THE EASTON GAZETTE.

SATURDAY MORNING. - NOVEMBER 30, 1861.

EASTON, MD.

The Grand Jury of Talbot County has adjourned, and its action during a week or more of arduous session, may be considered as an appropriate and fitting accompaniment of the general winding up of the Secession party of Talbot. The disunion epidemic has, during a period of some ten months, run its allotted course, and now its melancholy victims have the satisfaction of knowing that the loathsome contagion, instead of spreading as they hoped, throughout the entire community, bringing all alike within its deadly influence, has simply preyed upon their own vitals, until paralized and helpless, they have sunk beneath it. The advocates of disunion have played a bold game, but in staking all they have lost all. They now stand rebuked before an indignant people and consigned in the future to eternal political oblivion. In order properly to understand the principles and policy of the men who have with a boldness only equalled by their ill-success, endeavored to force Secession on the people of Talbot, it may be well to recur to a few of the leading events which have transpired in our midst and which here, as well as elsewhere, expose the character of this monstrous heresy and the means by which it is sought to be disseminated. Our readers will remember that in December last, South Carolina had thrown off allegiance to the Union and other States were preparing to follow her example, Governor Hicks had been petitioned, advised and threatened for the purpose of inducing him to call an extra session of the legislature, and while other States were calling Conventions to determine their action in the crisis, a public call was made for the citizens of Talbot to meet in County Convention, without distinction of party, to consult as to the proper course to be pursued at such an exciting period. The meeting accordingly took place on the 1st day of January and the scenes which there occurred are doubtless fresh on the minds of our readers. Suffice it to say that sympathy with the Southern rebellion was the prevailing element; freedom of speech was repressed and any manifestations of loyalty or approval of the course of Gov. Hicks were hissed down. Propositions stating that the interest of Maryland required her alliance with both the North and the South were tauntingly derided and voted down amid hisses and insults and altogether the proceedings were characterized by such turbulence and disorder as we never before witnessed at a county meeting. Three gentlemen were selected to wait upon Gov. Hicks, with the resolutions which had been adopted, and in the interview which was had with the Governor he was informed that the said meeting was one of the most HARMONIOUS which had ever been held in Talbot.—So much for the first demonstration in behalf of Secession. The firmness of our noble Executive in resisting the importunities of rebel sympathisers caused them to change their tactics. Conceding that the Governor was an unsafe depository of the power given him by the Constitution, that of convening the legislature, it was resolved by certain self-constituted leaders, that a SOVEREIGN Convention should be held, composed of delegates selected by the counties, without the intervention of the legislature, and which should have power to declare the State out of the Union. Talbot county being deemed the strongest Secession county on the Shore, was selected as the one in which to commence the movement, it being supposed that the other counties would follow as a matter of course. A meeting was called and delegates nominated on the 22d day of January. At this time, however, the Union feeling was aroused and a counter Convention assembled and nominated delegates on the same day. A short and active canvass was had and the Union ticket triumphed by a large majority. The fact, unknown before, was demonstrated that the Union sentiment was largely in the ascendency, and that while a few agitators could make the most noise, the ballot-box would invariably show them to be in the minority. The same result would undoubtedly have been shown in most, if not all of the seceded States, with the exception perhaps of South Carolina, where none but property holders can vote, if upon every occasion there had been a free and fair discussion and the question determined by ballot. The result in Talbot however, fell like a clap of thunder upon the Secession wire-pullers; the ballot system was speedily dropped, and when the self-elected Convention met in Baltimore it became an object of ridicule to the entire State. In the meantime State after state had gone out and when the Convention met in Virginia much anxiety was felt as to the course which it was likely to adopt. The Union delegates were largely in the majority and for a long time resisted the influence which was brought to bear upon them by the rebel conspirators. Promises and threats were resorted to but in vain, until it was telegraphed to the Confederate Government that Fort Sumter should be bombarded and that Virginia would then be compelled to take sides. The attack was begun on the 12th of April; the Convention unable longer to stand the pressure passed an ordinance of Secession on the 17th and by a preconcerted arrangement the U. S. troops were attacked on the 19th in their march through Baltimore. The whole was the result of a conspiracy, the crowning act of which was to be the Secession of Maryland. The events of that period form a memorable epoch in the history of our State. We all remember the reign of terror which for a time brooded like a dark cloud over the entire community. This was the crowning point of Secession; it became rampant and exacting and for a while ruled supreme. When the news of the Baltimore conflict reached here, an impromptu meeting was called at the Court House, PATRIOTIC speeches were made, "Northern Coborts" were denounced, and it was resolved that an expedition should be sent to Baltimore to DRIVE BACK the "vandals." Volunteers were not wanting. The Talbot "Horse and Home Guards" being in attendance were soon mustered into service and ere long the steamer was freighted with some seventy of the flower of our chivalry, each one resolved to conquer or die. This heroic expedition successfully ran the Blockade of Fort McHenry, remained in Baltimore a few hours, and returned home covered with glory.—This however was but the opening achievement of the campaign. It will be rembered that the Union party had called a meeting to assemble at the Court House on Tuesday the 23d of April, but it was suggested that in view of the alarming state of the country, all party lines should be forgotten, "bye-gones should be bye-gones," and that a mass meeting of the people should be held on the day above named. The bewildered Unionists readily abandoned their meeting and united with their fellow citizens in concerting measures, as they supposed, for the public security. Many of them attended the meeting in question, in good faith, when instead of being admitted upon terms of equality, they were asked to vote for an offensive resolution introduced for the express purpose of condemning Gov. Hicks and every Union man in the State. The resolutions, however, were all adopted, a "Committee of Safety" was appointed and the Commissioners of the county called on to levy $20.000 for the defence of the county. By virtue of these proceedings the Safety Committee began its distinguished career by taking possession of the State Armory, if not "in the name of the Confedgrate States," certainly not in the name of the United States. Old guns which had lain in the rubbish for fifty years were brought forth, painted and remounted, cutlasses, pistols, broadswords and grapeshot were speedily disgorged, while the clinking of hammers and the tramp of the sentinels gave tokens of war-like preparations. The "Commander-in-chief soon appeared on the field of action and the summons "to arms" was sounded throughout Talbot and adjacent counties. In a few days the following proclation was spread throughout the Shore:

DIVISION ORDERS.

HEADQUARTERS 2D DIVISION, M. M.
Easton, Md., Apr. 22d, 1861.

To the Citizens of the 2d Division, M. M:

Our fellow citizens of Baltimore have been slaughtered on our own soil by the soldiers of the U. S. Government which claims our support whilst it wages war upon our institutions,—our State has been made a seperate Military Department—our forts have been garrisoned and our State overrun by Northern troops in open defiance of the wishes of our citizens and of appeals from our constituted authorities.

I call you as your commander to rally to the defence of your property and your homes—to enroll yourselves immediately into companies of two classes—the one to defend their homes,—the other for service in any part of the State. I hereby command all the officers of the Divisions to use their utmost efforts to effect these objects and to hold themselves in constant readiness to sustain the civil authorities and to protect its defenceless inhabitants.

On the first of each month the Captains of Companies will make a full report to their respective Colonels and Brigadiers, and also to the Maj. General.—On the 10th of each month the Colonels will report to the Brigadiers and Maj. Gen.; and on the 20th of each month the Brigadiers will report to the Maj. Gen. and Adj. Gen.

TENCH TILGHMAN,
Maj. Gen. 2d Division, M. M.

The Safety Committee (with the Major General as chairman ex-officio) passed certain rules and regulations, among others one directing all stores in the county to be closed at 7 o'clock. The Secession mania was evidently at its height. Talbot must be "PURGED" became the motto, while certain persons were WARNED to leave and the General "commanding" intimated that in certain contingencies Union men ought and would be put under arrest. The decree went forth that there should be no change in the office at Oxford, and the newly appointed post master at Easton informed that if he should dare to assume the duties of his office "resistance would be offered." Orders from the Executive for the delivery of State arms to the citizens of St. Michaels were either POCKETED or treated with contempt. At this time the leaders of the movement evidently considered themselves invested with supreme authority and supposed they held Talbot county in the "hollow of their hand." But a change soon came over the spirit of their dream. The Union sentiment of the State, stifled for the time being, soon began to manifest itself; the landing of troops at Annapolis and the ready response to the President's requisition, soon brought returning reason to the conspirators, until those who dreamed of a "Southern aristocracy" began to realize that we had a government over us able to enforce the laws and to punish treason. In proportion as the power of the government was displayed, the operations of the "Safety Committee" became less energetic, their meetings became less frequent and we think it will puzzle one more astute than ourself to point out the precise time when their functions ceased. That they supposed themselves invested with supreme authority is evident from the fact that while they unhesitatingly took possession of the public armory in April they did not concede the same right to the United States government in June. When the special election for Congressmen took place in June there seemed to be an entire change of policy, the "war" cry was abandoned and the late rampant enemies of the Union made the welkin ring with their yells for "peace," but while many misguided individuals were caught by the ruse, the masses of the people detected the cheat and for the second time Secession was doomed to an ignominious defeat. It might be supposed that after two such signal rebukes by the popular voice the advocates of disunion would have bowed to the decision which they had so zealously invoked; but it was evident they intended to rule and not be ruled by the people. Notwithstanding the emphatic condemnation of their principles and designs, they continued to thwart the government by carping at the most necessary measures for suppressing the rebellion, giving aid and comfort to the Southern Confederacy and in many cases committing the overt act of treason. The secessionists of Talbot had their full share in this criminal work and seemed determined to make use of the lowest resorts to drive the people into compliance with their iniquitous schemes. Their patronage was withdrawn from merchants on account of their Union principles, boat captains were discarded, mechanics proscribed and overseers threatened in case they dared vote their sentiments on this all-absorbing question. Secession became fashionable with aristocratic aspirants; was lisped by young women and upstart youths and was understood to constitute a passport to select social circles. While, however, the PRIVILEGED classes, to a considerable extent, abandoned the cause of their country, the masses, termed at the South—THE MUDSILLS OF SOCIETY, true to their interests and the dictates of patriotism, rallied to the defence of their institutions and the election of Nov. the 6th tolled the death knell of Secession in Maryland.—Now we ask, where stands that presumtuous cabal that has so long and so vainly endeavored to rule the people of Talbot? They have played a bold game but their hands are now empty and they stand as humble petitioners before the great bar of public opinion which they have outraged and defied. They have awoke to the conscious fact that instead of ruling the people, the people are THEIR masters. As we remarked in our editorial of Saturday last, that we had supposed that all parties would have acquiesced in the popular will, as expressed through the ballot box, so we expressed our regret at the charge of judge Carmichael, believing, as has since been demonstrated, that its only tendency was to stir up the bitter waters of political strife which had partially subsided. Now in regard to our criticism on the charge of the judge, we will remark that we have been thrice taken to task for it; first by private correspondence, (which we will not further designate,) secondly, by that august body, the grand jury, and last and least the Easton Star. The writer in the latter, never formidable, is easily disposed of, having in this as in every other effort of the kind, convicted himself and damaged his cause in the commencement. If, as he says, "there was not a word of politics in the judge's charge to the jury, that it was the naked law and no more, and that every word was approved by some of the strongest Union men in the county" we ask why he commences his editorial by saying, "*as we expected*, the Gazette makes a great hubbub over Judge Carmichael's charge to the grand jury?" What right had he to expect any such thing if the charge was such as he had stated? He well knew that the Judge's charge was aimed at those who supported the United States Government and hence the ground of his "expectations." We said in our last editorial that we had no desire to do his Honor injustice, but it appears strange to us that the drift and tone of his charge was directed to one class of offences to the entire exclusion of another more glaring and more deeply criminal. We are aware that he read extracts from the Constitution of the United States which he "expounded clearly and forcibly," and could have specified other extracts the reading of which would have been profitable to the audience and instructive to the jury. Among others we cite the following:

Art. 3: Sec. 3: Treason against the United States shall consist in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.

If we may accept this definition as applicable to the State of Maryland we may be pardoned for quoting the following section from the Code of revised laws of the State:

Art. 30: Sec. 202: Every person convicted of treason against the State, shall suffer death, or be sentenced to the penitentiary for not less than six, nor more than twenty years, at the discretion of the Court."

Now we ask in the face of these authorities and the well known facts which have transpired in Talbot county, whether there were any grounds for action by the grand jury? Offences of a minor grade have been presented, United States officers in the discharge of their duty, and private citizens for giving information to the Government have been arraigned as violaters of the law, while the very men who have been endeavoring to subvert the law itself and have committed the overt act in its most aggravated form, are suffered to go unpunished. Those military officers who have been presented for arresting disloyal persons were acting under authority from their superiors, and would have been subject to a trial by court martial for disobedience of orders, and according to the articles of war, if the exigency of the case demanded it, the punishment might have been death itself. It has been intimated to us "that it would have been better for us to have gone before the grand jury and presented the guilty parties" we referred to in our editorial.—That is to say, after bringing these things to their notice it was our duty to go before them and do that which their own oaths required them to do. Judge Carmichael in his charge made no personal allusions in the matter of arrests and yet the grand jury had no difficulty in finding witnesses and identifying the parties. Why was he not required to go before them?

All we have to say is, that if they had shown as much zeal and ingenuity in ferreting out the perpetrators, aiders and abetters of treason as they did in hunting up United States officers who were engaged in suppressing treason, we doubt not they would have been as successful in one case as the other. Is it possible that the members of the grand jury knew of no one who has left for the Southern Confederacy with the declared purpose of fighting against the Government? that they knew of no one who has aided and assisted in this nefarious business either by money, advice or co-operation? and that they can procure no witnesses to testify to the fact? But we were before the grand jury and stood ready to give the names of certain witnesses who if produced before them would have speedily removed all embarassment on the subject; but we were notified that we could state nothing but what we knew of our own knowledge. It is a notorious fact that a number of our citizens have left us and are now in the Confederate army; some of them have been seen there by a gentleman who is now in our midst, others were assisted in their exit, and from others letters have been received confessing their treason. How is it that the government can discover and apprehend offenders, though in distant places, and our grand jury cannot though the lurking evidences are all around them? How is it, that Isaac B. Gibson could be captured by U. S. soldiers on Tilghman's Island for conveying rebel volunteers in his vessel to the Southern Confederacy and for keeping open communication with the enemy? These operations were doubtless unknown to our sticklers for the forms of law and the letter of the Constitution, but the perpetrator has been captured and for his crimes richly deserves to swing upon a gibbet.

We have stated that we were thrice called to account for our editorial. On Monday morning last we were summoned to appear before the grand jury for the second time, and after appearing before them, we were asked whether we wrote the article in Saturday's Gazette? This impertinent question we of course declined to answer, when we were informed that the Judge had been consulted, as well as the State's Attorney, and that each had given his opinion that the question was a legal one, and because we emphatically refused to divulge our private affairs the intimation was made that we would be reported to the court. We understand perfectly well that it was a ruse to gratify personal pique, and the grand jury that could lend itself to such a dishonerable purpose has forfeited all claim to exemption from public censure. We are mindful of our obligations to the law, and have, we trust, a proper appreciation of the respect due to the civil tribunals of the land, but when we see Courts of justice used simply as a medium for the propagandism of secession dogmas and rebel sympathies, we intend that no man, or sett of men, shall place a pad-lock upon our mouth or trammel us in the free expression of our sentiments. As we have already remarked, the grand jury has adjourned, and we but echo the sentiment of all loyal citizens, when we express the hope that it is the last time such a body of men will ever be called on to assist in the administration of justice in Talbot county.—Clothed with a little brief authority, they have strutted their hour and retired with an overwhelming sense of their exalted labors. But there is another tribunal to which they, in common with others, are responsible by the law of the land.—The Legislature of Maryland, the GRAND INQUEST OF THE STATE, will shortly convene, and when, in the course of their labors, they shall appoint committees of inquiry, with power to send for persons and papers, we can suggest no more appropriate place as the sphere of their labors than Talbot county. Let those who have clean hands welcome the investigaion and court the inquiry that must established their innocence. Public justice demands that the investigation should be had, and we will venture to say, that when the proceedings of secret sessions and midnight conclaves are brought to the light under oath, they will develop treason as rank as that which nourished rebellion on the soil of South Carolina.

LOCAL ITEMS.

J. N. BAIRD, D. D. S., would respectfully announce to his friends and patrons that he has returned to Easton, and will be pleased to see those desiring his services.

SUDDEN ILLNESS.—Mr. Thomas S. Hayward, Judge of the Orphan's Court of this county, while on his way home on Tuesday evening of last week was taken very suddenly ill, and when found he was in his carriage at his gate in a helpless condition. We are glad to learn that he has very much recovered and hope that he will soon be able to resume his official duties.

WHO IS TO BLAME?—About two months ago we received two copies of the Gazette returned from the Hillsborough post-office, bearing the names on the margin of two old and prompt-paying subscribers on one side, and on the other was written an order to stop the paper. The two gentlemen in question have seen us since, and wanted to know why their papers were stopped. Whether the present incumbent is in fault or his Secesh predecessor thought the Gazette circulated rather freely in that section, we are unable to say. Let the fault be where it may it has been the means of losing us two good subscribers.

THANKSGIVING.—Thursday last was observed in Easton by the closing of stores, suspension of business generally and divine worship. There is no section of the country that ought to be more ready to render thanks than that of Maryland.—While the other Southern border States have in a great measure been desolated and made feel the stern realities of war, our State rests comparatively quiet. Contrast her condition with that of Virginia, and it is plainly seen that we have been blessed thus far, and we hope that her citizens will ever keep and make her yet stronger for the Federal Union—for in Union there is strength.

ANOTHER ARREST.—A detachment of United States soldiers was sent down to the Bay Side, on Tuesday last, and captured a man by the name of Gibson, who has been conveying passengers across the Potomac, to join the rebel army. He is said to be a very expert hand with a boat and had a canoe, large enough to carry a number of persons, fitted up with black sails to keep from being detected at night. His last exploit, previous to the one with the U. S. troops on Tuesday was to carry some fifteen or twenty young men from different parts of this county, to the land of Dixie, and had only been home a few days when Gen. Dix paid his respects to him.

As the Grand Jury of this county appeared to think that we did it great injustice in the manner in which we noticed their action toward H. H. Goldsborough, Esq., last week, we here put in juxta position our notice with the presentment as it appeared on the Clerk's docket. The difference between tweedle-de and tweedle-dum has just been brought to light.

HON. H. H. GOLDSBOROUGH, has been indicted by the grand jury of this county for giving information to the U. S. troops of the breaking up of the Chapel Union meeting, which led to the arrest of the guilty parties who are permitted to go unpunished.	State vs. H. H. Goldsborough, Presentment for aiding, assisting and advising in the illegal arrest of Perry G. Stevens, Wm. H. Slaughter and Jas. T. Slaughter on or about 20th of October, 1861.

COURT PROCEEDINGS.

Monday, Nov. 18, 1861.—Court met at 11 o'clock. Present, Hon. R. B. Carmichael, Judge. I. C. W. Powell, State's Attorney. S. T. Hopkins, County Clerk. Saml. Sparklin, Sheriff.

GRAND JURORS.	PETIT JURORS.
E. L. F. Hardcastle,	Harrison Austin,
Jos. H. Harrison,	Samuel Rathell,
A. H. Seth,	John W. Fooks,
Alex. Dodd,	Edw. S. Harrison,
John Porter of T.,	Joseph Horney,
John W. Catrup,	John Wyatt,
John Baggs,	Jas. A. Roe,
Thos. B. Leonard,	John W. Cheezum,
Geo. H. Dawson,	Henry P. Hopkins,
Matthias Merrick,	Edw. Tenant,
Edw. Covey,	Thos. J. Lowe,
Jos. S. Robson,	James Cox,
Thos. Arringdale, Jr.,	N. E. Nicols,
Nathaniel Hopkins,	P. T. Hambleton,
John T. Stevenson,	R. D. Johnson,
Thos. H. Sherwood,	Montgomery Lloyd,
Chas. Stewart,	Wm. H. Bruff,
R. H. Adams,	Jos. B. Lowe,
Saml. B. Merrick,	Alex. W. Fountain,
Jos. B. Harrington,	John K. Skinner,
W. C. Callahan,	Saml. H. Benny,
James H. Leonard,	James Redman,
Wm. K. Leonard.	John Mason,
	Robert H. Jump,
	Nathaniel Leonard.

ASSAULT AND BATTERIES.

State vs. Wm. T. Elliott, presentment for assault and battery on Josiah Higgins—fined 25 cents. O. P. Sparks for assault and battery on —— Smith—fined 25 cents. Edw. Jones, for assault and battery on Lewis Tarr—fined 25 cts. Wm. H. Bostick, for assault and battery on Jno. O. Dawson—not guilty. Albert H. Dickinson, for assault on Solomon Colburn with a pistol—fined $10. William B. Roe, for assault and battery on E. Rathell—fined $1. James Ll. Martin, for assault and battery on I. C. W. Powell—fined 50 cents. Barney Sudler, for assault and battery on Thos. Woodall—fined 12½ cents. Barney Sudler, for assault and battery on same—fined 12½ cents. Thos. Parrott of P., for assault and battery on John T. Brown—fined 12½.

Tuesday, Nov. 19.—State vs. James Merritt, presentment for assault and battery on R. A. Stevens with a stick—fined 25 cents.

Wednesday, Nov. 10.—State vs. Wm. May, A. A. Dunham and Daniel Bridges, charged with rioting in Broad Creek Neck—not guilty.—Martin and Hambleton for defendants.

On motion of Wm. B. Clark, Esq., John D. Kemp, Esq., was admitted an attorney of this Court.

State vs. Jas. Stewart, presentment for an assault and battery on Nathaniel Leonard with a stick—fined $5. Goldsborough for defendant.

State vs. Nathaniel Patchett, presentment for assault and battery on James Fitzjarrell—not guilty. Hambleton for defendant.

Thursday, Nov. 21.—State vs. William H. Faulkner, charged with an assault and battery with intent to kill and murder John F. Meginey—verdict, "not guilty on 1st count, but guilty on 2d,"—fined $1 and sentenced to 3 month's imprisonment in the county jail. Murray for defendant.

State vs. T. T. Martin, presentment for assault and battery on James Jester—fined $1.—Martin for defendant.

Saturday, Nov. 23.—State vs. Edw. David son, charged with an intent to murder Jno. W. Plumer—verdict, "not guilty on 1st count, but guilty on 2d,"—sentence of the Court that he receive 39 lashes on the bare back. Hambleton and Jump for defendants.

Monday, Nov. 25.—State vs. Rose Cuff, (f.n.) charged with stealing 2 chickens of John Callahan—verdict, not guilty. Martin for defendant.

Tuesday, Nov. 26.—State vs. Jim Hubbard, (slave.) indictment for burning ricks of straw and stacks of fodder, property of John C. Adams—verdict, not guilty. Jump for defendant.

On motion of James Ll. Martin, Esq., John Prentiss Poe, Esq., of Baltimore city, was admitted as an attorney of this Court.

State vs. Wm. Maxwell, presentment for an assault and battery on Thomas Colburn—fined $5. Same for assault and battery on John, (slave of A. H. Mackey,)—fined $5. Same for assault and battery on Daniel (slave of A. H. Mackey.)—fined $5.

Wednesday, Nov. 27.—State vs. Chester Miller, indictment for stealing corn-top fodder from Hugh Harris—verdict not guilty. Martin for defendant.

State vs. London Derry, (f.n.,) indictment for using language calculated to promote discontent insubordination and insurrection—verdict not guilty. Jump for defendant.

State vs. Wm. M. Bayne, presentment for an assault and battery on Wm. Dobson—not guilty. Same for maliciously breaking the windows in the house of John Wheatley—not guilty.

On motion of James Ll. Martain, Esq., Wm. E. Dickinson, Esq., was admitted as an attorney of this court.

Friday, Nov. 29th.—State vs. Gus. C. Mackey. indictment for shooting at Thomas J. Gale—verdict not guilty—Clark and Martain for defendant.

By proclamation of Gov. Hicks, the Maryland Legislature will meet in extra session, at Annapolis, on Tuesday next.

The Expedition to Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Three Rebel Officers Prisoners—Seven Cannon Captured—Disappearance of Disloyalty.

BALTIMORE, Nov. 24.—[Special despatch to New York *Herald*.]—Despatches to Gen. Dix, from Eastern Virginia, announce the capture of three Rebel officers—a captain and two lieutenants. Seven cannon were also captured. They are all new and in good order. All traces of disloyalty seem to have disappeared in Accomac and Northampton counties.

County meetings are to be held to-morrow to renew allegiance to the Federal Government.—The people will first adopt the State Government for Western Virginia as a temporary measure, and then look to legislation by that State and Maryland for annexation to the latter.

The Secretary of the Treasury has ordered the restoration of the light on Cape Charles, and the Postmaster-General will send a special agent to renew the postal connections with both counties.

Doings of a Sovereign Convention

Virginia Relapsing into Oligarchy—Labor to be Shackled—Free Schools Denounced—Her Convention Proposes to Disfranchise the People—No Voting Except for Legislature—The Legislature to Elect the Governor and all other Executive and Judical Officers.

From the Richmond *Enquirer* of the 20th inst., we catch a glimpse of the proceedings of the Virginia State Convention, now in session in the Rebel Capital. This body which, last spring, betrayed Virginia into the toils of the Rebels is now hard at work destroying the remaining liberties of her people.

Every day's transactions of the Southern rebels brings to light more clearly that it is a rebellion of the aristocracy against the democracy—a determination of the Southern millionair to grind into the dust the laboring man and the poorer class generally. Here we have it evinced by the Sovereign Convention of Eastern Virginia. The right of ballot is wont to be abolished, free schools are denounced, and many of the privileges which the laboring man now enjoys are to be taken from him. Yet we find this class of men aiding in the destruction of their own happiness. Read and reflect.

On the first day of May, 1861, the Convention adopted the following resolution:—

Resolved, That a Committee of seven members be appointed by the President of the Convention whose duty it shall be to consider and report to the Convention, at its adjourned session, such amendments to the Constitution of Virginia as may be necessary and proper, under the existing circumstances.

The committee appointed under the foregoing resolution have, according to order, had the subject referred to them under consideration and submit the following report:—

[We omit the "Virginia abstractions," with which the Report is crammed, and give such extracts as embody its substance.—Ed.]

LABOR AND CAPITAL.

* * * * * * * * *

Governments are instituted for the protection of the rights of persons and property; and any system must be radically defective which does not give ample security to both. The great interests of every community may be classed under the heads of labor and capital, and it is essential to the well being of society that the proper equilibrium should be established between these important elements. The undue predominance of either must, eventually, prove destructive of the social system. Capital belongs to the few—labor to the many. In those systems in which capital has the ascendancy, the government must, to some extent, partake of the character of an oligarchy, whilst in those in which labor is predominant, the tendency is to what Mr. John Randolph graphically described as "the despotism of king numbers." It is the office of enlightened statesmanship to secure to each its appropriate influence, but to give the absolute control to neither.

LABOR TOO POWERFUL IN THE SOUTH.

The political condition of the Northern States presents a striking illustration of the evils incident to the preponderance of the element of labor.—In the early periods of their history these evils were not so apparent as they have since become. Their population was sparse, and the Western Territories afforded a convenient outlet for their restless citizens; labor was in demand, at high wages; property was easily acquired, and consequently the line of demarcation between labor and capital was not strictly drawn, because the laborer of to day might readily become the capitalist of to-morrow. But within the last twenty years a marked change has taken place in the North. Population has become dense, and the safety-valve afforded by emigration to the Western Territories has been greatly obstructed.—Wages have not kept pace with the cost of subsistence, and the difficulty of acquiring property has increased. The tendency of this new condition of things has been to divide society into two distinct classes, and to array the one against the other.

FREE SCHOOLS DENOUNCED.

This tendency to a conflict between labor and capital has already manifested itself in many forms, comparatively harmless, it is true, but nevertheless clearly indicative of a spirit of licentiousness which must, in the end, ripen into agrarianism. *It may be seen in the system of free schools*, by which the children of the poor are educated at the expense of the rich; in the various forms of exemption and homestead bills; in the popular cry of "lands for the landless," and "homes for the homeless;" in Fourierism and communism; in the habitual disregard of the ordinances of religion, and of the institution of matrimony; and more distinctly, in the form of abolitionism.

* * * * * * * * *

ATTACK ON UNRESTRICTED SUFFRAGE AND POPULAR ELECTIONS.

In the opinion of your committee no system of government can afford permanent and effectual security to life, liberty and property, which rests on the basis of unlimited suffrage and the election of officers of every department of the Government by the direct vote of the people. The tendency of such a system is to demoralize the masses; to encourage the habit of office-seeking; to foster corruption at the polls, and to place unworthy and incompetent men in positions of trust and responsibility. These, however, are the vital principles of the social organization of the North, and, as before stated, their bitter fruits are already in a course of rapid development.

In the Southern States more conservative and rational principles still prevail. This is due mainly to the institution of slavery, which constitutes a partial restriction on the right of suffrage. In the North, men of every class and condition of life are entitled to vote. In the South, all who are in a condition of servitude are necessarily excluded from the exercise of political privileges, and the power of the country is wielded by the more intelligent classes, who have a permanent interest in the well being of society.

Slavery also constitutes an effectual barrier against that tendency to antagonism between labor and capital, which exists in the North.—There, capital is the casual employer of labor, and is interested in diminishing its wages. Here, capital is the owner of labor, and, naturally, seeks to enhance its rewards.

* * * * * * *

NECESSARY TO DISFRANCHISE THE PEOPLE.

Material changes seem, also, to be necessary in regard to the selections of various classes of public officers. Under the Constitution, as it now stands, no discrimination is made in the mode of choosing public agents, founded on a consideration of the nature of the functions they have to perform. A mistaken desire to propitiate popular favor rather than a wise and well-considered purpose to give security to individual rights, and stability and dignity to the Government, seems to have controlled the action of the Convention of 1850. The selection of almost every officer has been referred to the people, and by shortening the official term, as far as possible, the officers are made dependent on the people.

PEOPLE TO VOTE ONLY FOR LEGISLATORS.

In determining the mode of selecting officers, it seems to your committee that some regard ought to be had to the nature of the duties they will be required to discharge. No rule can be prescribed which will be free from all objection, but your committee believe that it would be safe to assume that all *legislative* officers should be elected by the people, but that those who are to fill *executive* or *judicial* trusts should be chosen by intermediate agents. There seems to be a good reason for this distinction. Legislation affects the rights and liberties of the whole people collectively.

Hence those who exercise legislative powers should be elected by a direct vote of the people, and be dependent, for their continuance in office, on the will of the people. But judicial and executive officers, being entrusted with the duty of expounding and administering the public will, as expressed through the Legislature, and in applying law to individual cases, have functions to perform which do not concern the people at large, and ought not to be affected by their wishes.

* * * * * * *

LEGISLATURE TO SELECT ALL OFFICERS.

As a general rule, it would be much safer for the people to elect, in the mode prescribed by law, representatives in whose ability, integrity and patriotism they could confide, and leave to them the duty, not merely of framing the laws, but also of selecting the higher officers, to execute them.

Important from Key West.

Capture of a Rebel Schooner, Loaded with Coffee, etc.,—Lieutenant Hardee a Prisoner—Capture of the Privateer "Beauregard"—The Crew in Irons.

[Correspondence of the New York Express.]

KEY WEST, Fla., Nov. 21.—The United States steamship Connecticut, Commander Woodhull, arrived from New York, via Fortress Monroe and Port Royal yesterday morning. She brought in the British schooner Adelaide, of Nassau, N. P., captured by Capt. Woodhull, near Cape Canaveral, on the 17th inst. She is loaded with Coffee, lead and swords, having several cases of the latter. The supercargo, Lieutenant Hardee, a relative of "Tactics" Hardee, is an officer in the Confederate army. He claims the cargo as his property, and acknowledges that he was taking it to Savannah.

The Adelaide has made several voyages to Savannah since the blockade. The Adelaide has been libelled by the District Attorney, and seized by the United States Marshal, who has placed a guard on board. Hardee and Smith have been taken to Fort Taylor, Major Hill, the commander, consenting to receive them until Capt. Woodhull returns from the fleet, when they will be taken to New York.

The United States sloop-of-war W. G. Anderson, Lieutenant Commanding W. C. Rogers, U. S. N., entered this port from a cruise the morning of the 20th.

She was accompanied by a prize schooner carrying on her deck an ugly-looking rifled gun.—On boarding the Anderson we learned that the prize was the Confederate privateer Beauregard, of and from Charleston, S. C., and commanded by Captain Gilbert Hay.

[From the Washington Star.]

CAPTURE OF THE "BEAUREGARD"—THE OFFICIAL ACCOUNT.

Acting volunteer Lieutenant W. C. Rogers, of the bark W. G. Anderson, reports to the Navy Department that on the 12th instant, in lat. 26° 40', lon. 75° 42', he captured the Rebel privateer schooner Beauregard, 101 tons manned by a Captain, two Lieutenants, Purser and twenty-three seamen, and carrying a rifled pivot gun, throwing a 24-pound projectile.

She was first seen about daylight, running before the wind towards the W. G. Anderson.

Lieutenant R. says:

On approaching within four miles, he suddenly hauled by the wind, and as we noticed many men on his decks, immediately made sail, in chase, and in two hours brought her to under our lee, and ordered the Captain on board with his papers.

He brought a letter of marque from Jefferson Davis which he surrendered with his vessel.

We put a prize master and crew on board and transferred the prisoners to our ship, placing them in double irons.

On boarding her the crew were found in a drunken state committing all the destruction they could throwing overboard the arms and ammunition, spiking the gun, and cutting the sails and rigging to pieces. She was otherwise in bad order and poorly found, and having but a short supply of water, of which we have none to spare, was in no condition to send to Boston.

Having twenty-seven prisoners, and no room for them on board the "W. G. Anderson," I decided as we were in three days sail of Key West, to take them and the vessel into that port and deliver them to the proper authorities.

The Mason and Slidell Case.

The United States journals that take any view all take one view, that is, Commodore Wilkes not only had the right to arrest Mason and Slidell, but even to bring the Trent into port for adjudication and confiscation.

Professor Theophilus Parsons, one of the Cambridge Law School, sends a letter to the Boston Advertiser, in which he expresses his opinion with such strong and marked emphasis as to imply that there can be no doubt whatever of the perfect legality of Captain Wilkes' action. We copy his letter and the quotation from Lord Stowell which accompanies it, because it is eminently satisfactory to have our own conclusions confirmed by those of so distinguished a jurist.

"*To the Editors of the Boston Daily Advertiser:*

"It may be regretted that so much doubt is expressed as to the legality of the capture of these persons, when the true state of the law in relation to this subject is so easily ascertained beyond all doubt or question.

"It is simply certain that no civilized Government can be more positively bound than the British Government is this day bound by its own most peremptory, direct and authorative decisions, published for the information of the world, to admit the legality of the capture of these ambassadors from the Confederate States, which States that Government has again and again, formally and informally, called a "belligerent power."

"I say this thus emphatically, because Sir William Scott, brother of Lord Chancellor Eldon, and himself ennobled as Lord Stowell, and always regarded as the oracle of English admiralty law, in an important case relating to the rights of beligerents against neutrals, quotes from Vattel and other writers on these subjects a certain rule, which rule he adopts and confirms as his own doctrine, and which rule precisely meets this case. I content myself with one quotation, for if it is not enough nothing can be, remarking only that the italics used are those of Scott himself, as they appear on the 468th page of the sixth volume of "Robinson's Admiralty Reports."

T. P.

"Cambridge, Nov. 18, 1861."

"I have said before that persons discharging the functions of ambassadors are, in a peculiar manner, objects of the protection and favor of the law of nations. The limits that are assigned to the operations of war against *them by Vattel*, and other writers upon these subjects are that you may exercise your right of *war against them* wherever the character of hostility exists; you *may stop the ambassador of your enemy on his passage*; but when he has arrived, and has taken upon himself the functions of his office, and has been admitted in his representative character, he becomes a sort of *middle*-man, entitled to peculiar *privileges*."

The frigate St. Lawrence, blockading off St. Simond's Sound, Georgia, captured the Rebel schooner Fanny Lee on the 6th inst., which left Darien, Georgia, that morning. She proved to be quite a valuable prize, being loaded with rice and tobacco.

©Maryland State Archives, msa_sc2940_scm11033-1122