DORCHESTER AURORA.

"PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES, AND MEN BY THEIR PRINCIPLES."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

OLD IRONSIDES ON A LEE SHORE.

BY AN EYE WITNESS.

From the Democratic Review.

It was at the close of a stormy day in the year 1835, when the gallant frigate Constitution, under the command of Captain Elliott—having on board the late Edward Livingston, late Minister at the Court of France, and his family, and drew near to 'the chops' of the English Channel. For four days she had been beating down from Plymouth, and on the fifth, at evening, she made her last tack for the French coast.

The watch was set at eight P M.—the Captain came on deck soon after, and having ascertained the bearing of Scilly, gave orders to keep the ship 'full and bye,' remarking at the same time to the officer of the deck, that he might make the light on the lee beam, but, he stated, he thought it more than probable that he would pass it without seeing it He then 'turned in,' as did most of the idlers and the starboard watch.

At a quarter past nine, P M., the ship headed west by the compass, when the call of 'Light O!' was heard from the foretopsail yard.

'Where away?' asked the officer of the deck.

'Three points on the lee bow,' replied the look out man; which the unprofessional reader will readily understand to mean very nearly straight ahead. At this moment, the Captain appeared and took the trumpet.

'Call all hands,' was his immediate order.

'All hands,' whistled the boatswain, with the long shrill summons, familiar to the ears of all who have ever been on board a man of war.

'All, hands,' screamed the boatswain's mate, and ere the last echo died away, all but sick, were upon deck

The ship was staggering through a heavy swell from the Bay of Biscay; the gale, which had been blowing several days, had increased to a severity that was not to be made light of. The breakers, where Sir Cloudesley Shovel and his fleet were destroyed, in the days of Queen Anne, sang their song of death before, and the Dead Man's Ledge replied in hoarser notes behind us.—To go ahead seemed to be death, and to attempt to go about was sure destruction.

The first thing that caught the eye of the Captain was the furled mainsail, which he had ordered to be carried throughout the evening—the hauling up of which, contrary to the last order that he had given on leaving the deck, had caused the ship to fall off to leeward two points, and had thus led her into a position on a 'lee shore' upon which a strong gale was blowing her, in which the chance of safety appeared to the stoutest nerves almost hopeless. That sole chance consisted in standing on, to carry us through the breakers of Scilly or by a close graze along their outer edge. Was this destiny to be the end of the gallant old ship, consecrated by so many a prayer and blessing from the heart of a nation?

'Why is the mainsail up, when I ordered it set?' cried the Captain in a tremendous voice.

'Finding that she pitched her bows under, I took it in, under your general order, sir, that the officer of the deck should carry sail according to his discretion,' replied the Lieutenant in command.

'Heave the log,' was the prompt command, to the master's mate. The log was thrown

'How fast does she go?'

'Five knots and a half, sir.'

'Board the main tack, sir.'

'She will not bear it,' said the officer of the deck.

'Board the main tack,' thundered the Captain. 'Keep her full and bye, Quartermaster.'

'Aye! aye, sir!' The tack was boarded.

'Haul aft the main sheet,' shouted the captain and aft it went like the spreading of a sea bird's wing, giving the huge sail to the gale.

'Give her the lee helm when she goes in to the sea,' cried the captain.

'Aye! aye, sir! she has it,' growled out the old seadog at the binnacle.

'Right your helm; keep her full and bye.'

'Aye! aye! sir! full and bye she is,' was the prompt answer from the helm.

'How fast does she go?'

'Nine knots and a half, sir.'

'How bears the light.'

'Nearly a beam, sir'

'Keep her away half point.'

'How fast does she go?'

'Nine knotts sir.'

'Steady so!' returned the Captain.

'Steady,' answered the helmsman, and all was the silence of the grave upon that crowded deck—except the howling of the storm—for a space of time that seemed to my imagination almost an age.

It was a trying hour with us—unless we could carry sail so as to go at the rate of nine knots an hour, we must of necessity dash upon Scilly, and who ever touched those rocks and lived during a storm? The sea ran very high, the rain fell in sheets, the sky was one black curtain, illuminated only by the faint light which was to mark our deliverance, or stand a monument of our destruction. The wind had got above whistling, it came in puffs that flattened the waves, and made our old frigate settle to her bearings, while every thing on board seemed to be cracking into pieces. At this moment the carpenter reported that the left bolt of the weather fore shroud had drawn.

'Get on the luffs, and set them on all the weather shrouds Keep her at small helm, quartermaster, and ease her in the sea,' were the orders of the Captain.

The luffs were soon put upon the weather shrouds which of course relieved the chains and channals, but many an anxious eye was turned towards the remaining bolts, for upon them depended the masts, and upon the masts depended the safety of the ship—for with one foot of canvass less she could not live fifteen minutes

Onward plunged the overladened frigate, and at every surge she seemed bent upon making the deep the sailor's grave, and her live oak sides, his coffin of glory. She had been fitted out at Boston when the thermometer was below zero. Her shrouds of course therefore slackened at every strain, and her unwieldly masts (for she had those designed for the frigate Cumberland, a much larger ship) seemed ready to jump out of her.—And now, while all was apprehension, another bolt drew!—and then another!—until at last, our whole stay was placed upon a single bolt less than a man's wrist in circumference. Still the good iron clung to the solid wood, and bore us alongside the breakers, though in a most fearful proximity to them. This thrilling incident has never I believe, been noticed in public, but it is a literal fact—which I make not the slightest attempt to embellish As we galloped on—for I can compare our vessel's leaping to nothing else—the rocks seemed very near us. Dark as was the night, the white foam scowled around their black heads, while the spray fell over us, and the thunder of the dashing surge sounded like the awful knell that the ocean was singing for the victims it was eager to engulph.

At length the light bore upon our quarter, and the broad Atlantic rolled its white caps before us. During this time all were silent, each officer and man was at his post, and the bearing and countenance of the Captain seemed to give encouragement to every person on board. With but a bare possibility of saving the ship and those on board, he relied on his nautical skill and courage, and by carrying the mainsail when in any other situation would have been considered a suicidal act, *he weathered the lee shore, and saved the Constitution.*

The mainsail was now hauled up, by light hearts and strong hands, the jib and spanker taken in, and from the light of Scilly the gallant vessel, under close reefed topsails and main trysails, took her departure and danced merrily over the deep towards the United States.

'Pipe down,' said the Captain to the First Lieutenant, 'and splice the main brace.'—'Pipe down,' echoed the First Lieutenant, to the the boatswain. 'Pipe down,' whistled the boatswain to the crew, and "pipe down" it was.

Soon the "Jach of the Dust" held his levee on the main gun deck, and the weather beaten tars, as they gathered about the grog tub, and luxuriated upon a full allowance of Old Rye, forgot all their perils and fatigue.

"How near the rocks did we go," said I to one of the master's mates, the next morning. He made no reply, but taking down his chart, showed me a pencil line *between the outside shoal and the light house Island*, which must have been a small strait for a fisherman to run his smack through in good weather by day light.

For what is the noble and dear old frigate reserved!

I went on deck; the sea was calm, a gentle breeze was swelling our canvass from our mainsail to royal, the isles of Scilly had sunk in the eastern waters, and the clouds of the dying storm were rolling off in broken masses to the northward and westward, like the flying colums of a beaten army.

I have been in many a gale of wind, and have past through scenes of great danger; but never, before nor since, have I experienced an hour so terrific, as that when the Constitution was laboring with the lives of five hundred men hanging on a single small Iron bolt, to weather Scilly, on the night of the 11th of May. 1835.

NOTE.—During the gale, Mrs. Livingston inquired of the captain, if we were not in great dangar, to which he replied as soon as we had passed Scilly "you are as safe as you would be in the aisle of a church." It is singular that the frigate Boston, Capt. McNeal, about the close of the Revolution, escaped a similar danger while employed in carrying out to France, Chancellor Livingston, a relative of Edward's and also Minister to the Court of St. Cloud. He likewise had his wife on board, and while the vessel was weathering a lee shore, Mrs. Livingston asked the Captain—a rough but gallant old fire eater—if they were not in great danger; to which he replied—"You had better, Madam, get down upon your knees, and pray to God to forgive you your numerous signs, for if we dont carry by this point, we shall all be down in five minutes."

From the Harford Republican.

TO THE PUBLIC.

As one of the undersigned was nominated by the Governor for the office of Inspector of Fish, and rejected by a majority of the senate, who call themselves Whigs, because he was one of the "NINETEEN" Electors of 1836, and for that reason alone was disqualified from holding any office—we feel it due to ourselves, and the people we then represented, to present our reasons once more before the people

The majority of the Senate of Maryland being Whigs, as above stated, have by their action, declared that none of the "19" Electors aforesaid, are qualified to hold, even the most humble office, in the gift of the Governor. We cannot believe, after the sanction given to our course, in the election of two of that prescribed number, to seats in the House of Delegates, and one to a seat in the Senate, that the Sovereign People of Maryland, to whom alone we are accountable for our acts, will approve that decision, and pronounce a judgment of Treason against us, and add disqualification to hold office as the penalty of that act. Such is not the voice of the people of Maryland. Our action in 1836, has already been approved, and the sense of the People declared by the election of a Democratic Governor, a respectable minority of the Senate and House of Delegates, under the Reformed Constitution, which was the legitimate effect of our course in the year of 1836. As the action of the majority of the Senate may, perchance, be calculated to mislead some, we have chosen, once more to present our course before the public, that justice may be done us, and a righteous judgment passed upon our acts, and the action of that body which has thought proper to proscribe us. We said then, as we now state, that we are in favor of Reform, and our efforts to bring about changes in our institutions that would extend and secure the liberties and privileges of the people, have been, for party purposes, grossly misrepresented. In 1836 we were elected as Electors of the Senate, and were pledged, under any circumstances, to go for reform.—When the electors met at Annapolis, it was ascertained that twenty one of the electors, being a majority, designed to make a party Senate, and one that was opposed to the reform desired by a vast majority of the people of this State. The electors then who were in favor of reform, plainly saw, that if they went in and made a senate, without extorting from the anti-reform electors a pledge, that all the efforts of the reformers would be lost, and we should have the aristocratic provisions of our constitution rivited on us for at least five years longer. Under these circumstances the nineteen reform electors, who represented more than two thirds of the white population of the state, proposed to the twenty-one anti reform electors, that eight of the fifteen senators to be elected should be nominated by them, and should be favorable to reform. This proposition was rejected, and it was manifest, if we went into an election, that the reform electors could do nothing but witness the election of a senate decidedly opposed to every measure of reform. We had no power to elect a reform senate, but the constitution gave us the power to prevent the election of one opposed to reform, and we then, as the only means that was left, without a total surrender of the cause of reform, determined to interpose our constitutional right between the people and the anti-reformers, and prevent the making of the senate until we had assurance that a reform senate would be made. The twenty one electors, reluctant to serve the cause of Democratic reform, at last were obliged to pledge themselves to elect a senate favorable to reform, and when that was done, as many of the nineteen went in as were necessary to elect a senate, and by these means the people have got the reform that was made. If the nineteen electors had gone into the election without extorting the pledge, no shadow of reform would have been granted. A senate of high toned aristocrats would have been formed, who would have spurned every measure of reform, and we should have had no power to control them. But the stand taken by the nineteen brought the subject of reform fully before the whole people of the state, and even the arsstocrats and anti reformers were obliged to say they were in favor of reform, and pledged themselves to support it. They foresaw that the course of the nineteen would produce reform either by a convention which would have rooted from our constitution every aristocratic principle, or by extorting a pledge from the twenty one electors to elect a reform senate, and all the anti-reformers preferred what they call constitutional reform, which meant reform by the Legislature, to a convention, and for obvious reasons A conventional reform would have been thorough, and a reform by the Legislature could be in some degree controled and crippled by the aristocrats, as the reform that was in fact—for instance, they preserved the life offices in the Judiciary, kept the people from electing the Clerks and Registers, and made the senate to hold their seats for a long time, so as to remove them as far as possible from responsibility to the people. We and the rest of the nineteen, were willing to have reform in either way, but we desired reform, and determined as we believed and still believe it was our duty to do, to use all the power the people had clothed us with to coerce the anti-reformers into terms of compromise. We were at all times willing to make a senate, provided we could be assured that the senate, when made, would pass the reform bills necessary to give the people the rights and privileges which rightfully belong to them.

The clamor of bloodshed and revolution that was raised, was a party trick to alarm the timorous and to serve the cause of aristocracy. No sensible man ever could believe, who had reflected on the subject, that the refusal to elect a senate could produce any other effect than referring the constitution to the people for amendment, and no man who has the confidence which every Republican must have in the virtue and intelligence of the people could for a moment entertain any apprehension of danger from trusting the people with the amendment of their constitution—No bloodshed or confusion could have resulted from such a state of things, and the panic that was got up was the work of partizans, or office holders, and men opposed to reform, to defeat, if practicable, all extension of popular privileges. It has been charged that we violated our duty in not going in to elect a senate. We entertained different views of our duty—we were elected to get a reform senate, and we should have done but little towards accomplishing that, if we had gone in to enable the twenty one electors to make an anti reform senate. If the twenty-one electors had said, we will make a reform senate we would have gone in; but they would not say so, and we knew by the course the most influencial of them had taken in the Legislature, that they were deadly opposed to reform.

Our duty to the people then, was to vindicate the cause of reform, by saying to the anti reform electors, if you do not make a reform senate we will not, and cannot, according to our pledges to our constituents, aid either by our presence or otherwise, in making an anti-reform senate, and if they persisted, then to refer the matter to the source of all power—the people. Now if any censure be cast, it should fall on the Twenty-one Electors; they could have settled the whole matter, if they had done at first, what they did at last, pledge themselves to elect a Reform Senate. But they were unwilling to yield the cherished relicts of Aristocracy, which remained in the constitution, until driven to it by the public sentiment, excited by the course of the NINETEEN, and then they pledged themselves to elect a senate favourable to reform, which might have been done at first, and if done, would have saved the expense to the state, of Twenty one electors remaining four weeks at $4 each per day, and prevented all the hustle and excitement.

The charge of revolution against the Nineteen was ridiculous—nothing seriously mischevious could, by possibility, have grown out of it. The government could not by that event have been subverted; but if bloodshed and revolution would have grown out of it what ought to be said of the Twenty-one who according to the doctrine of their friends, are in this predicament, they would prefer a bloody revolution to a Reform Senate—the Nineteen ask them to pledge themselves to make a Reform Senate—the Twenty one refuse—the Nineteen then say, if the Senate be not favourable to Reform, we will not help to make it—the twenty-one then say, or their friends for them, we shall have a bloody revolution; the nineteen reply, you can prevent it by making a reform senate, but the twenty-one refuse, and of course prefer the bloody revolution, to the reform senate. This is a plain statement of the position in which the friends of the twenty one electors placed them by their cry of revolution. But these men, who raised the clamor, knew there was to be no bloodshed—and after they found they could not terrify the nineteen electors into making an anti-reform senate, why they advised their twenty one anti reform electors to make the required pledge to elect a reform, and it was accordingly done

No one who understands all the facts and circumstances, can believe, that we should have had any reform, if the nineteen electors had gone in—to have expected reform from men known to be opposed to it, as these twenty one were, was absurd.

The charge that we were influenced by party feeling, is unfounded, we knew the course we took was calculated to injure, rather than benefit our party—that it would be misrepresented by the designing. Our sole motive was reform: we saw that a firm stand must be taken in its behalf or it was lost, and we determined to do what we then thought and now know it was our duty to do, to stand firmly by the rights and liberties of our constituents; every one knows that all the rights and liberties which the people enjoy have been extorted from those who held them, and in no case have succeeded but by perseverance and firmness, and if they were to be terrified by menaces of aristocrats, and predictions of bloodshed, all would at this day be the slaves of a despot, our revolution never could have been accomplished.

Below we publish the letter, in which the twenty one electors pledged themselves to elect a reform senate—this pledge they refused, till it was extorted

Our course we submit to the candor and indulgence of the people—we are aware that enmity and slander will misrepresent and abuse us, but we think our fellow citizens know us too well, to believe that we would do any thing prejudical to their liberties or their interests—our own, and the destiny of those most dear to us is identified with that of the people of Maryland.

THOMAS HOPE.
SAMUEL SUTTON.

Letter of the Twenty one Electors making their Pledge

SENATE CHAMBER,
Annapolis, Nov. 19th, 1836.

Sir:—Your note of this day, asking us whether in a letter addressed to you on the 29th ultimo, by some of the undersigned, and which forms a part of the published correspondence between you and them, the term "Constitutional Reform" was to be understood in a particular sense specified by you, has been received, and in reply we beg leave respectfully to inform you, that those words were used, not in a restricted, but in their full and most comprehensive sense. That is—it was intended in that letter to convey the idea, that in the opinion of those who signed it, in which opinion the undersigned fully concur, (should the required Electoral quorum be obtained,) a senate would be elected whose known principles would lead them to endeavour to effect all such amendments of the Constitution, as the interests and happiness of the People of the State might require; in doing which they could of course select any mode, by Convention or otherwise, consistent with the principles and provisions of that instrument, which their enlightened judgments, due regard being had to the wishes of the people and the vigorous interests of the States, might determine to be the best.

We have the honor to remain,
Your very obedient servants,
(Signed)

Geo. S. Leigh,	B. J. Herad,
Geo. Vickers,	James Kent,
J. A. D. Dalrymple,	H. Brawner,
Wm. D Merrick,	S. Dickerson,
Geo. Dudley,	Wm. Williams,
S. J. K. Handy,	William W. Lake,
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