WEEKLY SENTINEL.

MONDAY, - - - - - - - FEB. 15.

The Right to Criticise the Acts of the Administration.

The Administration party are unwilling that the acts of those who have the control of the government shall be submitted to the crucible of public sentiment. The attempt is being made by the party in power to brand with disloyalty all who have the manliness and independence to call in question the wisdom and sagacity of the policy of those who have the control of public affairs. Since the commencement of the civil war in which the country is now engaged, hundreds, nay thousands of true and loyal citizens have been imprisoned, or compelled to submit to other personal indignities, for no other crime than criticizing the acts of the Administration. When the people of the American Colonies threw off their allegiance to Great Britain, and declared themselves free and independent, some of the ablest and purest British statesmen boldly and fearlessly called in question the acts of GEORGE the Third and his official advisers. In terms strong and bitter they denounced their policy towards the colonies, and they did so without their loyalty to their government being called in question. They advocated "peace," the "termination of hostilities," as the true policy of the British Government, and neither the crown, the ministry or the party supporting the policy then being pursued towards the colonies by the representatives of the Government, questioned either their right to do so or the purity of the motives which prompted them. To show the character of the opposition to the war then waged against the American colonies by the British Government, we quote a few extracts from the speeches of Lord CHATHAM, and commend the sentiments he expressed to the careful consideration of the party in power. Said that great and good man in a speech delivered in the House of Lords in favor of ceasing hostilities against the colonies:

"We have tried for unconditional submission—try what can be gained by unconditional redress.

* * * * * *

"I say this country has been the aggressor. You have made descents upon their coasts; you have burned their towns, plundered their country, made war upon the inhabitants, confiscated their property, proscribed and imprisoned their persons. I do therefore affirm, my Lords, that instead of exacting unconditional submission from the colonies, we should grant them unconditional redress. We have injured them; we have endeavored to enslave and oppress them. Upon this ground, my Lords, instead of chastisement they are entitled to redress."

Again he remarked in commenting upon the contest between the colonies and the crown:

"My Lords, I need not look abroad for grievances. The grand capital mischief is fixed at home. It corrupts the very foundation of our political existence and preys upon the vitals of the State. The Constitution has been grossly violated. The Constitution at this moment stands violated. Until that would be healed, until the grievance be redressed, it is in vain to recommend union to Parliament, in vain to promote concord among the people. * * *

"The Constitution has its political Bible by which, if it be fairly consulted, every political question may and ought to be determined. Magna Charta, the petition of rights and the bill of rights form that code which I call the Bible of the English Constitution. Had some of His Majesty's unhappy predecessors trusted less to the comments of their ministers, had they been better read in the text itself, the glorious revolution would have remained only possible in theory, and would not now have existed upon record, a formidable example to their successors."

In his speech in opposition to a motion to adjourn, just after the news of BURGOYNE's defeat, Lord CHATHAM thus speaks of the war and the ministry. Nothing stronger has been said of our civil war:

"Ten thousand brave men have fallen victims to ignorance and rashness. The only army you have in America may, by this time, be no more. This very nation remains no longer safe than its enemies think proper to permit. I do not augur ill. Events of a most critical nature may take place before our next meeting. Will your lordships, then, in such a state of things, trust to the guidance of men who, in every step of this *cruel, this wicked war*, from the very beginning, have proved themselves *weak, ignorant and mistaken!"*

The noble sentiments expressed by Lord CHATHAM have a forcible adaptation to the existing state of public affairs, and the example he set of opposing what he regarded the unjust and unwise acts of his government should animate every friend of constitutional liberty at the present time.

Presidential Movements.

We believe Gen. GRANT to be an honest man. This is the highest tribute that can be paid to him. He has undoubtedly a professional pride, without ambition for political preferment, or partizan advancement. It has been proposed to make him Lieutenant General. This position would place him at the head of the army, and we have no doubt that honor would be more gratifying to him than the highest civil office in the gift of the people. In a recent letter, referring to the appointment of Lieutenant General, he gives utterance to the following sentiments:

"You should recollect that I have been highly honored already by the Government, and do not ask, or feel that I deserve, any thing more in the shape of honors or promotion; a success over the enemy is what I crave above every thing else, and desire to hold such an influence over those under my command as to enable me to use them to the best advantage to secure this end."

If a similar spirit animated and controlled the men now at the head of the Government, the country would be in a far different condition. Instead of this, a contest is being waged by the members of the party in power for the control of the Government, not for the restoration of the Union upon the basis of the Constitution. Mr. LINCOLN is a candidate for the succession, and it is evident he will use the immense patronage at his control to that end. Mr. CHASE is also ambitious for the Presidency, and he will be urged for the nomination with radical zeal. We notice that General BANKS and General BUTLER are also named in that connection, and their claims will be urged with exceeding pertinacity.

We notice that a "Union Lincoln Association" has been formed in New York, and it has issued a circular to which the names of many prominent and wealthy merchants of that city are attached, urging the re nomination of Mr. LINCOLN. The old adage has it, that "money makes the mare go," and with the patronage at his control, it is evident that he will secure a renomination, and to that end he is using the influence of his position. We can only say that if the country is satisfied with the rule of the dominant party, it makes but little difference who is elected President, whether it be LINCOLN, CHASE, BUTLER, BANKS, or any other man.

Hon. Amos Kendall.

In a communication to the Washington Constitution Mr. Kendall says:

A correspondent inquires of me whether I will support for the Presidency any other man than Gen. McClellan, should another be nominated by the Democratic National Convention. I answer that I will support any competent man of unquestionable loyalty who can best unite the conservatives of the country against the disorganizers who now control the Government. I am not acquainted with Gen. McClellan; but I admire him for his talents, his virtues, and his loyalty. I sympathize with him in the wicked persecutions he has patiently endured; and I think the wrongs which the country has suffered through him, can be most appropriately redressed by placing him at the head of the Government.

HISTORY.—"The war can be finished in sixty days."—[Secretary Seward.

"I will do it with 75,000 men."—[Abraham Lincoln.

"Nobody hurt."—[Abraham Lincoln.

Supreme Court Decision.

We have been favored with a copy of the Decision of the Supreme Court in the case of the State vs. Batzner, relative to his defalcation. We presume the tax payers of this county could hardly read this decision without feeling almost indignant, and without entertaining a much less respect for the opinion of the Supreme Judges than they would like to feel toward the opinion of men placed in that high and responsible position by their votes. We learn that the opinion was delivered by Hanna, and, taken in any light, reflects no credit on him. If it expresses his opinion, he is no lawyer. If it does not, he is a dishonest man. In either event, he should be held accountable by the voters of the State. It is a decision in which not only the people of this county are interested, but also those of nearly every county in the State. We presume that, according to his logic, there are but few bonds of County Treasurers in the State that are worth the paper they are written upon.

We are pleased to learn that the attorneys for the State, Messrs. Holland and Binkley, are making an effort to obtain a rehearing of the case; but whether they will succeed or not, we of course do not know. One thing, however, we do know—and that is, that justice and a true regard for sound and established principles of law, demand that the decision should be reversed.

The foregoing article from the National Defender published at Brookville, is rather a novel mode of urging the re-hearing of a case decided by the Supreme Court. It can hardly be supposed that when Mr. Holland is elected to the Supreme bench, he will consider such a mode of approach to his court either dignified or respectful. He ought not to set an example the imitation of which may plague the inventor.

The truth is, the case that arouses such a bitter outbreak of feeling, was a suit upon a County Treasurer's bond. The Treasurer had absconded with over $20,000 of the State taxes; his securities were sued, and naturally enough saw proper to defend themselves. It was life and death with them, for most of them would have been ruined by an adverse judgment. On the other hand, if they were released, the tax upon the citizens of the county, to make good the defalcation, would have been a trifle in comparison.

There is an attempt to create a feeling on the part of the tax-payers where none at present exists. When the case came up for trial, the counsel, who now concern themselves so deeply for the tax payers, *would not submit the case to a jury of those very tax payers.* The defendants were compelled to try the case by the Judge, or to submit to the inconvenience of a change of venue. The Judge, a perfectly honest and highly capable, though not infallible gentleman, gave judgment for over $25,000 against all the defendants but one, whose signature, it was conceded, had been forged.

The Supreme Court reversed the cause on two grounds: 1st. The action was wrongly brought on the relation of the Treasurer of State; the proper relator being the Auditor of State. 2d. The defendants were discharged, some by false representation made by the Treasurer when he solicited their signatures; and the others by the fraudulent act of presenting them a bond to sign, on which appeared the signatures of other persons who were not bound.

The opinion of Judge HANNA presents a careful and elaborate examination of the law and displays learning and research. It is not possible for an unbiassed mind to read his argument without a very strong impression that his ground is impregnable, and his conclusion in conformity with the interests of the public. It is hardly fair for counsel, after taking the pains to print in their petition for a re-hearing the entire opinion of the Court and the whole of the evidence, to make an appeal through the newspapers to the tax payers of the county as a means of re-enforcing their argument for a re-hearing. It would be a paltry Court that could be so cheaply intimidated.

Confiscation in Poland.

The January number of Blackwood's Magazine, in its letter from Poland, gives a most interesting and instructive twenty four hours in Volhynia, which is one of the provinces of that ill-fated country now engaged in a spasmodic effort to throw off the yoke of Russian domination. The landed proprietary of the province are Poles; the peasantry being, in chief part, Puthenian, who have no sympathy with the popular movement against Russia, and who, although by no means attached to the empire of the Czar, have been easily bribed or induced by a prospect of plunder to side with the Emperor. These peasants have in many instances resisted every temptation, and remained faithful to their masters.

The Russian Government, by way of aiding to put down the rebellion, seems to have resorted to a decree of confiscation of property of rebels, not unlike in its provisions the act of our Federal Congress. In both cases, the property of the revolted section has been called upon for pecuniary contribution to aid in restoring the authority of the General Government, and, in event of failure to respond (of which failure both the United States and Russia had, from the necessities of the case, foreknowledge), then prompt sale of the property at auction to slaves, or peasants, as the case may be. In Poland, there has been a longer experience than in South Carolina, and we give below an extract from the letter before us, that it may be seen how history teaches by examples:

One of our motives for visiting the country just at this period, was a desire to be present at some of the sales of sequestered property, which were taking place daily. These sales were expressly arranged for the benefit of the peasantry; one of my friends, for instance, who is a Galician, as well as Volhynian, proprietor, who was called upon to pay the Russian Government a sum equal to £8,000 for the suppression of the rebellion. As he has carefully abstained from taking part in the movement, the amount of the tax in itself was sufficiently onerous; but lest he should be in a condition to procure that sum at short notice, he was only allowed three days to raise it; and as he was not resident in Volhynia, it was manifestly impossible for him to make the necessary arrangement. In default of prompt payment the live stock of the proprietor is put up at auction among the peasants, who are thus enabled to purchase their master's horses at a shilling apeace; and merino sheep have been known to sell for as little as three half pence each. In other words, the peasantry receive a present of their master's stock, his crops, or working his lands, and is obliged to pay the difference between the trifling amount which his property has realized and the sum originally demanded by the government. It would seem, however, from late accounts, that the peasantry are becoming unmanageable and independent in their bearing toward the government, which has thus spoiled them, and complain of being obliged to pay to the government the tax properly due to the proprietor, in compensation for the land which was originally his, and has by a recent arrangement been transferred to the peasant. Having paid only a nominal sum for their cattle, they now want to get the land for nothing as well; and it is some consolation to the proprietor, who has been robbed of both, to see the thieves fall out. The position of a country gentleman in these provinces is in fact becoming intolerable; not allowed to leave the country, he is constantly subjected to the suspicion of the government while he remains in it, and too often finds himself at last an unwilling occupant of a dismal cell, or one of a melancholy *cortege* on its way to Siberia. Those who were fortunate enough to procure passports at the commencement of the movement have fled the country; those who were left were, in most instances, arrested, so that scarcely a property remains tenanted. Any who have been discreet or lucky enough to be left at liberty have been called upon, on the one hand by the Russian, on the other by the Polish, national government, to pay heavy contributions. In both instances the payment is compulsory, while the constant presence of armed bands of disorderly peasants, or of Cossacks, renders daily life unsafe.

☞ The Democratic State Central Committee of Ohio has fixed upon Monday, March 23, as the day for holding the State Convention, for the purpose of electing delegates to the National Convention, and nominating candidates for State officers.

Peace Propositions.

In Congress, on Thursday last, Mr. Cox of Ohio favored peace propositions and expressed the belief that if Hon. FERNANDO WOOD was sent on a mission to Richmond peace would be restored in sixty days. We do not propose to discuss the probabilities of such a mission, but only to refer to the declarations of one Mr. SMITH of Kentucky, who stated that he was the last man to treat with rebels. General WASHINGTON treated with rebels, and so did General JACKSON, and it was never regarded as a crime in either; otherwise it was thought to be sound policy. But there is a higher example in that regard than either of these distinguished men. GOD, and we speak it reverentially, treated with rebels. HE did more than this. HE even condescended to entreat them to return to their allegiance, and His only Son, CHRIST JESUS, was offered and became the atoning sacrifice. GOD could and did treat with rebels to save them from the consequences of their crimes, but Mr. SMITH of Kentucky and the abolitionists he represents have no such regard for their erring fellow men. Said the Savior of mankind, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

THE OATH OF OFFICE.

Speech of Senator Bayard of Delaware, in the United States Senate, January 26, 1864.

Senator Bayard, after taking the oath of office prescribed by the act of July 2, 1862, asked the unanimous consent of the Senate to make some remarks personal to himself, which being granted, he proceeded to speak as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT: In the course of the debate upon the rule adopted yesterday by the Senate, I stated to the body having exclusive jurisdiction over the subject, I should hold myself bound by its action, and that but one alternative remained, if the rule was adopted: either to comply with the decision or relinquish my seat in the Senate. Subsequent reflection has convinced me that I was partially in error. Another course is open: to submit to the decision and resign.

The gravest consideration has induced me to pursue this latter course; and, in a brief period, my connection with this body, which has lasted nearly thirteen years, will cease.

I desire to assign the reasons which control my action. Without any decision upon the constitutional validity of the act of July, 1862, all the members of the Senate and House to whom it applied belonging to the political party with which I have acted have voluntarily taken the oath prescribed by that act, deeming, doubtless, that the constitutional questions involved were of less moment and the precedent made less dangerous than they seemed to my mind. I could not but reflect that the unanimous action of those with whom I coincide in general political views, might give cause even to men unbiassed by the perverting influences of political or personal hostility, who do not know me personally, to doubt, if not to believe that I declined to take the oath for reasons other than the considerations that, in my judgment, it was a dangerous innovation upon fundamental principles of the Constitution.

As I believed that the law had been passed without a full discussion, and as a decision on its validity by the proper tribunal had been waived at the special session when I was not present, I was content to leave others to their own action, and govern mine by my conviction of duty. The decision now, however, has been judicially made, after hearing my objections to the act and the oath it imposes, and that decision, though in my belief a dangerous precedent, is obligatory to the extent of taking the oath, as I have already held the seat for nearly one year since my re election.

Sir, I admit that I covet the approbation of the good, the wise and the reflecting, and would not willingly subject myself to their censure or to reasonable suspicion as to my motives of action; though I am utterly indifferent to those calumnious, groundless and vindictive attacks to which every man in public life, even in less excited times, is subjected by personal malevolence or political hostility. But though I desire such approbation, I have never made either opinion or popularity my standard of action, but my own sense of right and duty; and I owe a respect to my sincere convictions of public duty which I will never sacrifice. Many of you are aware that before civil war commenced I expressed fully my views as to the course of action which I thought the welfare and prosperity of the whole country required after the secession of seven States. Those views differed from the course pursued subsequently by the Administration, and its course was approved by a majority of Congress, and, indeed, by the people at large, after their passions had become excited by actual war.

I told you then that I did not consider secession a constitutional or reserved right of the States, but an act of revolution; but a revolution by organized communities—not rebellion in the modern sense of the word, but only in its old Roman sense—the revolt of a people. I told you, also, that in my judgment, conciliation, and the removal of real or even apprehended grievances or dangers, and not coercion by arms, was, in such a crisis, the true policy of the statesman; and that the framers of the Constitution had wisely left such a state of affairs without any provision as one of those "mortal feuds" which, in the language of Hamilton, "when they happen, commonly amount to revolutions and dismemberments of empire."

I admitted that secession was a breach of the compact by which the Federal Government was established, and that it rested with the United States to determine whether they would and could, by war, compel the seceding States to repair the breach, or whether the act by which they severed their political relations with us should be assented to, and a peaceful separation permitted, in the hope that past memories and the ties of blood and marriage, with continued commercial intercourse might in a few years restore those seven States to the Union; similar influences having at the origin of the Government, induced North Carolina and Rhode Island, after a year's delay, to become members of the Union, though the former had in the first instance rejected the Constitution, and the latter had refused to be represented in the Convention

I may be pardoned here for quoting a short extract from a speech I made on the "condition of the country," in March, 1861, as illustrative of my opinions before the sword had been drawn:

"You may attempt by war to keep the States united—to restore the Union—but the attempt will be futile. Conciliation and concession may reunite us; war never! The power may be exercised for the purpose of punishment and vengeance. It may be exercised if you propose to conquer the seceding States, and reduce the nation into a consolidated nation; but if your intention be to maintain the Government which your ancestors founded—that is, a common Government over separate, independent communities—war can never effect such an intention."

I preferred then peaceful separation to civil war as the lesser evil, but the Administration and the dominant party decided to resort to an enforcement of the laws by the coercion of arms, as against an insurrection. Civil war has since raged, and its events and consequences have strengthened my conviction that the prosperity of my country and the happiness and morals of the people cannot be promoted by its continuance. To these views an overwhelming majority of Congress is opposed, and, so far as the elections of the past year can be accepted as evidence of public sentiment, that majority is sustained by the people. It is true that new questions have arisen in the progress of war as to its mode of conduct and object, and have produced conflict of opinion among the people.

But on the question of peace—even by temporary separation if essential—the Democratic party with which I have been connected is divided, and many of its leading and most influential adherents indulge in the visionary idea that a common government, based on "the consent of the governed," over separate political communities, with diversified habits, manners, customs and institutions, can be restored and maintained by the sword, without the abandonment of a Federal and its conversion into an imperial and centralized government. So thought not the President of the United States or the Secretary of State on the 10th of April, 1861, before war had begun, and to my mind such an idea is a delusion and a mere chimera.

I have also the fixed opinion and belief that the life of a nation depends upon the preservation of its liberties, and not upon the extent of its dominion. Standing, therefore, almost alone in this body, I have lost the hope that I can longer be of service to my country or my State. Never an ambitious man, the passion of ambition has with the advance of life so diminished that I prefer the repose of private life to the imbittered contests of the political arena in these tempestuous times.

I have lived to see the elective franchise trodden under foot in my native State by the iron heel of the soldier, and "Order No. 55," not the people of Delaware, represented in one Hall of Congress. I have lived to see her citizens torn from their homes and separated from their families on the warrant of a self-styled detective, without any charge expressed on its face, and without any known accuser; and then, without hearing or trial, these citizens banished from their State, beyond the protection of the laws, into a State in which the laws of the United States are now neither enforced, nor enforceable. Yet in the State of Delaware the courts have been always open, and at no period has there existed the semblance of a conspiracy or combination to resist the authority of the United States. Such an allegation is a gross calumny, and utterly groundless, come from what source it may.

And now, Mr. President, the Senate of the United States have, by their decision enforcing an expurgatory and retrospective test oath, repugnant to both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution, made a precedent which, in my judgment, is eminently dangerous, if not entirely subversive of a fundamental principle of representative government. Under these circumstances, with my construction of the Constitution, having held the seat, I am bound to submit to your judicial decision as to the validity of the act of July, 1862, and have therefore taken the oath it prescribes. I cannot doubt that the precedent now made will be followed, and yet I regard all test oaths as useless and demoralizing acts of tyranny. It has been as truly as beautifully said by a brilliant and distinguished advocate:

"They are the first weapons young oppression learns to handle; weapons the more odious since, though barbed and poisoned, neither strength nor courage is necessary to wield them."

With a firm conviction that your decision inflicts a vital wound upon free representative government, I cannot, by continuing to hold the seat I now occupy under it, give my personal assent and sanction to its propriety. To do so I must forfeit my own self respect and sacrifice my clear convictions of duty for the sake merely of retaining a high trust and station with its emoluments. That will I never do, but, retiring into private life, shall await, I trust with calmness and firmness, though certainly with despondency, the further progress of a war which it is apparent to my vision will in its continuance subvert republican institutions and sever this Federal Union into many arbitrary governments.

Among these, wars for dominion will arise and continue until, from exhaustion, the different divisions subside into separate nationalities, leaving not the vestige of a republic remaining. If the lessons of history be not deceptive and valueless, such will be the inevitable result of protracted war; for a single centralized government over so vast a territory, inhabited by so intelligent and energetic a people, could it be organized through military genius and power, and be successful for the hour, would not outlive the generation in which it was established.

I close these remarks with the language in which a historian of the Constitution so eloquently portrays the universal sentiment of the American people (alas! how changed now) at the time of its adoption, and the great object they intended to accomplish in thus cementing more firmly a Federal Union:

"They beheld that republican and constitutional liberty which with all that it comprehends and all it bestows was not only altogether lovely in their eyes, but without which there could be no peace, no social order, no tranquility, and no safety for them and their posterity.

"This liberty they knew must be preserved. They loved it with a passionate devotion. They had been trained for it through a long and exhausting war. Their habits of thought and action, their cherished principles, their hopes, their life as a people, were all bound up in it; and they knew that if they suffered it to be lost there would remain for them nothing but a heritage of shame and ages of confusion, strife and sorrow."

"Lincoln and One Term."

The cry of "LINCOLN and one term" is circulating through the ranks of the Republicans. Wilkes' "Spirit of the Times," the organ of the Ring Sutlers, and the Sweat Board, and the Camp followers, is also the mouth piece of a powerful section of the Abolition party. It calls for a combination against LINCOLN's re election of which it says:

The country is all right in tone. It has been willing to laugh at Mr. Lincoln's jokes; for a season; but now that the true strain of our institutions is approaching, it requires courage and decorum in the chair of State.

For our part, we believe the people will, in this matter, meet with the relief they wish. We can conceive how a popular tumult may, in its first emotions, upheaves some jocose clodpole to the apex, but we cannot conceive how, in the face of dripping guillotines and a rocking empire, Jack Bunsby could be elected to preside over a period like that of the old French Revolution for a second term!

Reviewing the history of the Administration of LINCOLN and his tergiversations, it says:

All this has been brought about in the conscience of a naturally well intentioned man, by the corrupting temptation of a double term, and we may judge somewhat further of the dreadful rigor of that demoralizing influence by the fact that the patronage of the Government is not only being squandered at this moment to debauch the legislatures into an illicit nomination of Mr. Lincoln, but he has actually been engaged of late in granting pardons to military rebels, who are above the high-water mark of the amnesty proclamation, in order that they may come within our lines and electioneer to carry out his personal purposes.

As for the amnesty proclamation itself, applied as it is to rush Louisiana, Arkansas and Tennessee back into the Union, in time for the June convention, it looks wonderfully like a dodge to recruit votes for Uncle Abraham in that body. He must be aware, from the specimen of border State patriots now in Congress, that these sudden proselytes will become the natural defenders of disloyal neighbors, and that when the reconstituted State is back, and can again cast all its votes, they may relapse with the malcontents into the slough of the rebellious "institution," like Reverdy Johnson, Garrett Davis, and their representative train. To our mind, therefore, this rapid reconstruction of the seceded States is premature. They should be held in abeyance until the National Constitution is amended against slavery, and once in under that guarantee there can be no secession, recantation or release.

This view should have struck the mind of a man tall enough to be a President, and perhaps it did; but if it did, what are we to think of Mr. Lincoln's principles in being willing to risk an untimely movement, for the mere sake of the hastily constructed votes it would contribute to his personal cause in June. These things are, in themselves, a lesson against the project of a double term, and should serve as a particular warning against Mr Lincoln. Should he succeed, he will at the expiration of that second term be still eligible to another term; and we can readily conceive from the way in which he has used his patronage already, that he may, if he be allowed to carry his conservative machine "over the centre" into easy running, repeat himself too often for the matter to be regarded as a joke. There is no safety for republican liberty, under our vastly increased armies and immensely distended national debt, but to restrict our powerful President hereafter to a single term; and the proper way to dictate that amendment to the Constitution is to rebuke Mr. Lincoln's aspirations for a re election.

But in addition to the political reasons against a double term, and especially at this time, Mr. Lincoln is the most unfit man among all the candidates of the loyal side, for the tremendous tasks and responsibilities of the next four years. The true war with the rebellion is yet to come. What has thus far taken place in arms, is merely a dazzling military prologue, and the grand body of the epic is to be performed in the Halls of Congress and in the Executive Chamber. The future of this country, nay, the welfare of all laboring mankind, depends upon the character of the adjustment, and in view of such a momentous task, we doubt if any but a salaried retainer or some hopeful mendicant, will pretend for an instant that such responsibilities would be properly lodged if left in the hands of Lincoln. Seldom resolved except to be in doubt, he never progresses but when hammered by the people. He has been wrested step by step from his stubborn resistance to liberal reforms, as our troops have wrested territory from the rebels, and with this insight, we have every reason to believe we should find him still more reluctant to practical advancement while endeavoring to "rope in" the country on the eve of his third term than he is at present.

—The following, from "The Birds of Killingworth," in Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn," is a pretty close hit at the meek and lowly preachers of war and blood:

The Parson, too, appeared a man austere,
The instinct of whose nature 'twas to kill;
The wrath of God he preached from year to year,
And read with fervor, Edwards on the Will;
His favorite pastime was to slay the deer
In summer on some Adirondac hills;
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane,
He lopped the wayside lillies with his cane.

THIRTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS.

SENATE.

WASHINGTON, February 9.

Mr. Sumner presented petitions from 17,706 ladies of New York, 15,300 of Illinois, and 11,641 of Massachusetts, with duplicate numbers of males, praying for the entire abolishment of slavery.

The introduction of the petitions caused a spicy and interesting debate between Saulsbury, Sumner, Wilson, and others.

Mr. Sherman introduced a bill, which was referred to the Finance Committee, prohibiting speculation in gold, silver and foreign exchange, and for other purposes.

Mr. Powell introduced a bill amendatory to the Constitution, so as to provide a new method of electing the President of the United States.

The Senate proceeded to the consideration of the bill for the promotion of enlistments

Mr. Doolittle spoke at length, claiming that it was the first duty of the government to increase our army. Slavery was the primary curse of the war, and ought to be forever done away with.

He was followed by Mr. Richardson. Mr. R. considered the war thus far, carried on totally for the negro. It left white men, who had some civilization, out of the account. The war had been a chapter of Administration blunders.

Mr. Wilson reported a bill for the examination of certain army officers—passed.

The Senate then adjourned.

HOUSE.

In the House, Mr. Dawes called up the Louisiana Congressional election case.

Mr. Fields advocated his right to the seat. He said he had a few slaves, but that if he had thousands, he would have sacrificed them upon the altar of his country.

Mr. Ganson opposed the admission of Mr. Field on the ground of insufficient constituency. He took occasion to sternly condemn the conduct of interference in elections by Gen. Ripley, who has become a convert to the pernicious doctrines that the revolted States are out of the Union.

Mr. Brown of Wisconsin argued that the military governor had so far interfered as to effectually prevent an election.

The resolution that Mr. Field was not entitled to the seat, was adopted: ayes, 82; nays, 14.

The House then resolved into a committee of the whole to consider the enrollment bill.

Mr. Hotchkiss of New York introduced a bill granting lands to aid in the construction of the Lake Superior Railroad; providing for the use thereof by the United States, free of charge.

The House went into committee of the whole, Mr. Dawes in the chair, and resumed the consideration of the Senate bill amendatory of the enrollment law

Mr. Kernan of New York offered an amendment exempting from draft clergymen who are not engaged in trade or secular business

During the debate Mr. Cox of Ohio opposed it, saying the pestiferous clergymen of the country ought not to be exempted.

Mr. Kelley was also opposed to the amendment, but for a different reason. He did not wish to put an insult on the patriotism of clergymen. Dr. Olds' church will remedy all defects of which his colleague (Cox) complained.

Mr. Cox resumed, saying the rebellion was fermented by clergymen North and South. His colleague (Spaulding) was not the man to impugn his (Cox's) loyalty, for he had stood here opposing secession while his colleague (Spaulding) was singing anthems to John Brown and plotting sedition and revolution.

Mr. Arnold of Maryland made an earnest appeal not to waste time in personal disputes, but at once pass the bill before them, as within thirty days the draft is ordered.

Mr Eldridge, of Wisconsin, offered a proviso that the ministers have not heretofore, and will not in future, preach politics. He said ministers were intermediate and stirrers up of strife and mischief, and they ought to go to the army because they are more fitted for that than to preach.

Mr. Kearnan's amendment was rejected.

The Committee disagreed to an amendment, 70 against 74, that in assigning the quota of troops, credits shall be given to States and counties from which men have enlisted in the military organizations from other States for three years or during the war.

Fernando Wood offered an amendment to exempt from the draft all who, from the conscientious belief in the humanity, necessity or eventual success of this war, are opposed to its further prosecution until an effort has been made, and failed to end it, by negotiation.

The Committee rejected this, 23 against 103, and refused to strike out the clause which proposes to consolidate the two classes, 45 against 60.

The Committee rose without conclusive action on the bill.

Adjourned.

SENATE

WASHINGTON, February 10.

Mr. Trumbull reported from the Judiciary Committee various bills to amend the Constitution and an amendment by way of a substitute providing for the abolishment of slavery throughout the States

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill prohibiting members of Congress, heads of bureaus and others from practicing, except in purely judicial cases, in civil courts.

Mr. Trumbull, from the Judiciary Committee, reported back the substitute for the joint resolution of Mr. Henderson proposing amendments to the Constitution, as follows: 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary service except in punishment for crime, shall exist in the United States, or in any place subject to them. 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Mr. Trumbull, from same committe, reported adversely to the proposed amendmets of the Constitution by Mr. Sumner, making all men free in law, so that no man can hold another as a slave.

Mr. Clark reported a bill modifying and reaffirming the President's proclamation of July 1, 1863—giving it statute force. Referred to the Committee on Slavery and Freedmen.

Mr. Brown reported an amendment to the enlistment bill—confirming emancipation proclamation, abolishing slavery throughout the country, subjecting colored men to enrollment and draft, &c.

HOUSE.

The House proceeded to the consideration of the bill to establish a Bureau of Freedmen's Affairs.

Mr. Elliott of Massachusetts explained the bill, saying that its passage was demanded no less by the consideration of high justice than by its effect on the pecuniary interests of the government.

No action was had on the bill.

Mr. Dawes of Massachusetts presented the credentials of Mr. Johnson, from Northwestern Arkansas.

Mr. Davis of Maine moved to lay them on the table, pending which the House went into Committee of the Whole on the enrollment bill.

The Committee rose, and was for a long time engaged on the section exempting members of religious denominations who were opposed to bearing arms in the field, but assigning them to look after freedmen.

Mr. Ganson offered an amendment that the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended in cases of alleged minors who may be enlisted.

This amendment was rejected.

Mr. Stevens offered an amemdment that persons of African descent between 20 and 45 years of age, whether citizens of the United States or not, shall be enrolled; and when a slave shall be drafted and mustered into service, the master shall receive a certificate of $300, and the drafted man shall be free.

The Committee rose without action on the billl.

Adjourned.

SENATE.

WASHINGTON, February 11.

Mr. Convers called up the bill amendatory to an act to provide Circuit Courts for California and Oregon After amendment the bill was adopted.

A bill to ascertain the losses of loyal States during the war was referred to the Committee on Claims.

The bill viewing the grade of Lieutenant General was called up by Mr. Wilson, from the Military Committee, with the amendments striking out the House clause, authorizing the Lieutenant General to command armies of the United States, and also the clause recommending Gen. Grant for that position.

Mr. Conness moved to amend the bill so that the Lieutenant General shall be General in-Chief of armies under the direction of the President, and shall remain in command during the pleasure of the President.

Without coming to a vote the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE.

In the House a bill was passed appropriating $12,000 to rebuild the President's stables lately burned.

The House went into Committee of the Whole on the enrollment bill.

The amendment to draft persons of African descent to constitute part of the national forces was discussed, involving the question of compensation to loyal owners.

During the debate Fernando Wood said the Confederate Congress was now debating propositions of peace, while we were legislating in violation of the Constitution.

Mr. Cox favored peace propositions and believed that if Mr. Wood was sent on a mission to Richmond peace would be restored in a day.

Mr. Smith, of Kentucky, said he was the last man to treat with the rebels, who must put down their arms and yield to the laws unconditionally.

An amendment by Mr. Davis was agreed to, providing for the appointment of a Commissioner to each slave State represented in Congress to award a just compensation, not exceeding $300, to each loyal owner of any slave who volunteers, payable out of commutation money, when the the master frees the slave.

Mr. Baldwin moved to substitute the words, "persons to whom the colored volunteer owes service," for owner of any slave, which was agreed to.

Mr. Brownell offered a proviso that this section shall not apply to any Congressional District if the representation of the same shall separately ask that the slaves of his district be exempted from the draft, letting it fall more heavily on white men. Agreed to.

Mr Webster offered an amendment that the bounty of $100 be paid to the person whom such drafted person owes service on freeing the person. Agreed to.

The debate continued at length, when finally Steven's amendment, as amended by Davis and Webster, was agreed to.

Various propositions were disposed of.

The Committee arose and reported the amendments to the House.

Mr. Schenck offered a substitute which includes the above amendments.

Ordered to be printed together with the bill as amended.

Adjourned.

SENATE.

WASHINGTON, January 12.

On motion of Mr. Lane, of Indiana, the Committee on Judiciary was instructed to inquire into expediency of amending the present law regulating the Supreme Court so as to confine its decisions to matters of law alone.

The Senate then took up the House deficiency bill as reported by the Senate Finance Committee.

HOUSE.

The House is engaged in the consideration of private bills.

The House proceeded to consider the action on the Senate enrollment bill as amended by the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.

Mr. Cox of Ohio suggested that the bill lie over for examination, the amendments being in such a confused state.

Mr. Schenck of Ohio replied that the public exigencies were so pressing we could not give an hour. He then moved the previous question, explained the amendment and substitute, concluding with an appeal to the friends of the country and the passage of the bill, that the army might be recruited and the government maintained.

Mr. Harding of Kentucky desired to address the House.

Mr. Garfield of Ohio proposed that Mr. Harding should, by general consent, be allowed half an hour for that purpose.

Mr Schenck objected to this proposition, and opposition to further proceedings on the bill was manifested.

Mr. Rogers of New Jersey moved to reconsider the vote by which, in the earlier stage of the proceedings, the House had agreed to adjourn till Monday.

This motion was laid on the table by a vote of 100 against 40.

The House proceeded to vote on the amendments to the Senate bill

The House voted on the following amendment:

All able bodied male persons of African descent between the ages of 20 and 45 years, whether citizens or not, residents in the United States, shall be enrolled according to the provisions of the act to which this is supplementary, and form part of the national forces; and when a slave of a loyal citizen shall be drafted and mustered into the service of the United States, his master shall receive a certificate of $100, payable when such person is mustered into service.

In freeing the persons, the Secretary of War shall appoint a commissioner from each of the slave States represented in Congress, charged to award a just compensation, not exceeding $300, to each loyal person to whom the colored volunteer may owe service, and which shall be paid by the United States out of the commutation money upon the master's freeing the slave.

The amendment was agreed to: yeas 84, nays 67.

The House agreed to the committee amendment to the bill.

Mr. Schenck submitted a substitute, which was agreed to, and the original bill as thus amended was then passed: yeas 93, nays 60.

SENATE.

WASHINGTON, February 13.

A resolution of thanks to Gen. Sherman and his officers and men was passed.

On motion of Mr. Wilson, the Senate resolutions equalizing the pay of officers were taken up.

A report of the Secretary of War was read, in answer to a resolution relative to officers' commutation for quarters and fuel. It shows that there are 587 officers here drawing such commutation now: 9 Major Generals, 18 Brigadier Generals, 34 Colonels, 18 Lieutenant Colonels, 24 Majors, 126 Captains, 43 Lieutenants, 26 Surgeons, 12 Assistant Surgeons, and 79 Paymasters.

Mr. Howe presented a memorial from the Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce, representing that within a few months more than $25,000,000 had been raised, and is waiting egress and asking aid in the construction of a wagon road with military protection through Central Minnesota. Referred

On motion of Mr. Wilson the Senate proceeded to the consideration of the bill equalizing the pay of United States soldiers.

Mr Conness withdrew his amendment conferring the benefits on those in the service at the time of the passage of the amendment.

Mr. Sumner offered an amendment providing that in cases where the Secretary of War shall be satisfied that persons of color have been mustered into the service of the United States at the rate of $13 per month, they shall be paid at that rate for previous services.

Mr. Grimes hoped the Senator would withdraw his proposition, and that from this time forward every soldier was to have the same pay. He hoped the bill might be allowed to stand on its merits without making a retrospective.

Mr. Wilson moved to strike out the clause in the bill of the committee giving colored troops the same pay, &c., except bounty, during the whole time they have been in service.

An amendment offered by Mr. Doolittle, deducting $4 per month from their pay for supporting their families and friends, is under discussion.

An amendment offered by Mr. Wilson was adopted, equalizing the pay of colored troops, extending the provisions of the bill so as to give them an additional $3 per month from January 1, 1864.

Mr. Sumner would not withdraw his amendment without explaining that its provision would only apply to a few regiments, and there would be no great draft on the Treasury.

Mr. Fessenden here claimed the floor, and from the Financial Committee reported certain amendments to the House deficiency bill. He asked that they lie over till Monday.

Mr. Johnson, in reply to Mr. Sumner, said if the black men of Maryland were as good as the black men enlisted elsewhere, why make exceptions? If justice were done, according to the views of the Senator from Massachusetts, some $800,000 would be taken from the Treasury; or, as he understood it, about $1,500,000. All should be paid alike. Why did not Massachusetts pay her troops herself?

Mr. Fessenden said he understood the pay had been offered, but the colored troops refused to receive it.

Mr. Wilson explained the circumstances under which the colored troops from Massachusetts had refused to receive their pay. They held the government to the pledges made to them, and wanted the full pay of thirteen dollars per month or ask to be discharged from the service.

Mr. Johnson said then they were colored gentlemen of extraordinary sensibilities.

Mr. Grimes said that from the very outset he and his colleague (Mr. Harlan) were in favor of putting negro troops on an equality with the whites. He was on the record in this respect before the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Sumner)

Mr. Sumner said that in a public speech he had said that while he was in favor of carrying the war into Africa he was more in favor of carrying the African into the war. [Laughter.]

Mr. Grimes was not only in favor of carrying the African into the war, but for paying him $13 per month, and for placing him on a footing with all soldiers. If we were going back to pay these colored troops from Massachusetts, &c., why not pay those from Tennessee? He was informed that there were some thirty regiments of these troops there. He thought there was trouble in the future to be apprehended from making the retrospective character of the bill indiscriminate He sympathized with the gallant and patriotic men of the 54th and 55th Massachusetts colored troops, but he could not keep from believing that it was on account of their action that the colored men of the South Carolina regiments refused to receive their pay.

Mr. Cowan said if we were going back for these colored men, he was also in favor of going back in favor of the white men who were earliest volunteers, and had borne the heaviest burden of the day. He was not in favor of overriding the statute to do justice to these negro troops, until equal and exact justice had been done to the veteran white soldiers. When the country should be restored to its wonted prosperity, we could do justice to all; now it is exceedingly dangerous.

The amendment of Mr. Wilson was then adopted.

The amendment of Mr. Doolittle, providing that from the monthly pay of colored troops mustered into service in insurrectionary districts, the sum of three dollars per month shall be reserved to reimburse the expenses incurred by the United States in finding and clothing the widows, children and parents of deceased colored troops. This was rejected after some debate.

Mr. Sumner proposed a proviso that cases of past services of colored troops, where it shall appear to the satisfaction of the Secretary of War from the actual papers of enlistment, that the troops were enlisted under the act of July, 1861, they shall be allowed the pay promised by that act.

This was rejected, 21 against 16.

Mr Cowan offered a substitute for the bill as amended, that from and after the passage of this act, all soldiers of the United States of the same arm of the service, shall receive like compensation

Mr. Cowan supported the amendment at some length, claiming that the negro must be regarded as a citizen under the Constitution, as he received the protection of the laws.

Mr. Saulsbury said if that was the basis of the Senator (Cowan's) substitute, it was abhorrent to his (Saulsbury's) views, he would not support it. The old fashioned term was negro—now they were colored citizens.

Mr. Howe asked if the negroes were not colored.

Mr. Saulsbury doubted if they were as colored in Delaware as they were in some other places. He would never consent to equality either political or social with the negro.

Mr. Cowan asserted that the negro had a legal status under the Constitution which protected him.

Pending the action on the amendment of Mr. Cowan, the Senate adjourned till Monday.

The Expedition Against Richmond—Gen. Butler's Scheme.

[Correspondence of the New York World.]

WASHINGTON, February 9.

It will be remembered that in the month of December Gen. Butler visited Washington, had a consultation with the President and Secretary of War, returned to Fortress Monroe and immediately thereafter all the rebel prisoners were placed under his control. He had a scheme of great magnitude, as I understand, the initial portion of which was to make a plea of fair dealing with the rebel Commissioner of Exchange, offer a just equivalent for all prisoners held by the rebel authorities, and so settle the grand difficulty which had arisen out of differences between Gen. Meredith, his predecessor, and Mr. Ould. He soon released 502 prisoners, as an earnest of his good intentions, and Mr. Ould responded with an equivolent, but immediately thereafter notified Gen. Butler that, as he was under the ban of outlawry, proclaimed by Jeff. Davis, no further communication could be held with him. Gen. Butler returned a characteristic answer, and stated that unless he was recognized he would discontinue all communication by flag of truce. Since then the flag has not been used for communication between Gen Butler's department and the rebels.

Any one who understands Gen. Butler's character knows that he is very sensitive to affronts. He no sooner received the rebuff from Mr. Ould than he proceeded to arrange means by which he might accomplish his cherished object—the release of she prisoners at Richmond—and possibly make capital for himself by a foray upon the rebel seat of government. As soon as he had conceived this idea and communicated it to the Government, he set about putting it into execution. As the development of his plans would not uncover Washington, nor materially withdraw troops beyond calling distance therefrom in case of a panic, he was permitted to put it in execution.

But Gen. Butler alone was powerless He had but few troops under his command, and could not hope for assistance from the Army of the Potomac in the way of troops. His department included North Carolina, and he drew a few troops from that quarter to Fortress Monroe. He then persuaded the Government that Gen. Gilmore's forces could readily be spared for a few weeks, as—while Admiral Dahlgren was inactive—it would be useless to attempt any military demonstration upon Charleston. The bureau at Washington consented, and a portion of Gen. Gilmore's command was withdrawn from Morris Island and joined to that of Gen. Butler.

When all was ready Gen Butler organized his forces and rang the bell for the curtain to rise with the army of Gen. Meade. The pieces were all arrayed upon the chess-board; the veterans of the Potomac army were ready; Gen. Butler was prepared with his reinforcements and had chosen a portion of Gen McClellan's hard earned territory as the theatre of his advance.

The scheme comprehended no less than a surprise of the Richmond garrison and a release of our prisoners of war held in vile durance there.

Gen. Halleck was distrustful of success; Mr. Stanton was willing to make the dash if only for the glory of the thing; and the President, occupied as he is with his scheme for reconstruction, merely gave an assenting nod, and, thus fortified,

On Saturday morning—the precise time for the movement of the Army of the Potomac—the advance began. Gen. Wistar marched from Yorktown to Bottom's Bridge, and crossed the Chickahominy. He did not surprise the rebel garrison there, nor did he march into Richmond, because the enemy were informed of his movement, it is said by the papers of that city through a Yankee deserter, and were prepared for him. He found the roads obstructed, and failure met him upon the outset.

The return was accomplished in comparative safety, partly because the rebels did not choose to follow, and mainly because there was but little force in Richmond to pursue the retrograde movement. A portion of the enemy, more venturesome than their comrades, made an assault upon Gen. Wistar's rear, but fortunately did no damage, nor did they greatly hasten the return movement.

The Army of the Potomac did not exactly march up the hill and then march down again, but accomplished their part of the reconnoissance. They crossed the Rapidan and met the enemy, with whom they had a sharp conflict. On the return they lost two pontoon bridges, and a portion of the force had to fight pretty sharply to cut their way out from certain grayback surroundings. The loss will not exceed 200. The rebels lost in the encounter and surprise about 500 killed, wounded and prisoners.

Piling on the Taxes.

One Freeman Clark, a Republican member of Congress, has offered a resolution to the effect that the Committee of Ways and Means are hereby instructed to inquire into the expediency of increasing the duties on foreign imports, upon articles of luxury of a class, as far as practicable, not manufactured or produced in this country, so as in their opinion to produce a revenue of $120,000,000 per annum; also, into the expediency of increasing the internal revenue tax upon articles of luxury, and upon such articles of domestic manufacture as come into competition with foreign articles upon which the import duties are not advanced, so as in the opinion of the Committee to produce a revenue of $230,000,000.

The present custom duties amount to about $60,000,000. This it is proposed to double. The internal revenue tax is about $65,000,000 a year. This it is proposed to increase nearly four-fold. The people are now taxed by the General Government $125,000,000 a year, but if this proposition carries it will be increased to $350,000,000 a year! In other words, the people of the Northern States are to pay a tax of $17 50 for every person, or about $100 a year for an average family! At the same time it is proposed to double the State tax in Ohio, increasing it from ten to twenty millions of dollars. This will add a tax of $50 year more to a family, making the Government taxes upon each family, rich and poor, $150 a year. God help the poor under such a system of taxation.—[Cincinnati Enquirer.