THE CENTENNIAL SEASON.

North Carolina to the Front with the Story of Mecklenburg.

AN IMMORTAL TWENTIETH OF MAY.

"No Power Other than God and the General Congress."

SKETCH OF AN ANCIENT CAPTAIN JACK.

What the Tar Heels Did in the Days that Tried Men's Souls.

CHARLOTTE, Mecklenburg County, N. C., April 19, 1875.

All honor to our American centennials and centenarians. The twenty centuries of which Napoleon reminded his infantry squares, as they met the shock of Mameluke battle, beheld them from the Pyramids, were as blank and meaningless as the stolid stone itself whereupon said centuries were supposed to perch. But an American century is of some account. It has an import, in its relations to human progress, which no similar period, in either the primeval foretime or the later ages of the Eastern Hemisphere can match. Our centenniums are few, but significant. There are barely four of them since Columbus. Our whole history, since the Anglo-Saxon came to the New World to stay, covers but little more than two and a half of them. If Tennyson wrote well and wisely when he said:—

Better a day of England than a cycle of Cathay,

how much more truly might the comparison be applied in favor of the United States. A hundred years, whether of our national or individual life, constitutes an historic zon, every twelvemonth and almost every hour of which is an upward step in the giant's stairway of the human race.

To-day the thoughtful patriotism of the country turns to the memory of the heroes of Lexington and Concord. Hardly will the echoes of the church bells and cannon which are now giving voice to the glad applause of their descendants have died away ere the posterity of the men of Mecklenburg will answer with a similar commemoration of the part taken by their own ancestors in inaugurating the great struggle which made us a nation. It is the first step that costs. When Pitcairn popped his pistol a hundred years ago to-day, he showed more pluck than all the artillerists of the whole Continental army in the seven years' war which followed. Courage no less high and admirable characterized the conduct of the heroic twenty-six who, at Charlotte, N. C., one month and one day later, put their pens to the first American Declaration of Independence. It is well that we render reverent honors to the sublime shades of both the Massachusetts and the North Carolina builders of our freedom. They were alike fit representatives of that dominant race which no other race shall ever supplant or succeed, and to the sound of whose steadily advancing footsteps the deep echoes of eternity shall never cease to respond.

Josiah Martin was the last of the royal Governors of North Carolina. Shortly after his arbitrary dissolution of the Assembly on the 8th of April, 1775, he became a fugitive, and the government of the province was thereafter entirely administered by the patriots. The highest actual power in North Carolina had, in fact, been exercised by the people from the 25th of August, 1774, the date of the first Provincial Congress, which was held at Newbern. The purpose of this assemblage was, however, mainly one of protest and resistance. The 20th of May, 1775, marked the epoch for North Carolina and all her sister colonies of a formal and organized renunciation of allegiance to Great Britain. For many months previous a republican sentiment had been growing and gathering strength, and not a few of the wiser and bolder spirits had become convinced that democratic principles were, for them at least, the only foundation of sound and prosperous government. Several detached meetings were held during the spring of 1775, in which the leading characters of Mecklenburg resolved, among other things, "that the cause of Boston was the cause of all; that their destinies were indissolubly connected with those of their Eastern fellow citizens, and that they must either submit to all the impositions which an unprincipled, and to them an unrepresented, Parliament might impose, or support their brethren who were doomed to sustain the first shock of that power, which, if successful then, could ultimately overwhelm all in the common calamity." In one of these patriotic conferences Colonel Thomas Polk, an ancestor of President James K. Polk, was requested to issue an order to each captain's company in the county of Mecklenburg (then including the present county of Cabarrus), directing each militia company to elect two persons and delegate to them ample power "to devise ways and means to aid and assist their suffering brethren in Boston, and also generally to adopt measures to extricate themselves from the impending storm, and to secure unimpaired their inalienable rights, privileges and liberties from the grasp of British tyranny."

Agreeably to Colonel Polk's order, this delegation, invested with plenary powers, met in Charlotte, the capital of Mecklenburg county, on May 19, 1775, when and where official news by courier arrived of the battle of Lexington on the same day of the preceding month. Every delegate felt that an awful and solemn crisis had at length come, that the supreme hour of American destiny was now at hand, and that the long impending Revolution was not only born but baptized in blood. Abraham Alexander was chosen chairman and John McKnitt Alexander clerk. After a free and full deliberation upon the various objects for which the delegation had been convened the subjoined resolutions were offered, and, after thorough discussion of every paragraph, they were all passed, sanctioned and decreed unanimously about two o'clock A. M. May 20:—

Resolved, That whosoever, directly or indirectly, abets, or in any way, form or manner countenances the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great Britain, is an enemy to this country—to America—and to the inherent and inalienable rights of man.

Resolved, That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract or association with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and innumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

Resolved, That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing association, under the control of no power other than that of our God and the general government of the Congress; to the maintenance of which independence we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes and our most sacred honor.

Resolved, That as we now acknowledge the existence and control of no law or legal office, civil or military, within this county, we do hereby ordain and adopt as a rule of life all, each and every of our former laws—wherein, nevertheless, the crown of Great Britain never can be considered as holding rights, privileges, immunities or authority therein.

Resolved, That all, each and every military officer in this county is hereby reinstated in his former command and authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, namely, a justice of the peace, in the character of a committee man, to issue process, hear and determine all matters of controversy according to said adopted laws, and to preserve peace, union and harmony in said county; and to use every exertion to spread the love of country and fire of freedom throughout America until a more general and organized government be established in this province.

Prior to the adjournment of the delegation a select committee was appointed to draw up a more full and definite statement of grievances, and a more formal declaration of independence. This latter is doubtless the paper of May 31, 1775, which some modern quibblers at the authenticity of the Mecklenburg declaration have consigned a separate and conflicting fabrication, and therefore have rejected both.

The above five resolutions are transcribed from the Revised Code of North Carolina, enacted by the General Assembly in 1854. Wheeler's "History of North Carolina," published in 1851, omits the second resolution, without remark, but gives the other four in the same words with the version of the Revised Code. There is a discrepancy also as to the exact time of the adoption of the resolutions. The carefully written sketch of the Mecklenburg Convention, prepared by Hon. B. F. Morse and Judge Asa Biggs, in 1854, states, in two places, "that the resolves were adopted at two o'clock A. M., May 20, at the conclusion of a session commencing the day before and continuing without recess into the night." Another account alleges that "the convention reassembled at noon on the 20th, when the resolutions were read amid an anxious throng of auditors and unanimously passed, and then read aloud from the Court House steps to the concourse of people." This discrepancy, however much it has been harped upon by the doubters of the genuineness of the whole story, seems to me more apparent than real. If we suppose that the adoption at noon on the 20th was merely a public ratification, in the presence of the masses, of the action taken ten hours before in the night session, the seeming inconsistency disappears entirely. And if we apply Bishop Butler's rule of evidence, indorsed by Greenleaf, in treating of the contradictions of the evangelists, this very difference of detail as to time is a proof of intrinsic and essential truthfulness, as tending to show the absence of preconcert in a fabrication. But I will return to this matter of authenticity further on, and give the Thomases a fair show.

A copy of these immortal resolutions was forwarded by hand of Captain James Jack to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. Captain Jack appears to have been an enthusiastic gentleman, with a good deal of the propagandist in him. He magnified his mission by reading the resolutions to every crowd he could gather along the entire route of his long and otherwise tedious journey. They were read in open court at Salisbury as he passed through that town, amid the plaudits of judges, lawyers and citizens. Their sentiments were so congenial to the popular taste and temper that they everywhere found willing listeners, and by this frequent and persevering reading their spirit and language became universally diffused. When the Captain got to Philadelphia the members of the Congress, while individually approving the resolves, deemed it premature to take action upon them as a body, and they (the resolves) went into a pigeon-hole. Thomas Jefferson, however, seems to have appropriated a portion of their phraseology in the Declaration of July 4, 1776.

As I have already intimated, the authenticity of the Mecklenburg resolutions is seriously controverted, and that, too, by North Carolina's native sons. Daniel R. Goodloe is one of the latest and most elaborate of these adverse critics; but I have not at hand his ingenious contribution to the vexed debate. A letter of Dr. Charles Phillips of Davidson College, North Carolina, hitherto unpublished, supplies me with some of the points relied on by the iconoclastic party. Dr. Phillips, in referring to the historical papers of ex-Governor Swain, of North Carolina, now deceased, so far as they have a bearing upon the Mecklenburg controversy, alleges that an examination of them, even if permitted by his executors and relatives, would not be worth the pains, as all that they contain worthy of publication is already in print. No one of the documents antedates the year 1800—a date entirely too recent for a contemporaneous authority. The attention of the public was called to the Mecklenburg documents for the first time in 1819. The truth and nothing but the truth was told about them then, but, unfortunately, not the whole truth. Had the certificate of John McKnitt Alexander, the alleged secretary of the Charlotte Convention, which Dr. Phillips published for the first time in the *North Carolina University Magazine* for May, 1856, been published along with the rest of the paper to which it was attached, when the Mecklenburg resolves, rewritten by Mr. Alexander from recollection after the destruction of the original by the burning of his house, were originally put in type in 1819, the present controversy could never have begun. In the publication, however, of this transcript from memory, Mr. Alexander's certificate to that effect was, purposely or inadvertently, it matters not, omitted by his son. Since 1847, when Dr. Johnson, in Charleston, S. C., and George Bancroft, in London, discovered the paper of May 31, 1775, Governor Swain entertained no faith in the paper ascribed to May 20th, 1775, holding it to be morally impossible that the paper of the 31st ever followed that of the 20th. Dr. Phillips also calls attention to the fact that Mr. Bancroft, who was in close correspondence with Governor Swain, omits all notice of the paper of May 20, and that Mr. Lossing, who he presumes saw the original in Governor Swain's hands, has merely a note about it. The paper of May 31, 1775,* is to be found in Timothy's *Carolina Gazette* for June 13, 1775, preserved in the city library, Charleston, S. C. Again, the records of the Court in Charlotte, N. C., for 1775, are still in good preservation. If the paper of May, 1775, produced any impression on the public some trace of it ought to appear in those records. But Dr. Phillips understands that these books contain no reference to either paper. The Doctor, however, suggests that it may have been that which the youthful heads and warm hearts of 1775 did actually declare independence, and were for fighting it out on that line thenceforward to a victorious consummation. The cool-headed graybeards were inclined to "watch and wait." Another source of information which Dr. Phillips conceives to be entirely unexplored, is the collection of documents made by Andrew Stevenson while American Minister in London, and now in the possession of his son, lately a member of Congress from Kentucky. It is agreed by both parties to the controversy that the papers of May, 1775, whatever they were, were forwarded by the royal Governor, Josiah Martin, to his master in London in hot haste. There is also evidence that whatever Governor Martin sent was in the Colonial Office in London until Mr. Stevenson's time, and it is said there is a record that he borrowed these documents from that office. These papers may be among Mr. Stevenson's collection, which, Dr. Phillips learns, have never been opened since their arrival in this country. Dr. Phillips says that the "originals" which he used in 1856 were a mutilated sheet which contained two or three of the resolutions of May 20, 1775, a page preserved from entire destruction by the executor of William W. R. Davie, and a list of the persons said to be present at the convention of May 20. The eldest of these papers bore as its date of composition "September, 1800" and was on its face, an attempt to recall what had been burned in April, 1800. This fact was suppressed, and when the men who were in Charlotte in May, 1775, were told that the day was the 20th, and that this was the paper then read, they of course said they heard it read then and there. The Doctor concludes with the remark that it is almost high treason up his way to doubt the genuineness of the declaration of May 20, 1775. As I propose to thoroughly investigate this question I hasten therefore to state that, notwithstanding all that Dr. Phillips and his coadjutors say to the contrary, I am a steadfast believer in the authentic character of the Mecklenburg resolves.

It strikes me that this whole debate is one mainly about verbiage. While it is entirely possible that John McKnitt Alexander did not succeed in reproducing, *in hoc verba*, line for line and word for word, the exact phraseology of the resolves of May 20, 1775; it is still equally possible that he did. There are very few men of ordinarily retentive memory who could not readily learn the whole thing by heart. The custodian of such a document, whose wisdom had been vindicated by the successful issue of the Revolution, must have felt a glad pride in its possession and have valued it as a most precious treasure. What is more likely than that he read and reread it again and again until it became indelibly imprinted in his mind? Is it incredible that he should have been able to recall, even with literal exactitude, in September, 1800, what was almost daily before his eyes up to the preceding April, when it was burned? Is it not, rather, incredible that he should have been unable to recall the document, at least substantially? And is it not, in fact, absurd to conceive that there could have been any difficulty in identifying the date, only twenty-five years afterward, of a transaction so memorable, so widely noised abroad and in which there were so many actors?

The proceedings of the Mecklenburg meeting were at once published in the Cape Fear *Mercury*, and this attracted the attention of the royal Governors of both North Carolina and Georgia. Governor Wright, of the latter province, wrote as follows to the Earl of Dartmouth, then Secretary of State. This letter is authentic, having been procured by George Bancroft from the State Paper Office in London:—

SAVANNAH, in Georgia, the 23th June, 1775.

By the enclosed paper Your Lordship will see the extraordinary resolves by the people in Charlottetown, in Mecklenburg county, and I should not be surprised if the same should be done everywhere else. I have the honor to be, with perfect esteem, my lord, Your Lordship's most obliged and obedient servant,

To Earl of Dartmouth, &c., &c. JAMES WRIGHT.

The following is an extract from a mournful letter by Governor Martin to the Secretary of State, dated at Fort Johnson, North Carolina, 30th June, 1775. The original can be found, or ought to be, unless somebody has "borrowed" it, in the State Paper Office, London (America and West Indies, vol. 204):—

The resolves of the Committee of Mecklenburg, which Your Lordship will find in the enclosed newspaper, surpass all the horrid and treasonable publications that the inflammatory spirits of the Continent have yet produced. * * * A copy of these resolves was sent off, I am informed, by express to the Congress at Philadelphia as soon as they were passed in the committee.

Away with that malign iconoclasm which would tear down the statues of our departed great ones! May our American Pantheon long be sacred from the profane approach of the disbelievers. Let the superb figures of our statesmen, sages and soldiers remain forever in the historic niches where the pious regard of their posterity has placed them. Is there no worth in our traditions? Shall we be told that our legends are but fables, and our heroes only myths? Shame upon the hypocrites who would play the Huxley and Tyndall with the people's patriotic faith! We need no Niebuhr with his chilling disenchantments. If the seven kings of Rome were but creations of the fancy, leave us our Patrick Henry and our Washington. Even an apocrypha is better than no sacred books at all. No healthy heart and brain can sympathize with that fell spirit of doubt which seeks not only to demolish the altars of religion, but to rob the annals of our race of those events and personages which constitute its truest greatness. Rather do we need, in this too sordid and utilitarian age of ours, to recur to those illustrious examples of self-denying patriotism which embellish our early history and to find in them the impulses of a new love of country and the inspirations of a lasting epoch of fraternity.

Gazetteer and Weekly Advertiser, the *Massachusetts Spy* and the *Essex* (Salem) *Gazette* as they appeared a hundred years ago. Also a fac-simile account of the battles aforesaid, published at the time, in four very solid columns, headed with forty coffins, on each one of which is the name of him who fell in these first struggles for American liberty. They revive the past with fresh interest and renew events which, though 100 years old, should forever remain undimmed upon the hearts of our people for all generations. They impress us with the vastness of the achievement as well as with the vigilance with which we should ever watch over the liberties we enjoy.—*Reading (Pa.) Times.*

The NEW YORK HERALD is doing splendid work for the Centennial. Its columns contain more about the coming exhibition in one issue than can be found in all of the Philadelphia newspapers combined in a week. The HERALD is "writing it up" with great effectiveness and ability.—*Salem (N. J.) Standard.*

The NEW YORK HERALD gives a fac-simile of the Revolution—newspapers containing the news in relation to the fights at Lexington and Concord.—*Oberlin News.*

The HERALD prints a fac-simile of a curious broadsheet of the times, issued as an extra sheet by the Salem *Gazette*, grimly embellished with a row of coffins at its head, forty in number, inscribed severally with the names of the patriots who were slain on the 19th of April, and bearing underneath this caption in great type:—"The Bloody Butchery by the British, or the Runaway Fight of the Regulars."—*Buffalo Express.*

The NEW YORK HERALD of Monday, 19th inst., prints fac-simile pages of the *New York Gazetteer* of May 25, 1775, of the *Massachusetts Spy* of May 3, 1775, and of the *Essex Gazette* of April 25, 1775, containing news of the battles of Concord and Lexington. It is already evident that during the next year the reading public will have its recollection of early historical reading refreshed in regard to those chapters reciting the opening of the Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is much to be regretted that we have not a President like Horace Greeley, who could deliver an address at each centennial meeting that would do honor to the occasion and reflect credit upon the country. The present incumbent is only qualified to serve in an ornamental capacity, and cannot be regarded as a striking success even at that. The committee might about as well substitute one of the wooden Indians usually found in front of tobacco stores, with a bunch of cigars in hand. The remarkable oratorical flights of General Grant at Portland, Newark and Philadelphia discourage the hope that he will be equal to the occasion on the Fourth of July, 1876. But he will have the satisfaction of knowing that since 1775 no public official has originated as big a salary grab as himself; nor have any of the descendants of the noble men of 1776 made as much money at Washington.—*Catskill Recorder.*

THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.

PERSONNEL OF THE BELGIAN COMMISSION—PROPOSALS TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS.

PHILADELPHIA, April 23, 1875.

The officers of the Centennial Commission from Belgium have just been appointed. They are as follows:—President, Baron Gustave de Woelmont, Senator; Vice Presidents, Alexander Robert, historical painter and member of the Academy of Fine Arts, Literature and Sciences of Belgium, and Charles De Smet de Smet, manufacturer. President of the Circle of Industry and Commerce; Secretary, J. Clerfeyt, Chief of the Bureau of the Minister of the Interior.

CIRCULAR TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS.

The Centennial Commission has issued a circular to the photographers of the country inviting proposals for the privilege of taking and selling photographs within the Exhibition of 1876. Proposals will be received for the privilege of taking general views of the Exhibition grounds and of the interior and exterior of the buildings, with the right to sell the photographs at such places as may be chosen by the Commission. The privilege will include the right to take portraits within the limits of the grounds. The privilege of taking photographs of subjects on exhibition will be permitted only on the consent of the exhibitor, approved by the Director General of the commission. All buildings (the plans and location of which must be approved by the Director General), furniture and apparatus necessary for taking photographs shall be supplied at the cost of the contractors. Proposals will state the terms and conditions for

First—The exclusive privilege for taking general views and portraits.

Second—The privilege for taking general views and portraits if not granted to more than three parties.

Third—For general views only.

(*a*)—Exclusive privilege.

(*b*)—If granted to not more than three parties.

Fourth—For portraits only.

(*a*)—Exclusive privilege.

(*b*)—If granted to not more than three parties.

In each case the proposal will include the right to sell the photographs taken.

Sixth—The party or parties to whom the privilege is granted will be required to observe the rules and regulations established from time to time for the government of the Exhibition.

Seventh—The Centennial Board of Finance expressly reserves the right to reject any or all propositions that may be made in answer to this circular.

Eighth—Proposal should be indorsed "Proposals for taking and selling Photographs."

JOHN WELSH,
President Centennial Board of Finance.
A. T. GOSHORN, Director General.

THE "REVOLUTIONARY" HERALD.

An unparalleled achievement in journalism is that of the NEW YORK HERALD in issuing its "Revolutionary Extra."—*Boston Globe.*

The enterprise of the HERALD is magnificent. As appropriate to the day of the Concord and Lexington Centennial celebrations it reproduces in fac-simile of type, heading, head lines, illustration and everything the *Essex Gazette*, the *Massachusetts Spy*, the New York *Gazetteer* and an extra issue of the Salem *Gazette*, containing original reports of the first battles with the British, as published immediately after their occurrence. This is not merely sensational enterprise; it is intelligent and liberal journalism, which reflects the highest credit on the HERALD.—*Petersburg (Va.) Index.*

The NEW YORK HERALD issued a double sheet on Monday containing fac-similes of the *Massachusetts Spy*, May 3, 1775; *Essex Gazette*, April 25, 1775, and *Rivington's New York Gazetteer* of May, 1775, with accounts of "late hostilities in the province of Massachusetts Bay." The testimony of a number of those engaged in the fight on the American side is given in the *Gazetteer*.—*Binghamton Republican.*

A special bit of journalistic enterprise deserves recognition, and we therefore mention the fact that the NEW YORK HERALD issued a most interesting and remarkable paper on Monday in honor of the Concord-Lexington Centennial. It issued a double sheet, with fac-similes of the *Massachusetts Spy* of May 3, 1775; *Essex Gazette*, April 25, 1775, and *Rivington's New York Gazetteer* of May, 1775, containing accounts of the exciting events in Massachusetts that fairly signalized the opening of the Revolution.—*Buffalo Express.*

The NEW YORK HERALD of Monday was truly a Centennial number. It contained fac-similes of parts of several newspapers published in 1775, giving vivid accounts of the affairs at Lexington and Concord. The HERALD also contained much other interesting matter on the subject, the issue being a double number.—*Gold (N. Y.) Independent.*

The NEW YORK HERALD well illustrates its own enterprise, and the vast strides made in American journalism during a hundred years, by publishing fac-similes of the *Massachusetts Spy* of May 3, 1775, the *Essex Gazette* of April 25 and *Rivington's New York Gazetteer* of May 25, 1775. They all contain intelligence of the "Concord fight," respectively six, thirteen and thirty-six days old. Rivington's paper also contains news from Philadelphia of May 13, only twelve days old—remarkably fresh news and commendable enterprise for those days. Vermont then had no newspaper, but one hundred years thereafter the *Rutland Daily Globe* had a representative present at the Centennial celebration of that "fight," and our columns, the next morning, contained a report thereof. We mark progress by contrasts.—*Rutland (Vt.) Globe.*

No fitter thing has been done in connection with the commemorating of the Centennial anniversary of Lexington and Concord than the reproduction in fac-simile by the NEW YORK HERALD of the stirring news of a hundred years ago, as it appeared first printed in the primitive newspapers of that day. The HERALD gives us a no doubt faithful portrait of the blurred and dingy title page of the *Massachusetts Spy or American Oracle of Liberty*, bearing date Wednesday, May 3, 1775; another of the *Essex Gazette*, printed at Salem, on Tuesday, April 25, 1775; still another of *Rivington's New York Gazetteer, Connecticut, Hudson's River, New Jersey and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, "printed at his open and uninfluenced press, fronting "Hanover square," on Thursday, May 25, 1775; and finally it produces in like manner a curious broadsheet of the times, issued as an extra sheet by the Salem *Gazette*, grimly embellished with a row of coffins at its head, forty in number, inscribed severally with the names of the patriots who were slain on the 19th of April, and bearing underneath this caption in great type, "A Bloody Butchery by the British, or the Runaway Fight of the Regulars." The *Massachusetts Spy* survives to this day in the Worcester *Spy*, which claims the proud distinction of being the oldest existing newspaper in the United States. Its publisher transferred himself from Boston to Worcester on the very day of the British expedition to Concord—"the memorable 19th of April," as he prophetically describes it in his notice to the public, "which will be remembered in future as the anniversary of the battle of Lexington." The *Spy* gives quite a lengthy account of the day's fighting and of the events preceding and following it, all embraced in a single article. These old newspapers are like voices from the dead and carry us back in a wonderfully real way into the midst of the excitements of a hundred years ago, when our great-grandfathers were nerving themselves for a struggle of unknown duration with the armies of King George.—*Buffalo Courier.*

We had almost neglected to note another of the NEW YORK HERALD'S great feats in its issue of Monday last, but we are so accustomed to astonishing things from that quarter that it is no wonder we almost failed to say something about its enterprise on that day. In connection with a graphic account of the celebration of the battles of Lexington and Concord, the HERALD reproduced a fac-simile of *Rivington's New York*

*Nota.—1775 is the correct date. See "Wheeler's History," vol. ii., page 355, in which the resolves of May 31, 1775, are copied from the *South Carolina Gazette*.

LOUISIANA.

Charles Nordhoff on the Condition of Affairs in the Pelican State.

WORKINGS OF THE WHEELER COMPROMISE.

The Color Line the Result of Radical Corruption.

CONSERVATIVES VS. DEMOCRATS.

The Cohesive Power of Opposition to Thieves.

HATRED OF RADICAL OFFICIALS.

Cessation of Federal Interference the Only Hope of the State.

NEW ORLEANS, April 19, 1875.

The long talked of "compromise" or adjustment, determined on by the Congressional committee, was completed on Saturday by the instalment of a conservative in place of a republican State Senator. Its terms did not entirely please the leaders of either party. The conservative leaders conceived themselves to be getting less political strength than the election of 1874 actually gave them, and the radical leaders, or at least some of them, declare that it is for them a surrender of political power in the State. Meantime, however, a wing of the conservatives very strongly favored the compromise, and were able to bring most of their side into it; while a ring of the radicals, among whose leaders were Governor Kellogg and ex-Congressman Sheldon, accepted the compromise, and General Sheridan's advice silenced Pinchback, Senator West and other radical opponents who were at first determined to defeat the measures of peace. Thus matters stood on Thursday, when the House formally accepted the adjustment and unseated the radical members whom the Committee of Congress declared to have been wrongly seated by the Returning Board. But when the resolution of acceptance was proposed a number of conservative members voted "No," among them Mr. Wiltz, whom some of the conservatives desired to make Speaker. This attitude of Wiltz encouraged those in his own party who did not want him to be Speaker, and on Friday these succeeded, with the help of a considerable radical vote, in defeating Wiltz and electing Estillete as Speaker.

This was the really important and decisive result of the adjustment, for it declared which of the two branches of the conservative party should control its organization.

THE COLOR LINE.

The State of Louisiana had, according to the census in 1870, 87,076 whites and 86,913 black males over twenty-one years of age. It has since been proved by undeniable evidence that the census understated considerably the number of whites. It was taken in the summer, when many white people always leave the State, and the census takers did not thoroughly record that part of the white population which is scattered over the pine hills back of the bottom lands, on which the greater part of the people are gathered. I suppose the truth to be that Louisiana has to-day at least 10,000 more white than black voters. The conservatives claim at least 15,000 more.

Now, in the election of 1874 parties were divided, unhappily, almost entirely on the color line. Mr. Packard, who unites in his person the two important, and, I should think, incongruous offices of United States Marshal and Chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, told me some days ago that only 5,000 whites voted the republican ticket and that the same number of blacks voted with the conservatives. It is, I think, a fair statement that, with the exception of the office-holders, State and federal, and their relations, there were no white republicans in the State in 1874, or at the furthest, but an inappreciable number. The reason for this condition of things I shall explain to you in detail in other letters. It must suffice now to tell you generally that the inefficiency and corruption of the State government in all its parts—leaving lawlessness unpunished, countenancing the most monstrous and shameful frauds, and continued thus for six disgraceful years, at last united all the whites in one party, whose aim was simply and only to oust the thieves. Opposed to them in 1874 stood those rulers with almost, but not quite, the whole negro population at their backs.

HOW THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY IS COMPOSED.

The situation was one not different in kind from that in New York city in 1871. The rank and file of the party which calls itself conservative consists in part of democrats who are naturally opposed to republican rule, but in part, also, of old whigs, Know Nothings, and the mass of citizens not interested in politics. These entered the conservative party only to save the State from further misgovernment and spoliation. It was and is, therefore, an "honest men's" party, and was called "conservative," and the name democrat dropped, because there are in Louisiana a large number of good citizens who are so strongly opposed to the democratic party that they will not actively, if at all, work with men bearing that name. Many of its most substantial citizens were opposed to secession, and to-day think that act was "blundering democratic statesmanship," as one said to me the other day. Here a Northern man may very commonly hear men who have been active and foremost in the conservative movement declare that "as soon as we have driven off the radical thieves and robbers who have so long spoiled us we shall quickly show these democrats that they cannot hold the State. There is not a shadow of doubt that whenever federal interference in the State definitely ceases and honest men have been put into power the "conservative" party—the white man's party—will incontinently split into two nearly equal halves, and each will try, with the help of the negroes, to beat the other. But it is tolerably certain that until this is accomplished the white men will stick together, for they cannot afford to do otherwise.

THE MEANING OF THE WILTZ STRUGGLE.

The republican politicians stigmatize one wing of the conservatives as "last ditchers," and it was these who desired Wiltz to be Speaker, and thus the head of the party. Now, they are not "last ditchers," or impracticable men at all, but they are democrats, and wish, as is but natural for them, to make the State democratic. To this end they would like to keep the present conservative party together permanently and use its strength for the democratic party. I cannot see anything wrong about this. They cannot do it, but it is their natural course to attempt it. But the other wing of the conservatives, which, in the struggle over the Speakership, was, curiously enough, led by Leonard—that editor of the Shreveport *Times*, whose extreme utterances last year were so widely quoted as proving the dangerous condition of Louisiana—this other wing determined to beat Wiltz, and in doing so had the sympathy, I think I may safely say, of the greater part of the business community of New Orleans. Leonard, who is a bold politician, did not hesitate to accept the help of the Kellogg wing of the republicans, and the Wiltz men, on their part, tried to secure the help of Pinchback. On Friday morning it was understood that Kellogg, Sheldon, General Steele and the better class of the republicans had given assurances to the Estillete men that they would co-operate for thorough reforms with that wing of the conservatives, while Pinchback, it was said, was ready to throw a considerable colored republican vote (23 was the precise number given) for Wiltz; and with this help it was then believed Wiltz would be chosen. At the last moment, however, Pinchback abandoned Wiltz, and thus he received but 37 votes, in a House of 108 members, in which his own party had 58 men. As it is very common to charge corruption where party lines are thus broken, I will add my belief, founded upon pretty intimate knowledge of the negotiations on both sides, that there was nothing of the kind here. Mr. Wiltz is a person of a high sense of honor, and his adherents made no promise for him or themselves to Pinchback, except that Wiltz, if elected Speaker, would, in appointing officers of the House, give a fair share of the offices to colored men. Pinchback probably deserted Wiltz at the instance of General Sheridan, who is known to have conversed with him on Friday morning. On the other side, Estillete's adherents insisted only on a solemn engagement from Kellogg that he would aid them in all reform measures.

The disappointment of the Wiltz men is very great, and that of the corrupt republicans is even greater, and with reason; for, unless Governor Kellogg should be weak and wicked enough to falsify his pledges and fling himself once more into the hands of the corrupt part of his party—which means, I do not hesitate to say, the very great majority of its white and black leaders—these are left out in the cold. Those republican leaders, meantime, who sincerely desire honest government—and they are not very numerous—hope that they have split the white man's party in the State, and that the result of the Speaker's election will be a final breaking down of the color line. If they can achieve this they will, of course, have done the people of Louisiana an inestimable benefit; for good government is not possible until this is accomplished. But even if they fail in this movement it is sure to be done, if only the federal government will stop its interference in the internal politics of the State and leave the people to manage their own affairs.

THE WEAK POINT IN THE SITUATION.

The weak point in the situation, so far as the reform republicans are concerned, is that they have to deal with two men, both of whom are weak and both have corrupt allies. Estillete, the Speaker, is too deaf to carry on business in the House, has little strength of character or personal presence, and is said to have for friends one or two men known as corrupt. Governor Kellogg is generally acknowledged, even by his bitterest opponents, to be a man of amiable intentions, but he is constitutionally a trimmer. He seems to me almost incapable of a direct course, and for such a movement as he now heads he lacks courage and determination. If Marshal Packard were Governor he would succeed, but Packard's interest is not that Kellogg shall succeed, for he is Kellogg's rival for the United States Senate.

Meantime, so sore are the white people of the State over the too long continued misgovernment, that they view every movement and every man with suspicion; and only the most unswerving, bold and determined course, the most vigorous punishment of corrupt men, could satisfy the State sufficiently to gain the new combination prolonged life. You cannot travel far in Louisiana without discovering that the politicians who, in the name of the republican party, rule it, and have done so for the last seven years, in all the departments of its government, State and local, are venemently and unanimously detested by the white people. I have been amazed to see how all white men, and many blacks, to my own knowledge—whether rich or poor; whether merchants, mechanics or professional men; whether Americans, French, Irish, German or Italian by birth; absolutely all except the office-holders and their relatives—unite in this feeling of detestation of their rulers. It expresses itself so vividly at the polls that as I noticed before, only 5,000 whites out of over 90,000 supported the republican ticket at the last election, and it is a fact that most of these 5,000 are office-holders; the greater part are strangers in the State, and very many of them may justly be called adventurers. It is so universal a sentiment that I have found scarcely a colored man, out of office, who did not complain to me that the republican whites are as faithless to their duty as they believe the other side would be.

Now, this small band of white men have for more than six years monopolized all political power and preferment in the State. They have laid, collected and spent (or rather misspent or stolen) all the taxes, local as well as State; they have not only made all the laws, but they have arbitrarily changed them, and have miserably failed to enforce any which were for the people's good; they have openly and scandalously corrupted the colored men whom they have brought into political life; they have used unjust laws to perpetuate and extend their own power, and they have practised all the basest arts of ballot-stuffing, false registration and repeating at election after election. In the last election it was proved before a committee of Congress that the republican leaders had, in the city of New Orleans alone, made not less than 5,200 false registrations. A few days ago I went down the river to attend court, in order to see the working of a negro jury. The court had to adjourn for lack of a jury, and no panel had been drawn, because, the names being taken from the registration lists of the parish, thirty-six out of forty-eight were found to be fictitious—and this in a country parish. The republican Returning Board was condemned as a transparent fraud by two Congressional committees, and has, so far as I know, no defender in Louisiana or in the country, except the President, who has just given a federal office in New Orleans to Mr. Wells, who was chief of the Board. I know of one case in the last election where, the conservative ticket being elected, the records of the election were carried by the Supervisor from the parish to New Orleans and concealed in a house of prostitution, one of whose inmates was sent to drive a bargain with the conservatives for their return. So common is corruption and so unblushing still that the Grand Jury of New Orleans, only the other day, began an investigation to discover who had altered, after its passage, an important appropriation bill, passed by the Hahn (republican) Legislature, and the discovery of so gross and daring a fraud scarcely excited attention in New Orleans, where I have myself seen colored members of the Legislature—men who were slaves but ten years ago and began life with nothing at that time—now driving magnificent horses, seated in stylish equipages and wearing diamond pins.

Whatever we in the North may think of the white people of the South, we cannot forget the fact that Louisiana has a long established and wealthy community, with large and complicated business and social interests, and a great accumulated capital, invested not merely in lands, but also in machinery and important public works. New Orleans is one of the largest commercial ports in the United States; it has a numerous body of intelligent and wealthy merchants, the equal of any of their class in New York, Philadelphia or Boston. The sugar planters of Louisiana are in fact manufacturers; they have large sums invested in machinery, and their business requires much technical skill, and they are, as a class, the equals in intelligence and character of Northern manufacturers. Now, then, all these men, the cream of the population, with scarcely an exception, are united in opposition to the present rulers of Louisiana, whom they not only detest, but dread. It is not only the cotton planter of the remote districts, therefore, but the country traders, lawyers and politicians who oppose the republican rule. How, in spite of so united an opposition, a handful of politicians, most of them strangers in the State, have maintained themselves in power I will try to explain in another letter. CHARLES NORDHOFF.

THE AMERICAN CARDINAL.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE GRAND CEREMONIES NEXT TUESDAY—WHAT IS BEING DONE AT ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL.

The special preparations for the church festivities to occur on next Tuesday morning in St. Patrick's Cathedral are now going on in the Cathedral and among the people. In the Cathedral the carpenter and the painter are already at work. They are arranging new places in the choir for singers and for some inactive spectators of the ceremonies, and in the galleries for the accommodation of more people than can now be crowded into them. In fact, every endeavor will be made, short of breaking through its walls, to increase

THE CAPACITY OF THE OLD CHURCH.

It is desired to satisfy, so far as possible, the widespread wish to behold the ceremonies of Tuesday morning. Not only Catholics but thousands of Protestants desire to be present at the ceremonies, and it seems more than likely that if only the latter were admitted to witness the investiture of Cardinal McCloskey with the insignia of his new dignity the Cathedral would be crowded to its doors. Still, very few Protestants, if any, will be present, for the good reason that every ticket for admission to the Cathedral on Tuesday was bespoken by Catholics weeks ago. Indeed the edifice will not hold one-twentieth of the Catholics who desire to witness the ceremonies. Father Kearney, who is to act as the Master of Ceremonies on Tuesday, is pestered continually by applicants for tickets. It would be a relief to Father Kearney if people would now understand that about all the tickets which were meant to be distributed among the Catholic congregations of the city have been given out. Those tickets which now remain the Father intends to give to the people of St. Patrick's parish, upon whom most of the expense of the grand ceremonies will fall.

THE CEREMONIES.

The fact that the investiture of the Archbishop with the insignia of the cardinalate will mark the beginning of a new period in the history of the Catholic Church in this country explains the eagerness of many people to be present in the Cathedral on next Tuesday. The grandeur, the solemnity, the glory of flashing lights and of pulsing colors, which will accompany that investiture, attracts the curious desire of many other people. To many persons the ceremonies, during which the Archbishop will be formally made a member of the College of Cardinals will have but little religious significance. The word religious is here used in its highest sense—its meaning in relation to God. In the hands of most devout Catholics the event of Tuesday next will be likely to arouse such feelings as were awakened in the breasts of devout patriots by the centennial celebrations of the past week. It will bind them anew to their faith and their Church. In doing this it will be religious, and to effect this it was intended by the Pope. As has been said, preparations are going on in the Cathedral for the approaching ceremonies. Already a