

Staunton Spectator.

Tuesday, February 9, 1869.

AN ELECTION TO TAKE THE VOTE FOR OR AGAINST THE SUBSCRIPTION TO VALLEY RAIL ROAD FOR \$300,000

by the County of Augusta.

ELECTION DAY, THURSDAY, MAY 27th, 1869.

BY ORDER OF COURT.

The Order will be found in another column.

"A Suggestion"

A communication signed "Pacifists," published in the Richmond Whig of Friday last, the 5th inst., suggests the following: "I see from the newspapers that the Republican party will hold a Convention in Petersburg on the 9th of March to select candidates for State offices. The Conservative party will meet in Convention in Richmond on the 17th of the same month to receive the report of the Committee of Nine, and to adopt such measures as may be deemed expedient to promote the success of the Virginia Movement. My suggestion is this: Let the Republicans select their candidates for State offices, and let the Conservatives select theirs for the same offices, and let the two parties meet in Convention on the 17th of the same month to place, approve and endorse the nominations."

The above "suggestion," as well as the action of a meeting in Nottingham, noticed elsewhere, shows how rapidly some in Virginia are marching towards the Republican camp with the view of joining the forces of that party. These are strange times and strange developments are being made almost daily. Truly, "no man can tell what a day may bring forth."

"Walk into my Parlor" &c.

The Alexandria Gazette says that, "never was there a better illustration of 'Love's Labor Lost,' or the 'Needlessness of an Invitation,' than is shown in the address of the Richmond State Journal to the Old Whigs—that is, those who were Whigs in old party times—most affectionately, earnestly and urgently exhorting them to 'come in' and join the Radical party. If it had only headed its persuasive article, as a motto, with the lines— 'Will you walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly, It is the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy—' the whole thing would have been complete. But, seriously, never were people more mistaken, than are the leaders of the Radicals, if they suppose, for an instant, that former party distinctions are to prevail with or operate upon the former Whigs in Virginia, to afford in the slightest degree, politically, with the Radical party. They have not a single political principle in common, and the events of eight years past have sundered them, politically, as far apart as the poles. No inducements of place, or distinction, or power, or gain, or success, could bring about, with men who regard principle, such a monstrous coalition; differing as they do on constitutional doctrines, on measures of policy, foreign and domestic; in ideas, in sentiments, in motives of action, and in the very fundamental principles of government. And when we speak thus, they are confident we speak for all, (with rare exceptions,) and those who were Whigs in days gone by, and who are not now in communion with the Radical party."

When we read the temptations held out, in the article to which we refer, we could not but think, not irreverently or by way of comparison, but as suggestive, of another temptation recorded in Holy Writ, "where all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" were shown, and the promise made "all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;"—and of the answer given to that offer!

Constitutional Amendments.

With the Alex. Gazette we have been, and are, totally opposed to the whole batch of "constitutional amendments" that have been brought before Congress during and since the war, and that continue to be brought in, up to this day. They are "only evil and that continually." If any of the propositions have merit of any kind, this is not the time, in this day of change and disintegration, to present them; much less to force them upon the people. If we had "peace"—and were in a peaceful and prosperous career of civil government, we would be willing to consider some changes in the organic law which considerate, right thinking men, might judge to be necessary or expedient. But, now, it is manifest that most of these so-called "constitutional amendments" are designed for miserable, temporary party purposes, and as party expedients. We prefer, infinitely, the Constitution as it was. The tinkers at the Constitution only batter and disgrace that noble instrument, and injure its beautiful symmetry and proportions. In a word, in our opinion, they are not competent by character, wisdom, virtue, good principles, or common sense, at this day, and at this time, to amend the Constitution. They ought to confine their operations to other and more congenial matters. If the course of legislation shows no respect to the Constitution—let the instrument itself remain on paper! It will be at least, even if unheeded—a silent rebuke! And that is as much as we can expect at this time!"

Railroad Meeting in Highland.

On the 14th of January, a meeting was held in the Court-house at Monterey, the county seat of Highland county, at which delegates were appointed to represent that county in the meeting to be held at Moorfield, Hardy county, W. Va., on the 22nd of February next, to take into consideration the propriety of organizing a company to construct a railroad from some suitable point on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad up the south branch of the Potomac, through the counties of Hampshire, Hardy, Grant, Mineral and Pendleton, West Virginia.

The following were appointed delegates:—

W. W. Fleming, J. W. Myers, John Trimble, L. H. Stephenson, A. W. Fleisher, Wm. Hever, B. Hansel, J. Waybright, F. H. Kenn, Campbell, James Terry, D. Rockenson, D. McNulty, E. Stuart, Wm. Vance, J. Armstrong, A. J. Jones, S. C. Eagle, G. Reser, court, J. T. Rynd and J. Savin.

At this meeting, Edward Stuart was Chairman, and Andrew J. Jones, Secretary. The object of the meeting was explained by W. W. Fleming, and addresses were delivered by Jno. R. Popham, of Bath, and by A. Stephenson and J. W. Myers, of Highland. The good people of that gallant little county seem much elated with the prospect of getting a Railroad.

The gravamen of Mr. Sumner's attack on Judge Parker was his presiding over the court in which John Brown was tried and convicted. That is enough to make the Judge "atrocious" in his estimation.

County Roads.

The wretched condition into which our roads have fallen, says the Petersburg Index, is an evil to the farmer of the most serious nature. Transportation by teams, for a greater or less distance, is necessary to every person who raises a bale of cotton or a bushel of grain for market; and the worse the road, the heavier the burden and expense on the producer. It is matter of no small wonder, then, that the farmers, who have the power in their own hands, should not, through the courts, enforce a rigid system in regard to the public highways. The laws are ample enough for the purpose.

In traversing the country at the present season, we see few evidences of attention having been bestowed on any of these thoroughfares. Where the ground is level they are covered with water; and when hilly, it may almost be said they are washed into gullies. Oftentimes the bed of the road is lower in the middle than at the sides, having no drainage; in fact, absorbing all the rain as it falls. Thus neglected they soon become miry by the passage of loaded vehicles, and in the end impassable. The consequence is, that teamsters are obliged to leave the beaten track, and strike out through the adjoining fields to the great injury of the owners thereof.

The public roads in Virginia, as a general thing, never had much reputation for their excellence, but we have noticed a great difference in counties adjoining each other, where the obstacles to improvement existed in the same proportion—all owing to the want of energy and fidelity on the part of surveyors. With some, the object seemed to be to do just work enough previous to the quarterly terms to escape a presentment; while on the other hand those who took a pride in it would put their sections in good condition by the expenditure of perhaps a large amount of labor at the time, but in fact a great saving in the end. Over such roads it is a pleasure to the farmer to haul his fifty bushels of wheat, or his ton of hay, or a couple of hogheads of tobacco, at a load, without his team ever so much as baulking. We venture to say that in the present state of our roads, and during the winter and spring, few teams are able to draw more than half that amount. The consequence is that a double expense is thereby entailed on the farmer; for to him, more perhaps than to any other class, time is money.

To construct a road properly, not only requires labor, but skill and judgment; and when it is once put in thorough repair it is easily kept so. As a general thing, on land liable to be cut into ruts, the bed of the road should be rounded off by being raised in the middle and sloped on the sides. This will enable it to carry nearly all the rain; and then with drains along the margins, it may always be kept reasonably dry even in wet weather. The time to do this is in spring or summer, so that the track may become compacted before the frosts and rains of winter.

Republicans Repudiating their Platform.

The members of Congress have shown, even before Grant's inauguration, that they have no regard for the principles declared in the platform upon which he was elected. That platform declares that "the question of suffrage in all the loyal States properly belongs to the people of those States." In the face of this fact the House of Representatives passed, by a vote of 150 to 41, the following joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution which claims for the Federal Government the right to control suffrage in the States. It reads as follows:

Be it Resolved, etc., two-thirds of both Houses concurring, That the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said Legislatures, shall be held as part of the said Constitution, to-wit:

Article — Section one.—The right of any citizen of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or any State, by reason of race or color, or previous condition of slavery or any citizen or class of citizens of the United States. Section two.—The Congress shall have power to impose by appropriate legislation the provisions of this article.

R. T. Daniel's Letter—"New Movement."

Raleigh T. Daniel, Esq., of Richmond, Chairman of the State Executive Committee appointed by the Conservative State Convention which assembled in Richmond on the 11th of December, 1867, has written a long letter to Jas. F. Clarke, Esq., in which he strongly opposes the "New Movement." He says: "I am utterly and absolutely opposed to the 'new movement' in its forms, modes and tenor. Never, since I made one, an humble but earnest advocate of that convention, have I desired to see its policy changed, even to the breadth of a hair, the declaration of which filled me with such a thrilling elation of self-respecting pride; never doubted, that it pointed to the path of honor and the path of safety, which, if the same, no faltered in the faith of the noble fortitude, the brave contempt of suffering, when suffering is for the right, which inspired its reformers. But in speaking freely and plainly of the change which has come over the spirit of our nation, I have not in the least intended to man's motives. I intended to others the patriotism and purity of intention which I claim for myself."

The Richmond Journal (Radical) says that the Committee of Nine asked Congress for universal suffrage and universal amnesty. "That Congress will grant them the first half, but which they ought to be satisfied, as it is not often that a suit in Court gets more than half of his demand." Now, this is what we "outsiders" in the present condition of things, would call "adding insult to injury!"

It is questioned by none that, in consequence of the course of the "new movement," the people of Virginia that were before these efforts were made. Of course no one can undertake to say what precise form this new-born spirit will take. Only we feel that the question of suffrage is the subject of the present session, and we certainly can afford to wait a few weeks for the relief we have been so long asking. Some think that the Virginia proposition as they stand, will be amended. Others think that modifications of them will be made. There are those who anticipate that Congress may revert Virginia to a territorial condition, which would develop the President (General Grant) the appointment of a Governor, Territorial Secretary, Marshal, Judge, &c. A Legislature would then have to be elected by the people to frame a constitution of State government, and suffrage and eligibility would be subject only to such restrictions as are imposed by the Fourteenth Amendment, and such general Federal laws as are in operation. I give you the skeleton and leave you to fill it up. There is no one to be feared from the "new movement" as they stand, and it is possible without the efforts made.

The following is an extract from the Editorial Correspondence of the Richmond Whig dated Washington Feb. 2nd:

"It is questioned by none that, in consequence of the course of the 'new movement,' the people of Virginia that were before these efforts were made. Of course no one can undertake to say what precise form this new-born spirit will take. Only we feel that the question of suffrage is the subject of the present session, and we certainly can afford to wait a few weeks for the relief we have been so long asking. Some think that the Virginia proposition as they stand, will be amended. Others think that modifications of them will be made. There are those who anticipate that Congress may revert Virginia to a territorial condition, which would develop the President (General Grant) the appointment of a Governor, Territorial Secretary, Marshal, Judge, &c. A Legislature would then have to be elected by the people to frame a constitution of State government, and suffrage and eligibility would be subject only to such restrictions as are imposed by the Fourteenth Amendment, and such general Federal laws as are in operation. I give you the skeleton and leave you to fill it up. There is no one to be feared from the 'new movement' as they stand, and it is possible without the efforts made."

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The New York World says.

The "new movement" in Virginia, it is assumed, a startling innovation. We have heard of the movement in the part of a few prominent Virginians to procure the ratification of the proposed constitution on condition that the restrictions on suffrage and office-holding be stricken out; but, in the light of fuller information, are reluctantly inclined to believe that, while this was at first the animus of the "movement," it has now degenerated into something very like the "new movement" in the States within the State of better materials than had gone to the formation of that organization heretofore. The Editor of the Richmond Whig, which sustains the "movement," has finally meant, writes to his paper from Washington, that it is vitally necessary to its success that Gen. Grant and the republican leaders be convinced that the people of Virginia will not use their enfranchisement to give the vote to the colored race, and to procure for us all, if not more than we have asked. Such is the confidence felt in General Grant's good wishes and purposes that the Editor of the Richmond Whig, who would willingly submit it to him to present a resolution to take a sheet of paper and write down upon it the form of adjustment. Under such circumstances the proposed policy would seem to be to have General Grant to give the vote to the colored race, and to procure for us all, if not more than we have asked. Such is the confidence felt in General Grant's good wishes and purposes that the Editor of the Richmond Whig, who would willingly submit it to him to present a resolution to take a sheet of paper and write down upon it the form of adjustment. Under such circumstances the proposed policy would seem to be to have General Grant to give the vote to the colored race, and to procure for us all, if not more than we have asked. 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