

PUBLIC OPINION

Reflected in the papers of this Great State:

According to the American, we presume George Washington, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln, U. S. Grant and all the other leading public men of America would, if living, be included among those the virtuous journal would cast out. No one will deny that among the politicians are our brainiest men. That because of their intellectuality, their moral worth, their ability, their popularity, they have been honored in the past with public trusts and that if they are politicians, as seems to be the case according to the American, they are such because the people by their votes have made politicians of them. There is as much sense in howling against the politicians, as classed by the American, as delegates to the convention, as there would be inveighing against the lawyer, merchant or farmer as delegates. Without reference to their occupation or calling, we should select true and tried men of moral worth with the capacity to frame a new organic law for the State, and we hope that after the American tires of its senseless tirades against the politicians, it will join in the good work.—Iberville South, Dem.

The sugar planters of this parish in forming a new party declared it to be a white party, and that no room existed in it for the negroes. They maintain that they carried St. Mary in 1896 by a white majority, and that they still possess that majority. In behalf of the Democracy of St. Mary we challenge them to put this claim to the test and make the coming contest a white one. Let both sides refrain from urging the negro to register or to vote, and let the party most strongly entrenched in the hearts of St. Mary's white citizens win the day. A refusal to meet the white issue will be accepted by the entire parish to be an acknowledgment by the leaders of the Planter Republican party that their boasted white majority is but a myth and that their party is virtually a negro party with white leaders, and that they dare not submit their views to white men for settlement.—St. Mary Banner, Dem.

The fact that only 960 voters registered in this parish is being commented upon by the press throughout the State. They speak of it as if all those fitted to register had done so, with the wonderful result that out of 8000 males over the age of 21, less than a thousand could fill a registration blank. This is not a fact, and the Clarion thought that it had fully explained the combination of causes that lead to so few registering. St. Landry can make a better showing than that, and the next registration will prove it.—St. Landry Clarion, Dem.

All misdemeanors should be within the jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Courts, such as assault and battery, petty larceny, disturbing the peace, violation of labor contracts and such minor offenses, and they should have the legal right to dispose of them finally. As it is, a party aggrieved makes an affidavit before a magistrate. He examines into the facts and if there is a probability as to the guilt of the accused he is bound over to appear before the District Court. When court convenes these petty offenses are made the subjects of informations to the court by the district attorney, then commences the proceedings in court. Witnesses for the State and defense are summoned and a jury is empaneled to try the case. Half a day of the precious time of the court is consumed in the trial, and, if the accused is acquitted, the parish has to pay the bill of costs that has begun in the magistrate's court and accumulated in the trial court. As the law now stands, it is the sworn duty of the district attorney to bring before the court all matters within his knowledge where it is probable a crime against the State has been committed, and he cannot but do his duty and prosecute all

such cases from the magistrate's courts. The fault is in the organic law, which should be changed and be made, as it is in most of the States of the Union, so that magistrates shall have final jurisdiction in all cases where the punishment is not necessarily death or imprisonment at hard labor.—Texas Gazette, Dem.

Our contemporaries throughout the State are beginning to discuss the question of holding the constitutional convention. This matter is a very important one to the State, as the convention will undertake to remodel the present organic law in many respects. We are afraid, however, that under the present demoralized condition of affairs in our State there will be very little improvement on the constitution we now have. But, be that as it may, the convention has been called, and it will be the duty of the people to select their ablest, most conservative and patriotic men to represent them in that body.—Baton Rouge Capital Item, Dem.

Then, again, a belief is gaining ground in the United States of abolishing the death penalty. And we would not be surprised if this very belief were not the guiding star of the judge whose unwarrantable leniency upon the bench has also done much for mob law. We see no use in any State endeavoring, through its judicial authorities, to reconcile the people to the abolition of the death penalty, when they refuse to be reconciled to the tune of lynching every criminal or supposed criminal that they can get their hands on. If the Louisiana Legislature would all of a sudden wipe out the death penalty, and the people would find themselves opposed to it, the same or a subsequent Legislature would be compelled to reinstitute it as a means of abolishing revolution. The people seldom willingly receive that which they do not want, and it can be easily seen that they strongly favor the punishment of death. So long as conscientious scruples against capital punishment fail to disqualify the juror in this State, as the law is today, and so long, too, as men are permitted to be sworn in upon the jury who do not possess education enough to reason out the difference in the degrees of crime of which the accused can be convicted under the same indictment, or who have not sufficient common or moral sense to feel the difference between right and wrong in their own bosoms, so long as the jury is held in disrespect and often contempt by the masses, because of their low moral or intellectual degree; that long will the people administer the law by their own hands. And even longer than this.—Franklin News, Ind.

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