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BY G. W. REESE.

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The Feliciana Democrat.

Objections to Know Nothing-ism.

During the last session of the late Congress, the advocates of the New Order, delivered many able and eloquent speeches in support of its peculiar and prescriptive doctrine. They were met by talented and patriotic representatives of the Democratic party, who exposed its rottenness of principle, its re-opening of the whitened sepulchre of Federalism, and its unallowed attempts to lay violent hands upon the Constitution.

None was more able than that delivered by the Hon. L. M. KERR, of South Carolina. Passing over the earlier portion of his speech, we come to that part, where, he replies to the expression made by Mr. Banks, of Massachusetts, that "they [the Know Nothings] have the right to secrecy." He thus proceeds;

That associations of men for political purposes have the legal right to secrecy is indisputable; but the moral aspect of the question is at least debatable. There are two kinds of right, the legal and ethical. The former looks to the peace of society; the latter to morals. The pampered capitalist has a legal right to refuse a penny to the starving wretch upon his door-sill; but is there no obligation of charity upon him?—Are there no duties beyond the reach of law? In a state of isolation, each one possesses rights unqualified by artificial restraints. Government is established for great and indispensable purposes, and necessary to it is the possession of certain powers. Each one, therefore, divests himself of certain portions of his natural rights and power, and bestows them upon government. The forms of government are numerous; but each form has some great and vital requirement. The requirement of a republic is *publicity*. Suffrage is its life-blood; and to give health to the body politic, it should be not only free, but intelligent and discriminating. How can this be when measures are planned in secret and withheld from investigation? I ask again, is there no public duty beyond the empire of mere law?—I have the legal right to cast my vote for the most ignorant and corrupt; but have I the moral right? We have established a political organization which affects us all, and have I the moral right to commit it to those who will use it to the injury of the others? The interests of all are affected by the measures of the government, and does not good faith require that those measures should be subjected to public examination? In society we cannot absolutely individualize ourselves; we must look out beyond self. There is a difference between associated and individual action.

Having premised thus much upon the moral right of secrecy, I submit to the committee three objections to the know-nothing organization:—

1st. It tends to break down the rights of the States.

2d. It attacks the character of the American people.

3d. It invades the sanctities of social life.

1st. It tends to break down the rights of the States. Does it not profess to extend all over the Union? What are some of its objects? To regulate the right of suffrage, and exclude foreigners from all offices.—Does not the right of suffrage belong exclusively to the States? If so, is not this interference in the interior affairs of a State? Is not this attempt to control suffrage digging at the very foundation of the State structures and limiting a power to recast their deepest foundations? Are not the States foreign to each other, except so far as they have contracted together? If so, is not this an attempt to consolidate them together in a vital matter, in which they are distinct and foreign by their organic constitutions? Is not consolidation the breaking down of State rights? The social condition of Massachusetts blends with that of South Carolina, and both simmering and seething together, a *tertium quid* is evolved which is to be the rule of government for both.

Again: "no foreigner shall hold an office of honor or trust." Is not this intruding into the domestic affairs of a State? Prescription must go into everything—into public institutions, into private corporations, into municipal affairs, into the charity of the hospital, and into the garbage of the gutter. If this foreign interference with, and control of, the purely domestic affairs of a State does not break down State rights, I am at a loss to conceive what will. What is consolidation? Is it not a crushing of the States into one whole, so that the inhabitants of each portion may interfere in the management of the domestic affairs of the

others? Is not this such an interference? What interior interest is free from its grasp? It controls the municipal council, and clutches at the crum and jury-box. It proscribes the sexton, and lays its hand upon the watchman's rattle. Other national organizations have connected themselves only with national interests. They professed to take cognizance only of such matters as were common to all by the stipulations of the constitution; this organization glides along beneath the very foundations of the States and mangles them, interior, federal, and foreign, into one totality. Its members are secret, are silent, are know nothings! Sir, their designation is aptly chosen, for if they succeed, they are mutes in the funeral procession of the republic.

I object sternly to this new order, because its march is over the ruins of the States. State sovereignty is the corner-stone of our Federal Temple, and upon it rests our destiny. Consolidate this government and no human power can save you from despotism. Can we, dare we, trifle with this great principle? The cause of State sovereignty is a grand and a sacred one. Esorted by the memories of the past and the hopes of the future, and crowned too with all the royalties of intellect, comes it to us. It has been won through too much blood, and hallowed by sacrifices too august and tremendous, to be shattered by the hand of tyranny. I will not give aught of encouragement to an association which flings even a shadow over the integrity of this principle.

I object in the second place, to this secret organization because it attacks the character of the American people. Their character has ever been frank, manly, and magnanimous. They have never paltered with principle upon flimsy subtleties, nor stifled the voice of public faith upon pettifogging technicalities. They have not stooped to sophisms and subterfuges to vindicate an equivocal honesty, nor have they "hidden in misty generalities their violations of chartered rights." No, they have been proud even in error, and brave even in wrong. God forbid that the manhood of the American character should sicken and disappear under the poison of trickery and insincerity. Evasions and sophisms are an ethical poison, and corrode the best character.

This order requires evasion as the sacrament of admission into it, and under the sophism of individuality it cleaves down, in secret, the rights of others. It avows not its principles in public, and courts not the light; but it plots at midnight and strikes under a mask. The elements of manly character are not nursed in secret and matured upon subterfuges. Against this secret organization, the common manhood of the country rises up, for it insidiously attacks the very foundation of magnanimity and frankness in the character of the American people. Private worth is the foundation of public greatness; strike down the one and you destroy the other.

In the third place; because it invades the sanctity of society. Does it not invade the relations of life and corrupt the faith between man and man? If it does not preach, does it not connive at a morality which permits you to betray a friend and deceive an enemy? Will not political treachery, even if it does not fasten upon the character, at least produce chronic and incurable distrust, alienation and selfishness? Have not men belonged to this secret order while they occupied high places under the old party organization, and thus betrayed their old allegiance? Have not associations of men accepted the candidates of their former party and carried them with banners from hustings to hustings, while they were active members of the new order, and working for its success? If these things be true and they are affirmed—do they not poison all the relations of men? What dealer wrong can you inflict upon society than to obliterate all confidence, and blast fidelity between man and man? Do this, and how know you that the hand you grasp in political fellowship is not the hand of a political enemy? that the man you shelter is not a spy? Infuse infidelity into your relations, and how know you that treason clings not around your hearthstone, and stoops not over the couch of friendship? Are great principles to be thus achieved? And can the ear of party only be rolled on over the softest charities of the heart, and the sacred ordinances of society?

I examine in the fourth place, the application and bearing of the new organization upon the South. Why should the South encourage it? Is her system of labor threatened with pauperism, or does she want to build up castes among the whites? Have not her institutions been assailed and by those who originated this new order? What an awful spectacle did the member from Massachusetts reveal in his description of the social condition of that State? Two

thirds of the population of Massachusetts pressed into the gutter by selfish capital disowning their manhood, and compelled in the dark hours of the night, to flit along subterranean paths, and conspire in secret against their own government. With us only insurgent slaves hide from their masters and conspire at midnight. Are these men who are the slaves of capital, and who are compelled to plot in secret against their wealthy lords, the men to reform our institutions, and brand us with inferiority? Eighty thousand *freemen* in a republic, conspiring, in underground ways, to vindicate their rights at the ballot box against forty thousand! Is this freedom? Is this free-labor society?

Nominal freedom often is practical slavery, and nominal slavery practical freedom. There are two modifications of social existence: the one a corollation of mutual obligation, *i. e.*, inseparably between capital and labor; the other, the dissolution of continuity, *i. e.*, independence between capital and labor; in the former the elective franchise is limited to a portion of the community, but there is no starvation; in the other it is unqualified, but in crowded civic populations ten per cent. die of starvation, directly or indirectly through typhus fever, insufficient food, imperfect shelter; and all the accompaniments of pauperism. Take you, now, slavery and safety, or free labor, with paper rights and starvation. What remedy, let me ask, is proposed for these evils of civic population? Socialism! Yes, socialism you prescribe. Your French socialist teachers tell you the evils of society spring from the freedom of society. Labor, through competition, enslaves itself, they say. To guard against this, *labor must be organized*. What means this organization of labor? Why, it means social slavery.—Laborers shall not compete, they shall not dispose of their own time and strength—socialism is social slavery. Will the South then go into this new organization because it is pauperism enlisted against wealth and charters, and the establishment of a system of social slavery? Will she go into it because of its abolition tendencies? Do they not exist? Has not the national whig party disunited because of the abolition tendencies of its northern wing? Will this wing have less abolition feeling under a new organization? Will these northern democrats who abandoned their party because they said it was allied with slavery be more moderate abolitionists in the new party?—Do not such materials make up the northern "know nothing" party? Is not its object power and place? Will it not, then seize upon all elements of strength which can carry it into power? And are not the elements floating about at the North, and eager for coalition, the abolition and free-soil element? They have been strong enough to shatter an old and powerful organization and will they lose their virgins and purpose in a new one?

What, too, have been the practical results of this new party? In Massachusetts alone it has been victorious through its own strength; and what see we there? Is not the abolition and free-soil flag the only one flying? how stands its members elect? I read an extract from the correspondent of the National Era (an abolition paper.) The writer is stated to be John G. Whittier, co-editor of the Era, and a distinguished abolitionist of Massachusetts, who, as much as any man, is looked up in reference to its politics, particularly free-soil:

"C. L. Knapp, of the eight district, is an old liberty-man, true as steel. De Witt in the Worcester district, Trafton in the eleventh, Sohier in the fourth, Durrell in the third, and Burlingame in the fourth district, are also free-soilers. N. P. Banks, jr. is triumphantly elected from the seventh district against the combined opposition of the Pierce Democrats and the Whigs. He goes back to Washington an anti-administration fusionist. Bullington of the second district, and Morris, of the tenth, are reliable anti-slavery Whigs.

"Gardner, the Governor, stands openly pledged against the Nebraska fraud, and the fugitive slave law. His past history has been evidently that of a pro-slavery whig, but we speak now only of his present position. Of the senators and representatives elected, enough is known to be tolerably certain that a reliable man will be chosen to the United States Senate and effectual provision made for protecting the inhabitants of the State against the fugitive slave hunt.

Thus have acted the know-nothings of Massachusetts. How spoke they? I will read the resolutions of a know-nothing convention in Norfolk, Massachusetts:

"Resolved, That we hail with hope and joy the recent brilliant successes of the Republican party in the states of Maine, Iowa, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Ohio, and we trust these victories are a foreshadowing of others soon to come, by which the free states shall present one solid phalanx of opposition to the aggression of slavery.

"Resolved, That in the present chaotic condition of parties in Massachusetts, the only star above the horizon is the love of human liberty, and the abhorrence of slavery, and that it is the duty of anti-slavery men to rally round the republican party as an organization which invites the united action of the people on the transcending question of slave domination which now divides the Union."

"Whereas Roman Catholics and all very big talk, founded and supported on the basis of ignorance and tyranny, and being, therefore, natural allies in every warfare against liberty and equal treatment; therefore, be it

"Resolved, That there can exist no real loyalty to Catholicism, which does not embrace slavery, its natural co-worker, in opposition to freedom and republican institutions."

How spoke Gardner, their Governor, in reply to the charge that he had aided in the rendition of Burns. He says in a letter to Mr. Wilson, a free soil leader:

"Were the same charge made against yourself, it could not be more groundless than it is against me. The power of language does not permit me to express the utter loathing I have for the conduct attributed to me. For sooner would I be the poor quivering wretch on the road again to the agony of bondage, than a voluntary guard to a d in his return. He who invented the charge grossly slandered me; who repeats it, or believes it, do not know me. "It is not true that I am, or have ever been, in favor of the fugitive slave bill. I never voted for a man who favored it, knowing such to be his view, and I must change very much before I ever do. I never voted, act, or vote, favored its passage, and I am an advocate of its essential modification, or in lieu thereof, its unconditional repeal. Returning from Canada last June, I read in the cars that there was a petition for its repeal at the Exchange News Room, and on my arrival, before even going to my place of business, I hastened to the Exchange and signed the petition."

Is this unbroken testimony of deed and speech nothing? Will the South unite with this northern know nothing movement animated with the sentiments of socialism and abolitionism? Will the South enlist in a crusade of socialism and abolitionism that we may exclude from our councils men who, like Gaston, wave laurels in the history of North Carolina, or who, like Porter, whom Louisiana loved to honor, grace the Senate hall? Will the whig party of the South go into it? I ask the whigs of the South, why did you break up your old party organization? Do you do it because the northern wing of it was too much abolitionized? Did not the northern members of it say to you, "Let us agree to disagree on the question of slavery," and sooner than agree to this did you not break it up? Will you now enter into a new organization with these men and agree to disagree on the same subject? If your devotion to the constitution and the South, made you break up your old party organization, will you trample upon that devotion in joining a new one? I now ask the whigs of the South—and the are gallant men—whether they will abandon and break up their old party with its saints, its confessor, and its whole army of martyrs, and fall object and helpless into the clutches of this new order, with its past of pauperism and its future of abolitionism and consolidation?

Will the democracy of the South go into this order? Will they abandon their old cause of State rights and the constitution? Will they desert their old flag which they have waved so often in the breach and over the field, and have illumined even in defeat and ferment in this new order? The member from Massachusetts, Mr. BANKS, the champion of the know nothings here, abandoned the democratic party because it was not free-soil. Has he become pro-slavery? or will the South become anti-slavery?—Shall the South contract this alliance?—What a picture rises up! There stands the sculptured genius of socialism and procription, grinning hate against the South—with the saturnalia of emancipation in the front—while the member from Massachusetts is seen in the back ground, flying wildly in abhorrence from the "black hearse of slavery." His footsteps lighted up with the lurid glare of a burning convent in Charlestown. If this picture be real, will the South be dragged into it? If such there be, I pray that the painter may do in charity, what the painter of the sacrifice of Iphigenia did in skill—throw a mantle over the features of the victim.

A very intelligent young gentleman from this parish, a student in Yale College in sending us a northern paper says, "Know Nothingism and Abolitionism in this State (Conn.) are almost synonymous terms."

And we will add that this young gentleman is a native of St. Mary; and we would further add that his views appear to be fully sustained by reference to the columns of the New Haven Palladium which he sends to us.—Planters' Banner.