

# North Carolina Argus.

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BY FRANK DARLEY.

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HOW POWER STRAYS AWAY FROM THE PEOPLE.

The saying that "Revolutions never go backwards," has been repeated until it has acquired the authority of a proverb, and we will refrain from taking direct issue with it, lest we may have the appearance of imbecility. We will content ourselves with the remark that the expression is, to say the least, misunderstood and misapplied. For it may be true, that a particular Revolution never retraces its steps and overturns the work it had accomplished; but that it will eventually spend its force, and that another Revolution, originating in motives, passions, and sentiments the reverse of the first, may arise and run its course in the opposite direction, cannot be denied. The counter revolution may, and generally does, come in the guise of friendship to the cause of its predecessor, in order to betray it, and pervert the new forces to totally different ends. Hypocrisy, so the poet tells us, "puts on the livery of Heaven to serve the devil;" and "patriotism," according to Dr. Johnson, "is the last resource of a scoundrel." Christianity, itself, has in every age, except the first two of its existence, been made the cloak for priestly tyranny and corruption; and democracies are prone to degenerate into despotisms under the selfish leadership of demagogues. Indeed there have been but few revolutions in the world's history which have not been followed by reactions—otherwise the Republics of Greece and Rome had been perpetual; the Reformation would have swept Papacy out of existence before the end of a century from the time of Luther; and the French revolution, which startled Europe with the tocsin of liberty, would not have gone out in the darkness of despotism. The adage, therefore, in declaring that "Revolutions never go backwards," is little better than a play upon words. "It holds the word of promise to the ear, but breaks it to the hope." It is inconsistent, also, with those other maxims which Mr. Jefferson was wont to repeat, that "power is continually stealing from the many to the few," and that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."—*Rol. Register.*

WHAT WE HAVE GAINED.

The *Chicago Times*, in noticing a late speech of Mr. Richard Smith in his canvass for Congress, in Cincinnati, says:

"If the Democratic party get into power, we shall lose in place what we have gained in war." So says Smith. If this be true, it is proper to count up our gains by the war. We have gained an enormous high tariff, which taxes the nation for the benefit of New England manufacturers. We have gained an internal revenue system which taxes sixteen thousand different articles and requires an army of office holders for its enforcement. We have gained a National banking system, capable of controlling the capital of the country, to which the people yearly pay \$18,000,000 in interest, which might be saved by the substitution of National currency for bank notes. We have gained a debt of several thousands of millions of dollars, which is a mortgage upon the property and labor of every man in the country. We have gained a Congress and State Legislatures so corrupt that the press of the same party with them is compelled, from very shame, to denounce their accessibility to bribery. Smith says these gains will be lost if the Democratic party gets into power. Smith intended to lie, but stumbled on the truth.

Senator Wade writes to a friend that he will introduce, the first day of the next session, a bill to repeal the act organizing Utah as a territory. He says the action of the Mormons in denouncing the Government as tyrannical and unjust must be punished by a prompt suppression of polygamy.

[From the Raleigh Sentinel.]  
**Letter from Hon. Wm. A. Graham on the "situation."**  
HILLSBORO, Oct. 10, 1867.

GENTLEMEN: I shall be unable, by reason of engagements of business, to be present at the meeting of the Conservative people of Wake, at Raleigh, on the 12th inst., and to address them on the topics involved in the approaching election, in accordance with the invitation received from you a few days since. I regret this, both because of the pleasure I should have derived from a free communication with so intelligent an assemblage of the citizens of the State on the duties of the present time, and because the topics in question are so numerous and suggestive to be treated satisfactorily in a letter, without unbecomingly tediousness.

I was pleased in observing that such a meeting had been called. In the opinion of some, with whom I have conversed, it was supposed there had been too great delay among Conservative citizens in communicating together, in the face of very active exertions to form a party adverse to them and to the best interests of the State, in which it was sought to combine all the colored voters by appeals to prejudice, passion, and hopes of unlawful gain. I have not been much disturbed by apprehensions of this kind. The white population of North Carolina, by the census of 1860, outnumbered the black in the proportion of two to one, or thereabouts, and after deducting all who are disfranchised under the military acts of Congress, the majority of voters of the former will stand to the latter somewhat in that proportion. This white population, which has been heretofore the depository of the political power of the State, is as faithful to the Constitution of the United States as it ever was or as that of any other State of the Union is now, but they have an intelligent comprehension of their rights and duties as electors and as citizens, and, even without much consultation or concert, will, in my opinion, cast a majority of votes only in favor of such measures and candidates as will best promote their safety and happiness. To the military authority, which has been established over them, they yield a ready obedience. Even where they may supersede their ancient and cherished laws and usages, they bow before it and make no issue. But when, by the law, an issue is presented to them, to be solved through an election, it is naturally to be understood, as the term imports, that they screw their choice, to vote either upon measures or candidates as each individual voter according to his views of the public interest or his sense of duty may prefer.

The Bill of Rights of the State, from 1776 until now, proclaims that "elections ought to be free." It is a noteworthy fact that, in France, where, so far as elections are allowed, universal manhood suffrage prevails, under the first Bonaparte in 1804, and under the third in 1852, a Republican form of government was converted into a monarchical or despotic one, through the economy of an election, and by a vote of the people approaching to unanimity. These results were, of course, attributed only to the influence of duress and fear. But in England and America such influences are not allowed to operate, and like bribery or fraud would render an election void. According to our theory, if the elector at the polls shall express, not his own sentiments, but those of some other person or authority, the election itself is but an idle form. An election with us, therefore, is an occasion for serious thought, inquiry, unreserved consultation and free discussion; and our suffrages are accustomed to be given, according to the convictions of our minds, effected through such means.

In the election now before us, the electors are to vote "For a Convention or Against a Convention," and, at the same time, for delegates, to represent their counties in Convention, provided the affirmative vote shall be sufficient, according to the provisions of the law. Such Convention, if called, is to deliberate on the formation of a Constitution, in which there shall be a provision that the elective franchise shall be enjoyed by all such persons as have the qualifications for electors in the present election; that is "all the male citizens of the State, twenty-one years old and upwards, of whatever race, color or previous condition, who have been residents in the State for one year previous to the day of any election, except such as may be disfranchised for participation in the rebellion, or for felony at common law." I make this quotation with care, for the purpose of collating it in my subsequent remarks, with the qualifications of voters in some of the leading States now represented in Congress, whose members have shown extraordinary zeal in prescribing its terms to us.

Never, heretofore, in America, has the elective franchise been extended to new classes of voters, except through the agency of Conventions chosen by those who had enjoyed it exclusively before. Congress, by the acts under consideration, has extended it to all males of the black race twenty-one years of age and upwards, with no other qualifications than those above recited; but only so far, however, as regards the present election. And, according to my recollection, it was stated in the debate on these acts by Mr. Fessenden, of Maine, certainly one of the ablest and most experienced members of the Senate, that no permanent regulation of this nature could be constitutionally established in a State without the sanction of its people, and I think the correctness of the remark was acquiesced in by the subsequent action of Congress. Congress, then, has provided that in the present election the black race, with no other than the qualifications already stated, shall vote. That was their act. If it shall be provided that they shall so vote in all future time, the act will be ours. It is not sought to be disguised, that Congress desires that we shall so provide, and it is strongly intimated, that representation in Congress will not be allowed us until it is done; but it is still left to the people of the State as represented in Convention to be deliberated upon and decided, and no more momentous question was ever pre-

pared for the determination of a free people.

The inquiry cannot be excluded from our consideration, if we would, whether under the Constitution of the United States or any Republican organization, a Constitution of government for the regulation of the internal affairs of a State can be forced upon a people against the wishes of a majority of its qualified voters, by distrait or duress? A Constitution of Government, says Mesaulay, which will fit one State or people may not fit another; any more than a coat by the measure of the Apollo Belvidere may be expected to fit all the human race. And the very idea of Republican Government presupposes that the people themselves can best judge as to the fundamental law under which they shall live, as well as of the enactments passed from time to time by their Legislatures. This proposition is most clearly stated by Washington in his farewell address, when he declares that "the basis of our political system is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government." North Carolina does not seek to have a voice in the question whether the Japanese, Chinese or any Asiatic race shall exercise the elective franchise in California; nor does she claim the right to interfere in the domestic regulations of any sister State of the Union. On the other hand, she makes her appeal to the people of all the other States to concede to her, within the limits of their common Constitution, the powers of control, and those only, which these States assert for themselves.

But throwing out of consideration the question of right of the people of a State, to frame their State constitution according to their own conceptions of the public good, is the measure proposed expedient? Will it promote the general welfare to confer the right to vote in all regular elections on the negro race, with no other qualifications than those in contemplation? Is it not perfectly manifest that it will not? The representative republics of this country, with their written constitutions, their divisions of power into legislative, executive or judicial departments, and their introduction of the people to participate in and decide upon the rights and interests of society, as voters and jurors, are looked for in vain in other countries of the world, and are founded upon the idea of a certain standard of virtue and intelligence in the constituent body of electors, without which they cannot be maintained. Who among us believes that the great mass of the blacks recently in a state of slavery, coming up to this standard of virtue and intelligence, and are fit to be made self-reliant electors? In such their condition as to knowledge and morality, the extension of the right of suffrage to them indiscriminately, instead of distributing political power among a greater number of citizens, will in fact concentrate it in fewer hands; as designing individuals will not enlarge their own power by using them to vote, not their opinions, but those of the men who control them. Already we learn that they have been extensively organized into secret societies, or leagues, with a view to be voted en masse, and under the influence of prejudices carefully instilled into them, in opposition to the whites, who were formerly masters or may now be owners of property. To elect such a class to be permanent voters, as is now proposed to us, will be to make a revolution tending to anarchy, and to hazard, in my belief, the long continuance of any stable government. Foreigners are barred out from the right to vote for five years after settlement here, by our naturalization laws; in order that they may become acquainted with our institutions, and capable of taking part in their administration, and must prove that during that time they have behaved as persons of good moral character, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the country. The freedmen as a class are less informed than foreigners and less capable from want of education and early instruction.

But, it may be said, there is little disagreement among ourselves on this question; but Congress has required it of us, and, in the event of non-compliance, the most direful consequences may be expected. This is an argument, which I am not disposed to pass by, or to treat lightly. I think some misapprehension prevails in regard to it. Congress certainly has denounced no penalty on such delinquency, in any of the three acts of reconstruction. After providing for the establishment of Military Governments in the ten Southern States, the first of these acts goes on to declare that:

"When the people of any one of said rebel States shall have formed a Constitution of Government in conformity with the Constitution of the United States, in all respects, framed by a Convention of delegates, elected by the male citizens of said State, twenty-one years old and upwards, of whatever race, color, or previous condition, who have been residents in said State for one year, previously to the day of such election, except such as may be disfranchised;" and "When such Constitution shall provide that the elective franchise shall be enjoyed by all such persons as have the qualifications herein stated for electors of delegates;" and when certain other things shall occur, (as further recited in the 5th section, "said State shall be declared entitled to representation in Congress and Senators and Representatives shall be admitted therefrom, on taking the oath prescribed by law." This is the only provision touching the subject matter under consideration, and its sole intimation is, that until there is a fulfillment of the requirements, the Military Government shall continue. There have been threatening declarations made by individual members of Congress, and certain presses have teamed with fulminations against all who should hesitate in taking immediately the steps proposed; but Congress, as a body, have established no penalty and made no threats. The first reflection which occurs on hearing these announcements is, that it would be a harsh measure and savor of injustice to require people to vote in an election, and then punish them for voting for the candidate, (whether man or measure,) of their choice. And further, that it would be still more unjust to punish the

people of North Carolina for failure to make a Constitution and establish a basis of suffrage which Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and other great and leading States of the North have refused, and still do refuse, to establish for themselves, though with far less cogent reasons than prevail with us. The Constitution of Pennsylvania, as re-ordained in 1838, regulates suffrage in these words:

"In elections by the citizens, every white freeman of the age of twenty-one years, having resided in this State one year and in the election district where he offers to vote ten days immediately preceding such election, and within two years paid a State or county tax which shall have been assessed at least ten days before the election, shall enjoy the rights of an elector," &c.

That of New York provides that "Every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, &c., shall be entitled to vote," &c. "But no man of color, unless he shall have been for three years a citizen of the State, and for one year next preceding every election shall have been seized and possessed of a freehold estate of the value of two hundred and fifty dollars over and above all debts and incumbrances charged thereon, and shall have been actually rated and paid a tax thereon, shall be entitled to vote at such election," &c.

That of Ohio, as follows: "Every white male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of the State one year next preceding the election, and of the county, &c., in which he resides, such time as may be provided by law, shall have the qualifications of an elector and be entitled to vote at all elections."

Since the passage of the Acts of Congress on this subject, an amendment has been proposed in the Constitution of Ohio by the Legislature and submitted to the vote of the people, so as to admit colored men to the right of suffrage on the same footing with white men; and after a most animated canvass in its favor by the leading public men of the dominant party in that State, the news comes to us, as I write, that it has been rejected by an overwhelming majority. Now will there be any punishment attempted upon the people of that State for refusing to extend the right of suffrage to negroes? If not, is any to be reasonably apprehended upon the people of North Carolina, if they shall come to a like determination, for reasons far more powerful and compelling? If any penalty is to be imposed, should it not rather be upon those States where the negro is not numerous and has been a freeman for generations if not from before the foundation of the State, (as in Ohio), than in this State, where they constitute one-third of the population, and the generally are necessarily from their recent condition of slavery, in the grossest ignorance? Is it derogatory to the Congress of the United States, to presume that for a negative vote on this question, which would be but a respective remonstrance, they would think of visiting the electors of a State, with punishment; and if, in the excitement of the fever, they should, their constituents in the great States already mentioned, as well as others, who have manifested no disposition to make the coveted change in their body of voters, would be quick to perceive that what is ours to-day may become theirs to-morrow; that precedents accumulate and constitute law, and that, as their representatives shall have done to others, so may it be done to them. However this may be, the change proposed is in a fundamental article of the State Constitution, deeply affecting the security, safety, and peace of society, and the promotion of the civilization and happiness of its members; it is domestic and concerns ourselves only, and we must act upon it in the choice allowed us according to our convictions of duty. The elective franchise is not necessary to the protection of any of the rights or immunities of the freedmen before the law. By the present Constitution, and the Bill of Rights which has stood untouched since 1776, the free colored man is now, and always has been entitled to all the guarantees as to life, liberty, security and property, which are vouchsafed to the white man—as much so as women, minors and adults of the white race, who have not paid public taxes. The question before us therefore is not one of protection to him, but whether he is qualified for the exercise of political power here, which is denied to him in so many States of the North. I have no prejudices against the colored race. As a member of the Legislature in years gone by, I voted for their liberation on all proper applications; according to the then state of the law; in the practice of my profession I aided several in establishing their claims to freedom against white men holding them as slaves, and prosecuted and defended their pleas as for white men; and since their liberation I recommended to the Legislature in a published communication, in reply to inquiries from certain of its members, promptly to concede to them the right to testify in the courts of justice—which was done. I wish them, now all the happiness and prosperity which can flow from an upright and virtuous course of life in their new condition. But it is better for them and for us, that the elective franchise shall remain as heretofore, with the white race, ensuring a stable, tranquil and salutary state of society, in which every individual, of whatever complexion, shall be protected in all his rights, rather than incur the hazards of the anarchy, disorder and insecurity which will ensue from the change in question.

Deeply solicitous as I am to see the old and constitutional relations of the States of the South to the Union restored, and general harmony re-established, I cannot consent to overthrow the organism of civilized society in a vain and Quixotic attempt to effect that result. I prefer to ask Congress to re-consider the propriety of the course which has been adopted, and would pray them to remember that the destruction of a State, which will be the effect of the measures proposed, can never be the means of its restoration; and that to compel her adoption of a change in her Constitution by striking out a provision which

stands conspicuously, as we have seen, in those of other great States of the Union, and which they indignantly refuse to remove, is to affix a badge of inferiority utterly inconsistent with their ever heretofore being considered an association of equals.

There are two modes of making such an appeal without any disrespect to Congress: 1st, By electing a Convention which shall frame such a Constitution as is deemed fit for the people of North Carolina, and asking approbation thereof. 2d, By voting against Convention. And inasmuch as the only specific requirement of the act of Congress is as to a provision in the constitution for negro suffrage, which we consider it rigorous to adopt, I should prefer the latter. Conventions, with power over the fundamental law of the State, are not called of choice, except in cases where change is desired; but if the alteration proposed is not approved, there is no occasion for the call. To me, who concurred in, and most heartily approved their decision, it was a sublime spectacle in February 1861, to see the people of North Carolina reject the proposition made by the Legislature to call a Convention to consider the subject of secession. The presses and politicians of various shades of opinion, were, in the conclusion and uncertainty of the times, nearly unanimous in favor of the call. But the people, seeing the critical condition of affairs, rejected it by a decisive majority; at the same time taking care to elect delegates, who would represent their sentiments, provided the affirmative had prevailed. Thus two months were gained before causes, not then anticipated, and which were regarded when they occurred as a necessity, precipitated us into a war already commenced.

These are some of the views I should have presented to your meeting, had I been able to attend. I think the subject has been less considered by the people, than from its transcendent importance, it deserves.

I disclaim any purpose of disrespect or contumacy towards any department or authority of the Government of the United States, and still more to aim to promote the interests of any party.

A Whig from principle, never having had any other party connection, now past the meridian of life, will gladly forego all his interest in party, provided he can be assured that he yet has a country. Our own Gaston, long years ago, in the Halls of Congress, speaking of faction, which is but party in excess, exclaimed, "Faction out of power is a demon in chains. Faction, clothed with the attributes of rule, is a Moloch of destruction." In our present situation what is party to us or to you? To adopt pliers, profess creeds or barter away our rights and interests as a State, in order to conciliate any party, is not only positively wrong but is a mistaken policy. Nothing less than the saving efficacy of that perfect law of liberty embraced in the Constitution of the United States, with all its privileges and mutual guarantees, will relieve or materially benefit us. After this shall be restored we may afford to participate in the contests of parties. A half faced fellowship, a patched up Union based on fear and accompanied with mental reservations, should not be desired. I trust that Congress will reconsider and be convinced of this truth, and I trust that the people will be charitable toward each other, and patient and submissive to the laws, but that they will not lose their self possession nor forget that freedom in elections is their birthright; and, if there be among us those who, conscious of little favor with the old voters, are seeking to exhibit extraordinary zeal for the new, and to bind them together as a party organization, opposite and hostile, on the imaginary ground of adverse interests, let the former remember that they constitute the majority, and on this question hold their destinies in their own hands. Intending, as I am sure they do, nothing but what is right and just towards their fellow-citizens of all races, they have it in their power to protect themselves against wrong. I am, very respectfully, gentlemen,  
Your obedient servant,  
W. A. GRAHAM.

Messrs. FELL & GALES.

As an indication of the animus of the Radical party in Virginia, Huncutt, who is its acknowledged leader there, said in a speech in Charles City County, a few days since, that they had nothing to fear if a war of races should occur. He reviewed the results of registration in each of the Southern States, showing the negroes their physical preponderance in the Gulf States and South Carolina. He said he had no report of the relative strength of the two races in North Carolina; but in Virginia the white majority is only thirteen thousand. Huncutt and his number twenty-five thousand, and if they only numbered thirteen thousand, each one of them would go with the negroes. They were bound to make common cause with them. "Again," said he to the negroes, "you have no property. The white race owns houses and lands. Some of you are old and feeble and cannot carry the musket, but can apply the torch to the dwelling of your enemies." This sentiment was boisterously applauded. The above is copied from the Washington correspondence of the *New York Herald* of a recent date.

It is a noteworthy fact that two-thirds of the Republican Nominating Conventions in the Connecticut Valley are to be held in the village churches.—*New York Tribune*, Sept. 28th.

Is it not written, "My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves?"—*Chat. Union.*

WHY WE WERE DEFEATED.—For some weeks we shall have copious and various explanations of the causes that have led to the defeat of the Republicans in Pennsylvania and the loss of the constitutional amendment in Ohio. The only reason we feel inclined to give is that we had not votes enough.—*Radical paper.*

Raymond's paper, the *New York Times*, gives it up; that *New York* will follow, next month, in the wake of Pennsylvania and Ohio.