

The Semi-Weekly Sentinel.

VOL. I.

THE SENTINEL.

WM. E. PELL, PROPRIETOR.

THE PENITENTIARY DEMANDED.

Whatever may have been, heretofore, the force of the objections to the establishment of a Penitentiary, in North Carolina, it appears to us that our present condition demands it imperiously at an early day. The last Legislature, perceiving the consequences which must result from the abandonment of our old methods of punishing criminals, in compliance with military orders, passed a law empowering the Courts, hereafter, to punish persons guilty of misdemeanors or crimes, by adjudging them to work on the public roads with ball and chain.

We learn that Judge Warren, at the recent term of Guilford Superior Court, ruled that the law in question had been rendered null by Gen. Sickles' general order, in which corporal punishments were henceforth forbidden in Military District No. 2. Hence he sentenced all the convicts to simple imprisonment in the county jail, for such terms as the nature of their offences required. We learn further that this decision occasions considerable uneasiness among the county fathers, on account of the large expense which the keeping of a number of convicts in the county jails will entail, and the consequent increase of the county taxes.

Taking it for granted that Judge Warren's interpretation of the Commanding General's order is correct, our people will very soon begin to feel where the shoe pinches, and perhaps will open their eyes to the absolute necessity of a Penitentiary.

What is to be the effect of this state of things, if our people continue to oppose the erection of a Penitentiary? Months ago, when urging its necessity, we warned the public of this state of things. We regard the question as settled, however, unless we may think it to be, that, heretofore, in North Carolina, all corporal and degrading punishments for crime are at an end. We must adopt either the county work-house system or a Penitentiary. The county work-house system is wholly inefficient, troublesome and must be continuously expensive. Whatever objections may be urged against a Penitentiary, bear with still greater force against the county work-house system.

THE WASHINGTON correspondent of the New York *Herald* gives prominence to what he styles "some remarkable utterances" by Gen. Howard's Councill. The following are some of them:

"New England has the rents, and while she holds them she will drive roughshod over the Southern states, and place the entire empire at the tips of her fingers. This is the first. But the South can't say so much as that the next administration, when the swashbuckling people of the West who have to the past followed the lead of the East, will assert that great strength whose irresistible power is to control the future of this country. The East, at present, have the cultivated genius and refined intelligence; but even these cannot always claim, while the West will soon yield that ponderous common sense which is to wipe ever the flimsy cobwebs of legislation not being spun in the land, and with that mighty singleness of purpose which ever flows from that fountain, re-establish the Union and found that more perfect Union contemplated by the Constitution. The West will be just, but the West will also be generous, the West will be vindicated in the hands of the people of the State, to the passions of the educated race."

Considering that Mr. Cushing² himself is a New Englander, of the clan Massachusetts, we are not ill-pleased to see the illustration of New England temper which he so unflatteringly gives. It accords entirely with all our previous notions of the intolerance and malignity of the descendants of the Puritans. "To rule roughshod over a *couraged* people" evinces a noble spirit, truly! Let Alaric and his tribe hide their diminished heads.

Senator Wilson spoke in Wilmington on Friday last, and Benj. Robinson, editor of the *Wilmington Dispatch*, replied to him.

We cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that it is unfortunate, and detrimental to peace and good feeling, that Northern men should let it duty to come South to teach us our duty. The great mass of the people of North Carolina are ready and willing to submit to reconstruction on the Congressional plan, but they don't like outside interference. If office seekers and politicians would let the people awhile and black alone, everything would work right, and there would be no contention and strife. We repeat, that we are for leaving the work of reconstruction to be perfected by those that Congress considers loyal, but we protest against outside interference because we think that it can only result in harm.

We cordially endorse every word of the foregoing from the *Charlotte Democrat*, reprinted this morning.³ We are for leaving the work of reconstruction to those whom Congress considers loyal. To find out who they are, we must look to the terms of the Reconstruction Act, and there alone. It is the only present guide by which we can possibly be governed.

If Radical emissaries will only keep away from the State, we shall get along pretty well. The *Democrat* will perceive, from our outgoings, that we are for an extraordinary importation of a more extraordinary character before long.

The New Orleans *Advertiser* says that 4,000 voters have been registered in New Orleans under the reconstruction act. The registration is now going on in all parts of Louisiana.

The colored people of Alabama, who have been in mass convention at Mobile for two days, declare themselves a part of the Republican party, and claim the right to sit on juries and to hold office. The convention has adjourned.

RELEASE OF MR. DAVIS.—The Washington correspondent of the New York *Advertiser* says:

"If Jefferson Davis is not released on bail by Judge Underwood next week, the President will order his liberation."

RALEIGH, N. C., WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 1867.

NO. 98.

VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA.

We make the following extract from the travelling correspondent of the New York *Herald*, in relation to the condition of the Southern freedmen, made the significant statement that before the passage of the Reconstruction act, outrages upon that class of people were frequent, but that complaints on this account have almost entirely ceased. Such testimony, coming from a man who is more thoroughly informed than any other in the nation in reference to the actual condition of the freedmen, is the most conclusive vindication of the policy of Congress in the passage of the Reconstruction act, as opposed to that of the President and other opponents. *Chicago Tribune.*

Such testimony, coming from Gen. Howard or from any body else, only proves that the South, ever since the close of the war, has been the victim of persistent falsehood and misrepresentation, in order to the accomplishment of a certain object. That effected, by the passage of the Reconstruction acts, it is necessary to the vindication and fanatization of the "wisdom" of the Congressional policy, to say that outrages upon the freedmen have ceased, as one of its results.

According to a correspondent of the New York *Herald*, however, the "passage of the Reconstruction Act" has had another effect. His statements are to be credited. The tendency has been, while sweeping "outrages upon freedmen" from society, at a terrible cost, to outrage persons guilty of misdemeanors or crimes, by adjudging them to work on the public roads with ball and chain.

We learn that Judge Warren, at the recent term of Guilford Superior Court, ruled that the law in question had been rendered null by Gen. Sickles' general order, in which corporal punishments were henceforth forbidden in Military District No. 2. Hence he sentenced all the convicts to simple imprisonment in the county jail, for such terms as the nature of their offences required. We learn further that this decision occasions considerable uneasiness among the county fathers, on account of the large expense which the keeping of a number of convicts in the county jails will entail, and the consequent increase of the county taxes.

Taking it for granted that Judge Warren's interpretation of the Commanding General's order is correct, our people will very soon begin to feel where the shoe pinches, and perhaps will open their eyes to the absolute necessity of a Penitentiary.

What is to be the effect of this state of things, if our people continue to oppose the erection of a Penitentiary?

Months ago, when urging its necessity, we warned the public of this state of things. We regard the question as settled, however, unless we may think it to be, that, heretofore, in North Carolina, all corporal and degrading punishments for crime are at an end. We must adopt either the county work-house system or a Penitentiary. The county work-house system is wholly inefficient, troublesome and must be continuously expensive. Whatever objections may be urged against a Penitentiary, bear with still greater force against the county work-house system.

But two objections of any force have been urged against the Penitentiary. First, the cost of the Penitentiary in building and maintaining it; secondly, that it successful and self-supporting, it must interfere with the mechanical enterprises of the State. The first objection fails to the ground, when it is seen that the county work-house system can be shown to be far more expensive than a Penitentiary. It is estimated that the expense of purchase, construction and furnishing a county work-house, to be rendered really effective, will be from 10, to 20, or \$30,000. Let it be admitted that the average cost of these would be \$10,000, then it would require \$890,000 to supply each county of the State with a work-house person. If the convicts were required to do mechanical work, then they would interfere as much with mechanical trades as a Penitentiary could. Besides, being county in institutions and the counties being unwilling to supply the means for working tools, &c., and the number of convicts being comparatively small, the expense of keeping them up, over and above the profits of convict labor, would be greater in proportion to the expense of a larger institution like a Penitentiary. But the actual cost of a Penitentiary, properly located and judiciously constructed and furnished, would not be to the State over \$200,000. Hence there would be a saving of \$390,000 in favor of the Penitentiary. But suppose our people were to declare against a Penitentiary, or a work-house system, and insist that all convicts, convicted of crimes less than the punishment of death, shall be punished by simple confinement in the county jails, then every county in the State would be compelled to build larger and more costly jails than they now have, each costing at least \$10,000, besides submitting to the expense of keeping convicts in prison, which could not be less than from \$2,000 to \$4,000 annually. See, what an amount of money would be actually thrown away by each county, without adequately punishing crime, or in the least restraining it. The natural result from this state of things would be the release of every convict, in a few days, weeks or months, in order to save the people from expense. Will this do?

Already petitions are being sent in to Gov. Worth, to pardon convicts who have been just incurred, for the simple reason that the Counties cannot bear the expense. We hope the Governor will not listen to any such appeals for such a reason. Where the designs of the law and its honor are maintained, making the efforts of justice a "teror to evil-doers" and a praise to those that do well,⁴ in such cases pardon should be extended; but in cases where high crime and obduracy are evinced and the release of the culprit would be injurious to society, exemplary clemency should not be extended. We shall recur to this subject on tomorrow.

The Boston *Post* says the reason that Senator Wilson moves so swiftly in his clerical tourneying journey, is that his last speech did not overtake him, before he delivers again.

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A man in Kentucky named Beddoe petitions the Legislature to change his name.

HABEAS CORPUS.

Last Wednesday the following petition was presented:

MR. JEFFERSON DAVIS—HIS PETITION TO THE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT COURT.

To the Honorable the Judge of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Oregon:

The petition of Jefferson Davis, by George Shear, his attorney in fact, in his behalf, respectfully shows:

That he is, and ever since the 19th of May, 1865, has been, restrained of his liberty, and held in close custody as a prisoner in (all) to a certain strong place of confinement belonging to the Government of the United States, called Fort Monroe, within the said District of Virginia; and that Brigadier General Henry S. Burton is now the Commander of said Fort Monroe, and as such holds my petitioner in his custody.

That no ground of detention is alleged to the knowledge of your petitioner, or his said attorney in fact, unless it be a certain apprehension, presented against your petitioner, of the May 16th, of the year, entitled *Anti-Slavery Standard*, of which a copy is attached.

That your petitioner further shows that the said May term was adjourned to meet at Richmond, on the fourth day of June, in the course of the ensuing month, that at said adjourned term he, your petitioner, appeared by his attorney in fact, and was admitted to practice, being欲 to proceed without delay, but that the Government declined the practice of admitting attorneys at the bar, and accordingly, your petitioner, in the course of the ensuing month, obtained a dispensation from the said court, to practice in the circuit court of the District of Columbia, on the first Monday in May, 1866.

When your petitioner, thus armed with these words from the court, went to the office of the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, he was received by the editor, Mr. George Shear, who, after a short interview, told him that he was to be admitted to practice, and that he was to be admitted to the bar of the District of Columbia, and that he was to be admitted to practice in the circuit court of the District of Columbia, on the first Monday in May, 1866.

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