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THE SENTINEL. W. M. FELL, SEATON GALES, EDITORS.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1867.

WHAT IS BEST FOR OUR PEOPLE?

We admit to our columns from a respectable source, an article on "the situation," signed "Cato," which we do not endorse, but which seems to have carefully considered, and which deserves consideration. The writer does not favor our views upon bankruptcy as a remedy for the prostrate condition of our people, and although in declining being a republican, yet he evidently considers that repudiation is the only remedy which will suit our people. We estimated in our article upon the bankruptcy law, that the Radicals had produced repudiation, in some instances, to persons in order to secure their votes, when every conscientious man that a Constitution, containing the principle of repudiation, would not be worth the paper upon which it is written. Yet, to make the Constitution popular among the masses, we should not be surprised if some such law were thrown to the winds. The views of "Cato" are based upon the actual state of things existing since the war, in which he holds that the Southern States have been governed without the Constitution and simply by the caprice or will of Congress. The people of these States or provinces, being without Constitution or law and not answerable to the Constitution of the United States, and being governed by the will of Congress, as "Cato" seems to suppose, therefore, if in the reconstruction Constitution, repudiation were included and Congress were to accept it, it would be the duty of the people to acquiesce in the arrangement thereafter! We do not see the force or legitimacy of his reasoning, nor does his view promise any settlement of our difficulties. The most ready and humane, and the cheapest method of settling the indebtedness of the people, is by general and mutual compromise among debtors and creditors. This plan we have urged several times since the war, but there has been no disposition on the part of debtors or creditors to move in the matter. In 1863, this ought to have been done. Debtors and creditors should have met and settled their matters among themselves, on principles of justice and humanity. That scheme failing, we have seen no way of escape, until the passage of the bankruptcy law. The stay law, passed during the war, was not only unconstitutional, but operated almost as ruinously upon the people as the war itself. But for that law, the people generally might have cleared themselves of debt. The stay laws since the war have been of the same character, simply putting off the evil day, increasing the indebtedness of the people, by the accumulation of interest, compelling hundreds to pay large taxes, both State and Federal, upon worthless property and incomes, and vastly increasing the cost of litigation. But the whole fabric upon which "Cato's" argument is built is a false one. We hold that there has not been a moment since the inauguration of the late war, when the Southern States and people were not legally bound by the Constitution of the United States. The attempt to throw off our allegiance to the Constitution of the United States was purely revolutionary—until we effected the objects of that revolution, we were still amenable to that Constitution, although the war suspended its operation; but the failure of the revolution removed the suspension, and at once we were subjected to all the penalties of revolution, but, at the same time, were restored to all the rights and privileges of the Constitution. We hold, therefore, that, since the war, we have not only been living under the Constitution of the United States, but have been entitled to all its protection and benefits. If we have not received these benefits and protection, it is because the powers of the government have been usurped by Congress and the party in power, who are not disposed to give us our rights under the Constitution. The action of the Southern States, in carrying on the war, was revolutionary, but all the acts of the States and people were not revolutionary. Many of those acts were strictly in accordance with the requirements and privileges of the Constitution of the United States. Hence, when the revolution failed or the rebellion was quelled, all the revolutionary laws of the South became null and void, but those laws which were not contrary to the Constitution of the United States, and not revolutionary, remained in full force. The same state of things continues since the war, owing to the fact that the active power of the government has been wielded by the Congress to effect another revolution, equally as republican as the Constitution as secession was. If the present revolution should be successful, then, in that case, the present Constitution and government will be displaced by a new one, and all that has passed will be made to conform to the new. In that case, if we repudiate and the new government should give it its sanction, then of course it would stand. But if it should not approve, then it would be null. But suppose the present Radical revolution should not prevail! Suppose, as every Conservative hopes, that it will be checked in 1868, and the Constitution and laws of the United States should triumph! Suppose law and order will once more prevail, and that they have done, and the old government should be again settled down upon its old foundations, leaving the evidence of slavery, does not every one see, that whatever has been done since the war to repudiate or violate the principles of the United States Constitution, will be ripped up and

THE SITUATION.

cannot stand the rigid scrutiny of the Courts! Not a legitimate compromise of debt and creditor, nor the bankruptcy act, are contrary to the Constitution, and therefore not liable to be nullified, when once settled. But suppose we go into repudiation of any kind or degree, and effect settlements under State Constitutions or laws not recognized by the Constitution of the United States, and how long can they stand? Any arrangement, therefore, which may be offered by the Radicals to relieve the people by repudiation, can only have this twofold influence: first, to ally the people to their interests for the sake of a temporary reprieve; or, secondly, to bind them to their interests in order to preserve what they have gained by it, only to bring upon them and their children utter ruin and degradation forever!

THE STATE AFFAIRS IN MISSISSIPPI—THE CAUSES.

As mentioned in our telegraphic dispatches on Wednesday morning, that Gen. Ord had dispatched General Gillen, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau for the State of Mississippi, to Washington, to represent to the President and Secretary of War the starving condition of the Freedmen in a large number of the counties of his sub-district. We publish, on our first page, to day, the report of Gen. Gillen, made to Gen. Ord, upon which this action was predicated, and we submit the following important letter, issued by the District Commander on the 19th, inst. "Commanding officers are directed to notify the leading local men, and to tell to each other measures as may be necessary to give general publication of the fact, that all freedmen, who are able, will be required to earn their support during the coming year, and to go to work upon the best terms that can be procured, even should it furnish a support only, and thus prevent them becoming a burden on the Government. All freedmen who cannot, but will not, earn a livelihood whose employment can be procured, will be liable to arrest and punishment as vagrants. The cooperation of sheriffs and constables, and police magistrates, is requested to enforce the enforcement of this order, and any such action of theirs, under its provisions, will be sustained by the military authorities."

Judging from all the indications before us, it may not be long before some similar action becomes necessary in North Carolina. The immense losses that have been sustained by those of our planters, who went largely into the culture of cotton, the past year, together with the financial stringency resulting from other causes, will eventually preclude any extended or speculative operations, in any department of farming, the present year. The result will and must be, that thousands of laborers will seek employment, in vain, at anything like the wages which have heretofore obtained. We feel confident that many of them will come to consider themselves fortunate, ere long, if they can secure situations for their clothing and food. The number of idlers and loungers is very visibly increasing, each day, in every section of the State, and this fact accounts, in a great measure, for the accumulation of crime which has marked the closing weeks of the year just drawing to an end.

While this state of things has its origin in the depreciation of prices, the partial failure of the crops, and the monetary pressure, the first and last the legitimate results of Radical legislation, the condition is greatly aggravated by the teachings which have been instilled into the minds of the negroes by Radical emissaries, demagogues and incendiaries. Under these teachings, they have, in many cases, come to regard work (in the fields, especially,) as inconsistent with the idea of freedom. They look upon the ballot as something better than bread, voting as more necessary than violence, and constitutions as something that concerns their own dignity more closely than clothes. Most of them will forfeit a day's wages, at any time, to struggle off and listen to the empty vapors of some ignorant proreeder or designing demagogue, who proposes to "address" them on the great and glorious topic of "Liberty and Equality." The worst of it is, too, that, at the very time when a stern necessity is about to demonstrate, what every sensible man of their race ought to have foreseen, and what they have all been repeatedly admonished was the case, that their real and only dependence is upon the Southern whites, among whom they live, and are being raised, their minds are being poisoned against and filled with hatred towards their former owners.

NORTHERN SETTLERS.

Soon after the war, a number of persons of Northern birth, either connected with the army or following on its heels, determined to settle in the South, at different points, engaging in mercantile, cotton planting, &c., expecting to make a good thing of it. In the meantime, some of them became, also, deeply interested in the political situation of the South, and foremost in the management of the political machinery of the party in power, and, in many instances, they, with Agents of the Bureau, have been elected to the various Conventions of the Southern States. A good share of this class of men manipulated the wires in the Alabama Convention, and are doing the same thing in Georgia and Louisiana. This accounts, in a great measure, for the violence and liberality exhibited.

STATE NEWS.

The Goldboro News chronicles the following anecdote at Gable's in Wayne: "We learn, that one day last week, a negro entered a store at or near Goldboro, in this county, examined several articles, and finding no one present but a small boy, who was acting as clerk, selected several articles and remarked that 'we colored folks have got to have these things, and I'm going to take them.' And starting off with them, the boy seized a gun that was convenient and drawing a bead on the negro, commanded him to put them down or he would shoot. The negro was, like the look of the gun and the determination of the clerk, dropped the goods and made his escape. Many such attempts will no doubt be made during the winter, and we advise every man to have the means of protection within his reach."

Under the auspices of the Benevolent Society of Wilmington, the poor of that city were provided with dinner on Christmas day. Large amounts of provisions were contributed by the citizens, and the butchers and bakers were especially generous in their donations.

The Wilmington Journal gives the following sketch of Artie, the negro, who has been arrested for complicity in the murder of Col. Nethercutt, and who has confessed his guilt: "Patrick Artie, one of the arrested murderers of Col. Nethercutt, is a negro who has participated in all manner of lawlessness, and whose course of crime will no doubt soon have a fatal yet merited termination. Many of our readers are probably aware of the fact that he is engaged felon from our country workhouse, to which he was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment at the October term of our Criminal Court, for the offense of larceny. His capture after the commission of this crime, for which he was imprisoned, was not attended without serious difficulty. The workhouse was not strong enough to hold him, and he made his escape from there on the 24th of October. He was taken up until his arrest a few days since for complicity in the murder of Col. Nethercutt."

This man Artie was born in Stanton, N. C., and is about twenty-two years of age. He has lived in Wilmington for a considerable period since the war, and is a carriage maker by trade. He is about five feet one inch high, dark, thickly complexioned with black eyes, and has a scar on his right leg from a cut by an axe. His course in crime has been onward and rapid. We trust that those negroes who have fallen into a state of lawlessness and disregard of the law, will take warning by the fate which no doubt awaits Artie and reform their ways and habits while it is time."

The Salisbury Banner says that two Yankees have recently canvassed Union County, visiting a preparation, or white-wash, in the negroes, which, they assured them, after using for six months, would make their skins white.

THE GEORGIA CONVENTION AND THEIR PART—A STORMY SESSION.

ATLANTA, GA., December 23.—The Convention met this morning, and immediately took a recess until 3 P. M., to give an opportunity to negotiate a loan to pay the expenses of the body. The afternoon session was exceedingly stormy. The Finance Committee failed to secure a loan, and reported an ordinance to authorize further effort, which was defeated on the ground that nothing could be done. The report of the committee sent to Milledgeville to draw \$100,000 from the State Treasurer was received. It says that he showed the State Treasurer the ordinance of the Convention, with General Pope's authorization and directed him to obtain the money from the State Bank, by bringing it to mat at the national bank, on such authority, being sworn to by the constitution and laws of Georgia, and was handed only to pay warrants signed by the Governor. During the debate that ensued a delegate said the Treasurer had snubbed the Convention. Another said he would go to God the Convention could snub General Pope. The negro Branch said the sergeant-at-arms should be sent with a list of the soldiers to bring that impudent Treasurer to the bar of the Convention. Another negro said: "What did they bring us here for? Great confusion accompanied the adjournment, which is over to the 8th of January next. Extreme indignation is expressed by the delegates, a majority of whom have not money enough to take their horses, boats, board, houses, the Convention printer, and officials, suffer severely."

WAGES DECLINING.—As an indication of the decline in the price of labor, we give the following item of information: "The Superintendent and Presidents of our various railroads, who, last year, paid for laborers \$10 per month, with rations, have determined to pay over \$8 to \$10 per month, with rations, for the next year.—These laborers, it will be remembered, are charged for all lost time, even fractions of a day."—*Merion (Ga.) Telegraph.*

ARMY OFFICERS are generally distinguished for courtesy. We regret to hear that at Wal's Opera House, last evening, a Major General, gruffly declared to be a courtier, and refused to permit a person to get by him in order to join a lady, and brought on himself deserved censure therefor.

According to the Washington correspondent of the Baltimore Herald, General Grant would weep when it learns this fact: "A Kentuckian shot at his brother because he wouldn't answer for him. Although he missed his aim, his kind intention was frustrated, for his brother fell dead of heart disease at that instant."

Prince Alfred shot an elephant in Southern Africa, and then stood upon the carcass in an attitude of triumph. Brave prince!

John Brown's son has been taken in an Ohio tentacle system, afflicted with the hereditary taint.

Dr. Hayes thinks that one of his feelings would suffice to pay the national debt, if sold by the post. Even a cooler pig than Butter's.

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DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH.

Although some of our contemporaries seem to find gleams of sunshine in the condition of the South, we confess that so such desirable signs are presented to our view. We regret that the emancipation demonstration have just occurred in Richmond, in Mason, Ga., in Mobile, in Little Rock, Ark., and elsewhere. Conservative clubs are in process of organization in the Carolinas, as well as in some of the other unconstructed States. It is stated that Florida has chosen an anti-Radical majority for her constitutional convention. Gen. Hancock, the military commander in West Virginia, has also thrown a new and more consoling feeling into the administration of affairs in Louisiana. But no one whose eyes are open can fail to observe indications of a determination on the part of Congress to enforce its extreme doctrines of Southern reconstruction. This is true enough, if no other unpleasant cloud obscured the view to happier days for the South. Yet we fear that the Alabama Convention has adjourned and presented a constitution for the suffrages of the people of that unconstructed State—of those who are loved, while the elective franchise—containing provisions abhorrent to every respectable and responsible white man living within its borders. We also know that black supremacy conventions are now in session in Georgia and Louisiana, that others will shortly assemble in Mississippi and Arkansas, and that so far from expecting respect and toleration from those bodies the reverse can only be expected. Moreover, we have accounts of insupportable distress among both whites and blacks throughout the one fifth Southern domains. These accounts are accompanied by others which exhibit the progress of long and cruel Northern radicalism has progressed in prostrating commerce, destroying agriculture, undermining family ties, uprooting civil law and in seducing the ignorant blacks into the belief that no more labor is due from them, that they have worked long enough and that the inheritance of the whites, 'once their masters, becomes now their own. The fact that conscription is in every country, and that no one is longer allowed to sell land and daim to that effect are in the hands of the authorities, and that great mischief is meditated cannot be doubted. In view of these developments, occurring every day, we say we confess we cannot discern gleams of sunshine through the black South-ern clouds which some of our contemporaries, with the kindness of their optics, allege they have discovered. But let the Southern whites who are now under the heel of radicalism be firm, let them keep up their courage, let them be patient and await the hour of their complete redemption, which every sign portends will occur within a twelve-month.—*N. Y. Herald.*

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