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FOR THE WATCHMAN: Robert Seeger, Assessor of

are victims of their malice shut up in the Bastille at Salisbury. The breath of detraction and infamy can and will be blown upon these victims and their children, in after years, and all this, because they can get no chance to prove their innocence; but must lie there, perhaps to the end of the war and then be

The vast majority of those who now advocate Martial law—the suspension, not only of habeas corpus, but of all law, were once the disciples of Thomas Jefferson. Why not abide by him now? Let facts speak for themselves, and let him declare himself in favor of the eternal and unremittable force of habeas corpus laws. "Why," said he, "suspend the writ of habeas corpus in insurrections and rebellions? If the public safety requires that the government should have a man imprisoned on less probable testimony in those, than in other exigencies, let him be taken and tried, retaken and retried, while the necessity continues, only giving him redress against the government for damages."

The Great Writ was never suspended in the Government of the United States before the time of Abraham Lincoln. There had been rebellions and insurrections, intestine dissensions and foreign wars, but our fathers adhered to the personal liberty of the citizen. They had but too recently suffered from the tyranny of arbitrary power, to open the door for the repetition of its crimes. No effort, even, was made to suspend the writ until the conspiracy of Aaron Burr. At that time authority was given to Gen. Wilkinson to arrest Burr and Bienerville and their accomplices. Some of the latter eluded the aims of the laws, by obtaining discharges under writs of habeas corpus. Jefferson wrote to Wilkinson that he was unwilling that he should extend his arrests "to persons against whom there was only suspicion." Five years afterwards Jefferson wrote to Monroe that Wilkinson's conduct, though zealous, was "altogether injudicious." Meanwhile the Senate passed a bill, in great haste, authorizing the President to suspend the writ of habeas corpus for three months, and sent it to the House. Jefferson hearing this, procured its defeat in the House, through the agency of Mr. Eppes—his son-in-law. Mr. Eppes spoke of the habeas corpus as "our political charter," and protested against personal liberty being held "at the will of a single individual, and against giving the citizen 'in lieu of a free constitution, the executive will for his charter.'" Thus we see, that Mr. Jefferson refused to be clothed with such power, in a legal manner; notwithstanding the accomplices of Burr—against whom his antipathies are supposed to have been excessive—had evaded his grasp by the great writ. In that time of rebellion, he would not have any man arrested on suspicion only. He preferred that the writ should stand in all its stately grandeur, and that the enemies of the country should be "taken and tried, retaken and retried"—that a few guilty men should escape, rather than the main pillar of the temple of liberty should be removed, even for a time.

It was reserved for Abraham Lincoln to signalize his advent to power by the suspension of this writ—for the Confederate Congress to follow his odious example and for the President, lending a pliant ear to his croaking courtiers, to abuse the high and holy discretion with which, in an evil hour, he was clothed. We would not, unprovoked, in times like these, find fault with the powers that be. But principles and rights alone are eternal. Names and empires, (men and measures, sentiments and nations) are as chaff, compared with the eternal principles of justice. The beginning of evil, like the letting out of waters, must be resisted at once, else slides of evil, with the torrents rush, will sweep away every left and hindrance. Presidents are but fallible men; and Governments are created by the people and for the people. It will be an evil day, indeed, when any man shall rise so high, in these Confederate States, that it shall be treason to question his acts; and when freemen must say of him, "the King can do no wrong," or be silent. Let Presidents, Cabinets and Legislators be tried in the burning crucible of popular criticism; the gold will stand the test of the most searching alchemy—the dross alone will be cast off or consumed. But let us hear what Mr. Davis himself says about Lincoln and the people of the North on this subject. In his message to the Provisional Congress, November 18th, 1861, after denouncing in the strongest terms, the outrages which the Federal powers had committed in Kentucky, in seizing and deporting some of her most eminent citizens, "to languish in foreign prisons, without knowing who were their accusers or the specific charges made against them," he proceeds to say, that when the people of the Confederate States "see a President making war without the assent of Congress; when they behold Judges threatened because they maintained the writ of habeas corpus, so sacred to freemen; when they see justice and law trampled under the armed heel of military authority; and upright men and innocent women dragged to distant dungeons, upon the mere edict of a despot; when they find all this tolerated and applauded by a people who have been in the full enjoyment of freedom, but a few months ago—they believe that there must be some radical incompatibility between such a people and themselves."

Not content with this narration of facts, and denunciation of Lincoln and the Northern people, and with this defence of "the writ of habeas corpus, so sacred to freemen," the President releases and reiterates in his Inaugural address on the 22d day of February following, after this style: "The confidence destroyed by the invasion of the territory of the North) have recently exhibited for all the time-honored bulwarks of civil and religious liberty. Bastilles filled with prisoners, arrested without civil process, or indictment duly found; the writ of habeas corpus suspended by Executive mandate; peaceful citizens and gentle women incarcerated for opinions sake, proclaimed the incapacity of our late associates to administer a government as free, liberal and humane, as that established for our common use."

"For proof of the sincerity of our purpose to maintain our ancient institutions, we may point to the Constitution of our Confederacy, and the laws enacted under it, as well as to the fact that through all the necessities of our unequal struggle, there has been no act, on our part, to impair personal liberty, or the freedom of speech, of thought, or of the press. The courts have been open; the judiciary functions fully executed, and every right of the peaceful citizen maintained as securely, as if a war of invasion had not disturbed the land."

The people heard their Chief Magistrate and were glad with joy. But "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream." "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!"—only five days after he uttered these last sentiments, he proclaimed the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth under Martial Law. Not only was "the writ of habeas corpus, so sacred to freemen," suspended, but all writs and all laws were suspended. Proclamation followed proclamation, as the great writ expired, in town, city and hamlet, until at length weary and exhausted, the first intimation we have of the suspension of the writ, in Salisbury, is the announcement of the fact by the keeper of the Bastille, conveyed to him, doubtless, by lettres de cachet, sent for and received.

It is with unfeigned regret that I feel compelled to say that the President can no longer appeal to the fact that there has been no act, on his part, to impair personal liberty, as proof of the sincerity of his purpose to maintain our ancient institutions. The courts, so far as he has the power, have been closed in Salisbury, where neither insurrection nor invasion exist; the writ of habeas corpus, so sacred to freemen, has been suspended there, without ceremony or proclamation; a Bastille filled with political prisoners, some of them at least, peaceful citizens, arrested without civil process or indictment duly found, without knowing who are their accusers or the specific charges made against them, looms up here in our midst; and two hundred bayonets, basking in the mid day sunshine, not only threaten, but defy the Judges of North Carolina, when they attempt to maintain the writ of habeas corpus—one of the most time-honored bulwarks of civil and religious liberty.

Where, we ask, is the radical incompatibility between the people of the North, who "tolerated and applauded" these things in Lincoln, and those Southern men who do the same thing in Davis? If the submission of the Northern people to the acts enumerated by the President, proclaimed their incapacity to administer a free government, by what logic can Mr. Davis, his advisers or confederates defend the capacity of the Southern people to govern themselves, when they not only submit to the same aggressions upon the time-honored bulwarks of civil and religious liberty, but likewise applaud and defend? Lincoln and Davis are different men, the Northern and Southern people are diverse, discordant and belligerent; but acts are the same—the ends identical.

In conclusion, I beg leave to call the most earnest attention of my countrymen to that part of the regular message of Gov. Vance, to the General Assembly, upon the subject of the political prisoners confined at Salisbury, and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Turn to it and read it all, as it comes gushing from the patriot's heart, and ponder well its freeman sentiments. I can give you but a part:

"I have seen no official copy of the act, but learn from newspapers that Congress has conferred upon the President the power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, in all cases of arrests made by Confederate authority. If this be once admitted, no man is safe from the power of one individual. He could, at pleasure, seize any citizen of the State with or without excuse, throw him into prison, and permit him to languish there without relief—a power that I am unwilling to see entrusted to any living man. To submit to its exercise would, in my opinion, be establishing a precedent dangerous and pernicious in the extreme. Among a people so united and faithful to their cause as ours, where disloyalty is the rare and solitary exception to the general rule, I can see but little good, but a vast tide of inflowing evil from these inordinate stretches of military power, which are fast disgracing us equally with our Northern enemies. A free Republic that must needs cast off its freedom in every time of trouble, will soon cast it off forever. Freedom cannot be embraced to-day and spurned to-morrow, a steadfast and constant worship can alone secure her countless blessings. Her chosen instruments—the Constitution and the laws—were made the sure covenant of her everlasting residence among us; our delight in times of peace and prosperity, and our shield in the

day of trouble and calamity. Now, if ever, is the time when we should abide strictly by her stern decrees, and walk uprightly in the narrow path they have marked out for our footsteps. We should least of all forsake the helm and compass, when the vessel is driven by the tempest and clouds and darkness ob-

FOR THE WATCHMAN. WHAT WE THINK.

I am requested by several distinguished men to write an article for the press, especially to hit (very slightly too) a certain class of men about home, who though they have had "lice upon line, and precept upon precept," yet they do not quit their evil ways. I thought enough had been said by writers, both male and female, to bring at least a blush to the cheeks of these speculating, cold hardened extortioners and shirkers. But it don't seem so—their consciences are seared as with a hot iron—the devil has full possession of them; if his Satanic Majesty is as shrewd as is generally represented he had better set about making his position secure, else he will have reason to be jealous of these impostors who are making their money as fast as a shade or two of being as black and damnable as he. The misfortune is that we cannot reach them with pen and ink; like sinners in the congregation, they take everything as applicable to somebody else and nothing as applicable to themselves. All that we can do is, to hoist their candle for them, that others seeing their evil deeds may treat them with that utter contempt which they deserve. Men do not care so long as their own interests are not disturbed of their pride morified—it is useless to talk of making them feel through any other channel. This, however, is not the point, why then do I spend time thus foolishly? Moralizing and philosophizing are judicious when we have matter of fact to deal with, and the fact in this case is, I wish to address the ladies more particularly,—but this choking sensation (I fear it is chronic as our doctors say) is next to insurmountable—especially when I remember that my fair readers possess the same peculiarities now, which they did years ago. I need not enumerate them, and a single illustration will be sufficient:—In a certain case it is necessary that all advances should be made slowly, cautiously and covertly, else "the bird will be frightened from its nest" and the prize escape capture. The very same prudence and precaution are essential here.

Don't think me jealous, my dear readers; I have no cause to be so, still we don't like to hear of your wanting your charms,—you are indeed fastening pearls before swine. But before I proceed farther, allow me to explain this little word "we," or what is better, allow me to tell you who it may include. "It is generally known that I use "I" in preference, but in this communication "we" is the word. Besides several companies of privates it includes some half dozen captains, a score of lieutenants, and perhaps a few majors and colonels, to say nothing at all of the musicians. And we don't like to hear of this waste of intelligent conversation, the smiles, the kisses, the hugs—compressions—there! oh, ugh! give me my pipe ready lit—that will do,—I'm better now, and will proceed. I say we are sorry to hear of this prodigality. And who are the recipients? a parcel of genteel gentles who, two years ago were the first to don the cockade "War, war; we are for war!" But since the devil and fortune have both smiled propitiously on these swifdlings,—the former has converted their once brave and generous hearts into cowardly and selfish stones, the latter has lavished upon them from her cornucopia a beautiful share of this world's pelf, hence, by the first they are prompted to "shirk the war," the second enables them to get a substitute. What then? They revel in the business of home while we are trudging through snow half knee deep doing our just duty. They ogre, and spurn and flatter the fair sex—at least those of them who are silly enough to submit to their soft soaping, while we have to discharge the dull routine of our duties from day to day, ay, from year to year, without having the pleasure of speaking to a lady twice during the year. Not that we so sorely envy the lot of your admirers, gentle reader, but are you doing justice to the many worthy young men now in the field undergoing the keenest privations? Are you doing justice to the memory of the brave dead—to the crippled living? Do you ever feel any anxiety concerning the probable duration, or final issue of this war? Can you realize in imagination (if it may be allowed the expression) the consequences of ultimate defeat and subjugation? If you are not callous to the present state of affairs in our country, and not deaf to the appeals for help—more for sympathy—if you do not feel unconcerned when the news of a great battle reach you—then our advice is, spurn from your feet with disdain those fawning sycophants who, in the absence of braver if not better men, strive to shine around you. Tell them that your hands were not made to be clasped by those who with the most unpardonable apathy look on the suffering and agonies of their fellow countrymen for freedom. Tell them that their lawless exemption does not raise them in your estimation, but turns their pretended courtesy and attentions into the most flagrant insults. Their wealth may have bought substitutes, or their oily tongues obtained a clerkship, or their wonderful knack for shoemaking has got them into some government shoeshop; perhaps their proficiency in the science of rail splitting or breaking has procured for them a situation on the railroad,—no matter, their object is the same. It is said upon good authority that the cars upon a certain road not a thousand miles from home have never carried more than five passengers at one time—they are actually overloaded with conductors, brakemen, firemen, baggage masters, assistant baggage masters, sub ditto, and so on to the end of the alphabet. I know from observation that genuine pluck in a man will not brook scorn from a lady; try the charm and see how it will work; when a man is once so far gone as to say "I don't care what the

women think of me," you had better let the side, it is not likely that he will ever care much for the women or any body save self. Shall we go farther? Ladies generally dislike long articles, it is said, (always excepting love letters, and then a pamphlet is not too much) but in this case I hope to be excused, if I should appear a little over. I trust too that you will bear in mind the maxim, "I don't care what the women think of me," and if you are disposed to act upon any of the above suggestions, all right, you will make yourselves dearer to us, and do our country a noble service; such a service as will be gratefully remembered by us as long as reason retains her seat,—a service that this and other nations will applaud, and hand down in history to the latest generation.

Now for the finale: (Give me a light Sam, think ye. Besides the characters above mentioned an deserving fair reader's disapprobation, I would barely mention the speculator. (We live with him but my muse filled me and I got on the wrong track.) Here I'm sure you can scarce see of having our toes trod upon, as might possibly be the case in the preceding part of this letter. On this subject, too, whole columns have been written, all apparently to no purpose. But there are a few prominent specimens to whom I would call the attention of my readers. They are men such as might be termed "the top of the bush" were it not for the fact that an inordinate love of gain has taken hold of them; and for the acquiring of property they would, they do, destroy the happiness of hundreds around them, and sacrifice their own souls to boot. They howl for war! war to the hilt! but take good care that they may never have their own precious lives exposed. Some erect government shoeshops, the most gigantic swindling institutions in the Southern Confederacy; others (perhaps the same) forget the dignity becoming a Militia Colonelship and zealously hunt down sick and wounded soldiers whose fortunes may have expired a day too soon. We have heard of this, and regard it as a business that should condemn those who engage in it to the blackest and most infernal horrors of the bottomless pit. For a man, and one too who professes to be a Militia Gentleman, to stoop to acts so base is proof sufficient that he is not "one of nature's noblemen," yet, when he heard of the battle at Fredericksburg he exclaimed "See what a glorious victory we have won!" This is like the backwoodsman who sat astride a joint while Betty killed the bear; then descending he ran to a neighbor's house to tell about the "big bear he and Betty killed that morning." Come now Col. if nature or somebody else has bequeathed to you a pair of legs that always set you going in the wrong direction, pray don't render yourself despicable by unduly interfering in other people's affairs. And if a sick or wounded soldier happens to be found within your jurisdiction, without the necessary papers permitting his detention,—don't, we say, kick up a hubbub about it, distressing the infirm, as well as a whole neighborhood besides, with your meddlesome propensities. For past offences you must trust to God for forgiveness, for I doubt very much whether a single man whom you have ever wronged in that manner will forgive you. For the future take warning from the past, else some fellow will undoubtedly consider it his duty to bestow upon you some unpleasant favors. NAT.

Montgomery County.

The following Card, from Mr. Wooley, the Senator from Moore and Montgomery, and Mr. Barringer, the Commoner from Montgomery, effectually puts to rest the report that a movement, looking to a reconstruction of the old Union, was about to be made in that County:

RALEIGH, N. C., Jan. 22, 1863.

W. W. HOLDEN:—Sir:—We see in the papers of this City, an extract from an article in the Wadesboro' Argus, stating that it was rumored that certain persons in Montgomery County were in favor of a reconstruction of the Union, and that certain persons were expected to address them in public meeting.

We feel authorized to state that said rumor is entirely false and slanderous as to the citizens of Montgomery County, and excepting a mere squad, not enough to form a corporal's guard, there are no people more loyal and patriotic than the citizens of Montgomery; and they are the very best people who would be in favor of a reconstruction of the Union, under any circumstances whatever.

Montgomery County, out of a voting population of between nine hundred and a thousand, has sent about 800 able bodied soldiers to the army, and has lost many of her best sons on the bloody field in the defence of our country.

Yours truly, C. W. WOOLEY, E. G. L. BARRINGER.

A friend has placed in our hands a letter from Gen. Alfred Dockery, in which he indignantly denies the charge that he is for a reconstruction of the Union. Gen. Dockery's letter shall appear in our next N. C. Standard.

Fire.—The Smoke-house of Dr. E. Holt, of this county, was consumed, with all its contents, week before last; and last week his dwelling was found to be on fire about 12 o'clock at night. Fortunately it was discovered in time to save the most of his furniture, but loses everything in the cellar, among which was a large portion of pork he had laid in after the loss of his smoke-house. A negro girl some fifteen years old, confessed to having set fire to the buildings.—Hillsboro Recorder.