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Carolina Watchman.

VOL. 2. THIRD SERIES. SALISBURY, N. C., MONDAY, MARCH 11, 1867. NO. 10—WHOLE NO. 1753.

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From the Banner of Wednesday.

☞ The fate of Sherman's iniquitious bill is not yet definitely known. We know that it has been vetoed by the President, but whether it has been passed over the veto is not so certain. This however, amounts to very little. The XXXIX Congress whose term of service expired Monday at 12 o'clock M., may or may not have passed the bill. If it did not, the XL Congress, whose session begins at the expiration of the XXXIX, will, no doubt, pass that or a similar bill, and perhaps a much worse one, if such a thing is possible. So that we have nothing better to hope for. The Radicals in Congress have usurped the powers of the general Government, just as did the Jacobins of the National Assembly of France in the revolution of '92 and their acts will be worthy of usurpers only. They have brute force to back them; hence they disregard all law, all reason, all precedent, and strike for the mastery of all things, over all things, all rights human or divine, all Government, all human thought and action, with a pertinacity and bloodthirsty ferocity that would put to blush the puritan fathers. The Constitution is torn to shreds, or had as well be in ashes,—it is not heeded; The Supreme Court is set at defiance, and the executive is no longer respected but is regarded as an incubus, a nuisance, a thing to be dispensed with. They assume all power and demand obedience, and there is no appeal. And notwithstanding, they arrogate to themselves the right to exercise all power whether State or National, they pretend to be governed by the Constitution, and have respect for our action. We are gravely told that if we will adopt this or that atrocious measure that it shall be well with us, &c., &c.

This is the most humiliating and detestable feature in the ignoble proceedings of Congressional treason and usurpation; and it is really painful to hear men crying amen to these monstrous propositions.

Gov. Brown of Georgia has again distinguished himself for duplicity, political chicanery and harlequinade by urging the people of that noble State to adopt the Sherman bill and ratify their own degradation. But it was fitting in Georgia's Hackneyed harlequin to ask her people to become a party in the destruction of the Constitution, of free government and individual liberty, since his obstinacy and treason did so much to ruin the cause which the noblest and bravest of the South suffered, bled and died to save. It will do for him, and such as he, to urge the Southern people to assist in forging the chains which are to bind them forever to slavery, but let him and those of his kidney be alone in perfecting a condition so worthy of them.

The South has nothing to gain by acceding to the propositions submitted to her by the blood-thirsty fanatics who hold the reins of power, and thereby become *particeps criminis* in the overthrow of the fundamental principles upon which was erected the grandest structure of law and liberty ever beheld or enjoyed by man. There is nothing that she can do that will abate one jot or tittle the radical programme; and it is the most stupendous folly, to say nothing of the infamy and self abasement, for her people to attempt to change it by acts which every sense of exalted manhood and justice would condemn. We can not avert it, even were we base enough to sell our birth right for a mess of pottage: Neither can we escape the wrongs and oppression provided for us. Our doom is sealed. The last dying echoes of Lee's cannon at Appomatox Court House was the funeral dirge of expiring liberty. We are left alone in the world, without friends, stripped of liberty, plundered and oppressed, defenseless and with no Government to love—for it were unnatural for us to love that which would rob and crush us—all for what? because we durst defend our inalienable rights with our lives. Talk about treason! If it was treason for a State to withdraw from a compact which she as a party had signed with the implicit understanding that all her rights were to be protected, and which was, in the event of failure, by virtue of the stipulation null and void, in the name of heaven what shall we call that crime of Congress, the creature of the states, which assumes to set aside that compact, the Constitution, and even presumes to blot out the very name and existence of the States which created it!

But there is no use of reason or argument. The day has passed when either was effective.

Whether Sherman's bill has become a law or not is a matter of but little concern with us—we accept the situation. We care scarcely "a continental damn" what the radicals do—but in the name of a brave and oppressed people, we beg them not to ask us to assist in our humiliation, do not ask us to ratify your measures and bills of oppression and disfranchisement. Spare us this degradation. Do what you will, pass whatever law you may see proper, we will submit, and as good law abiding citizens, we will endeavor to discharge faithfully the duties required of us to the bet of our abilities, but do not ask us to go through the ceremony of adopting by mere outward parliamentary form but which we lothe and detest from the bottom of our hearts. We can bear anything—we are willing to suffer all things, but do not ask us to perform acts which will compromise our manhood, which are unworthy of a brave people and which will degrade us in our own estimation. We are unarmed and povertystricken. We are powerless for evil. We submit.

Since writing the above we have received news of the passage of Sherman's bill by both branches of Congress, over the veto; and it now has the force of law.

The most objectionable feature of the bill is that which requires us to adopt or indorse it or submit to a worse fate. The Southern people are not permitted to look on with indifference. They must go to work and assemble a Convention in accordance with its provisions (which is virtually ratifying it) or see the few straggling unmistakables and negroes do it for them. In such an emergency they must act and assist in their own degradation or be exterminated.

Would that this feature had been left out. Would that we had been required to submit to the bill as to a law, without being forced to approve or endorse it by legislative enactment.

But whatever we do let us do cautiously, deliberately.

THE VETO MESSAGE.

This message was received too late for this issue, but will appear in our next.

The following synopsis which we take from the Raleigh *Progress* will give some idea of its contents:

Washington, March 2.—In this message the president says, in effect, that he has examined the bill to provide more efficient governments for the rebel States with the care which a matter of such transcendent importance awakens, and is unable to assent to its provisions, for reasons so grave, that he hopes the statement thereof will have influence with patriotic and enlightened men. The bill places ten states under military rulers, combats the preamble, and he declares that his information shows the people of the south are united for the reorganization of the government on a basis of peace. The face of the bill shows its objects is not peace after the states adopt measures notoriously objectionable, and representation is allowed without reference to security of life and property. The preamble's excuse for the bill is admitted by the bill to be false. Military rule is established, not for the prevention of crime, but for the enforcement of the adoption of odious laws—a measure in character, scope and object without precedent or authority; palpably in conflict with the constitution and destructive of our blood bought liberty.

The power given a Brigadier General is that of an absolute monarch, whose will is law; he determines the rights of persons and property; disposes of lands and goods within his district; makes his own criminal code; everything is crime and which he denominates; every person is guilty whom he condemns; he keeps no record; need make no report; can break up courts, and make judges and jurors of criminals; his military courts are of his own making and its officers from his subordinates. Instead of mitigating harshness single rule in such courts would divide responsibility, thus making it more cruel and unjust. Several provisions dictated by humanity are introduced in the bill to restrain the officer imperative. Each officer may define cruelty according to his temper. The gag, lash, ball and chain lie within his power. A military commander under the provisions of the bill may condemn to death without trial, thus avoiding the executive sanction. The authority given the officer amounts to absolute despotism, aggravated by the power to delegate his despotism to subordinates—the bill declaring he shall punish or cause to be punished.

This power was denied to the English kings for five hundred years. In all that time, no people speaking the English language have borne such servitude. It reduces the population of ten States, regardless of color, sex or condition, and strangers within their limits, to abject and degrading slavery.

It may be answered that officers are just and humane. Doubtless they are so with other classes, but the history of the world may be searched in vain in the endeavor to show that there is no danger from unrestrained authority. It is almost invariably tyrannical when a strange ruler is appointed by an unfriendly power. It was tried in Hungary and Poland, resulting in sufferings which aroused the sympathy of the civilized world. In Ireland, though tempered by principles of English law, this same system begot cruelties which are indignantly denounced by all just men.

The French Convention arming deputies with similar powers sent them to the departments—massacres, murders and atrocities followed.

An irresponsible duty never yields what law dont extort. Have we the power to establish and carry this measure into execution, certainly not deriving its authority from the constitution, or acknowledging its limitations.

The balance of the message consists of elaborate constitutional arguments embracing copious extracts.

☞ The Richmond *Examiner*, in an article refering to the Sherman bill, addressed to the people of Va.., makes the following remarks which are equally applicable to the people of N. C.:

The act provides for a new Constitution for Virginia—at a period when no citizen of Virginia demands it—to be formed by a convention, composed of and elected by blacks and whites indiscriminately, the only limitation being one whose exclusion can only operate against the whites. To the same class the constitution must be submitted for ratification; the same class must administer it, when ratified.

Until such a constitution is formed, ratified, adopted, submitted to Congress, and by it approved; until, furthermore, a Legislature is elected under it, by a mixed white and black vote—a Legislature from which no one is to be excluded on account of color—until that Legislature has adopted the Howard amendment; until that amendment is adopted by three-fourths of the States of the Union, and incorporated in the Federal Constitution, the irresponsible rule of the sword must continue.

What you will do in such a conjuncture is the question for solution. It transcends, in importance, any question you have hretofore considered, and will not be exceeded, in interest to yourself and posterity, by any that can ever here after challenge your attention. Before it your ordinary affairs shrink into inconceivable insignificance; because as you determine it wisely or otherwise, you determine everything that can make the possession of life desirable, or its pursuits honorable, or its pleasures attractive. It involves the destruction of the government of your choice, the abandonment of the theory of the Revolution, the surrender of principles whose exercise was bought with patriot's blood, and the destruction of liberties, of law and of constitution, some of which were the gray heirlooms of your ancestors when Magna Charta was signed at Runnymede. You may well pause and tremble at the summons. The voice of the dead and of the unborn mingle in its tones—the one admonishing you not to dishonor, the other to destroy.

In this emergency, two courses remain open to you. They may be described, each in a word—action and inaction.

Your natural resentment at the cruelty and malignity of the proposal of your enemies, engenders in many hearts the resolve to meet, with simple defiance and inaction, the despotism to whose resistance their resources are inadequate.

Your enemies are pleased to call this sullenness; but no one who knows your wrongs, and sympathizes with your suffering as we do, can describe a word involving reproach, any resistance you may elect to make to your enemies. The feeling is inspired rather by that fortitude which crowns the fate of uncomplaining martyrdom with glory, even in the worst of causes; and if you have convinced yourselves that all further effort is useless, it is the course best befitting men who have shown their courage and endurance on many a field, while hope remained.

Should such be your deliberate resolve, however unwise it may be regarded and whatever calamities may ensue, the worst that posterity will be able to charge, will be a defect of judgment, under circumstances to the compassing of which human wisdom would seem all inadequate.

Let us examine, with the interest which a common fate constrains, the consequences of such inaction.

Your government is at once declared provisional. On the fourth Thursday in May next, if the terms of the act of Congress have not meanwhile been fully complied with, and your State restored—a result physically impossible—an election will be held in Virginia for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and for members of the Legislature. At that election all may vote (and none others) who are qualified by this act to vote. All will be eligible (and none others) who are by the act made eligible.

Meanwhile, however, the necessary steps will be taken by Radical whites, and such of the blacks as they can influence, to comply with the provisions of the act. A call for a convention will ensue, and if you pursue your policy of simple inaction, that convention will be chosen by, and will consist of the vilest, most ignorant and most radical of the population. That convention will assemble in Alexandria, probably, in order to be in easy communication with your enemies, and will frame a constitution under their dictation. What will be the character of that constitution, it requires no gift of prophecy to foresee. It will express the hatred and enmity, and lust for your property and your lives, of the worst of your enemies. It will be presented to you for ratification or rejection. If you continue to defy and resist the outrages inflicted on you, by persisting in your resolution to take no part in the scheme, it will pass almost without dissent, and will be recognized and accepted by Congress as soon as offered.

Does it require any spirit of prophecy or special fertility of imagination to conceive your condition under such circumstances? You have the picture in the fearful anarchy of Tennessee, West Virginia and Missouri—no not a tithe of the picture, for in each of these States the constitution and laws have, thus far, been framed and administered by whites. Here, negroes, and whites much worse than negroes, would form the first, sway the government; impose and collect your taxes; impose test oaths, not only for voting but for the exercise of the profession; monoplize the magistracy; administer your literary fund; control your State endowments; fill all the offices, legislative, executive and judicial; frame your poor laws; your labor laws; your assessments; change your criminal code to suit them.

And as the entire machinery of State action would fall into their hands, so would they, by the operation of test oaths, monopolize representation in Congress, thereby strengthening the fanaticism to which they would owe their power. Thus would Virginia be plunged at once into Haytien horrors, and thus would be secured the perpetuation of those horrors, by the surrender of all the functions of government into the hands of those whose power and consequences would depend on such perpetuation.

Terible Conflagration—The Exchange Hotel in Ashes—The denizens of our city were aroused from their slumbers, about 3 o'clock this morning, by the loud and prolonged tolling of the fire alarm bell. Hastily donning our habiliments we followed the current of citizens, which led us to the Exchange hotel. On arriving at that point, we found that the conflagration was confined to the rear portion of the building in the vicinity of the kitchen, but owing to the fact that a high March wind was prevailing, the flames rapidly spread to other portions of the building. In less than three hours, there was nothing left of the vast pile except the chimneys, and heaps of ashes and coals.

During the conflagration, the wildest excitement existed. The citizens generally repaired to the spot; the guests of the hotel were seen rushing from the house with haste and in the greatest confusion, bearing in their hands personal effects; while others again had set about the work of removing the elegant furniture with which Mr. Blair had furnished the establishment.

But, every effort was unavailing in almost every direction. A very inconsiderable portion of the contents of the hotel were rescued from the flames; indeed, the insurance polices will not be impaired in the least. On the hotel there was insurance to the amount of $22,000; $15,000 on the main building, $5,000 on the furniture, and $2,000 on the printing office of the *Methodist Episcopal*. Our townsman, P. F. Pescud, is the agent of thes offices in which the insurance had been effected—an assurance that all losses will be promptly adjusted.

We are gratified to know that the material of the newspaper office was saved and there will consequently be no interference with the regular issue of the *Methodist Episcopal*.

The community generally sympathize with the sufferers. Mr. Cunningim, owner of the "Exchange," is a gentleman of much enterprise, while Mr. Blair, the manager and lessor of it, added to that quality, an experience and liberality in hotel matters, and a courteous deportment in private life, which made him extremely popular. Both have our sympathies and we hope soon to learn that they are again up and doing, with their misfortunes repaired.—*Progress 2d.*

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