

The Weekly Carolina Era.

Office, in the "Standard" building, East side of Fayetteville Street.

RALEIGH, AUGUST 31, 1871.

The Grand Duke Alexis of Russia and suite have sailed from Cronstadt for New York city, and will be there the early part of October.

The Wisconsin Democrats met in State Convention at Madison, on the 23d inst. A "new departure" platform was adopted. Jas. R. Doolittle was nominated for Governor.

The Board of Trade of Louisville, Ky., held a special meeting on Thursday and adopted an appeal to Congress to refund the taxes on cotton paid by the Southern States in 1865, 1866 and 1867.

The attention of our readers is directed to the correspondence in another column between J. Z. Fails, of Cleaveland county, and His Excellency, Gov. Tod R. Caldwell. The reply of the Governor is exceedingly appropriate. It will probably be of some service to the Ku Klux of Cleaveland and Ruthford.

A gentleman writing from Chatham county, Aug. 21st, says:

"The article in the *Era* of Thursday, the 17th inst., headed, 'the proscription of the Radical Conservative party,' is something I have been long looking and wishing for, and have done the world a great service. The people of the State would not place the word 'Radical' where it rightly belongs, on the extreme men of the State, the Convention men, and keep it there."

The Supreme Court of California has decided that a postponement should have been granted in a case where it was shown that the counsel for the defendant was prevented from attending by dangerous illness in his family. The case in point having resulted in favor of the plaintiff, the judgment of the Court below was reversed and a new trial ordered.

The British Parliament was prorogued on the 21st, until Nov. 7. The Queen's speech was read in the House of Lords. She alluded to the recent use of the royal warrant, the condition of Ireland, the French commercial treaty, the Russian conference, and the treaty of Washington. The termination of the old feud between the United States and England is regarded by Her Majesty as a matter for mutual rejoicing.

New York City is governed by a corrupt clique known as Tammany Democrats. The National government is governed by Republicans. We ask the people to scan the following figures:

DEBT OF NEW YORK CITY.

December 31, 1869, \$34,407,047

April 30, 1871, 84,541,186

Increase in 28 months \$50,134,138

DEBT OF THE UNITED STATES

March 4, 1869, \$2,525,475,259

August 1, 1871, 2,283,328,858

Decrease in 29 months, \$242,128,401

It is supposed that a part of the money which Tammany has received is laid away to aid in electing a Democratic President next year.

A white man's party in North Carolina is now a necessity—a party under young, able, energetic men, who will be elected soon, or we shall continue to be defeated at each election. "Up with the flag!"—*Battleboro Advance*.

The Conservatives are closing up their ranks. One by one they fall into line. The re-organization of the White Man's Party is a fixed fact. "War to the knife, and the knife to the hilt," is the motto of the opponents of the Republican party in North Carolina. A systematic attack along the whole line, from Cherokee to Currituck, is being made upon the Reconstruction Acts and the Negro. The banner of the White Man's Party is thrown to the breeze. The vote of the colored man is not wanted and will not be sought by the Conservative White Man's Party.

The Asheville *Citizen* takes its place in the ranks as a supporter of the White Man's Party. It says:

For the future we unfurl the white man's banner to the breeze and beneath its folds intend to battle against the black cohorts of Radicalism until the question is settled whether or not this is a white man's or negro's government.

PLATO DURHAM'S TESTIMONY.—Plato Durham, Ex-President of Cleveland county, N. C., who was recently examined before the Joint Investigating Committee in this city with regard to the Ku Klux disorders in his State, has seen fit to publish a card in the Raleigh (N. C.) *Sentinel*, stating that there were not three lines of truth in the evidence given by him before the committee, as was reported in the Daily *Chronicle*. All we have to say is that the statement of his testimony was carefully condensed from the sworn evidence given by Mr. Durham, and that it was not important in every particular. Will Mr. Durhams be good enough to publish a phonographic report of it to the country? We dare him to do so.—*Washington Chronicle*, August 18.

We should like to see this question between Mr. Durham and *The Chronicle*, settled. Their statements are directly opposite. One or the other has not told the truth. *The Chronicle* has told the truth? The only means by which Mr. Durham can sustain himself is by publishing a phonographic report of his evidence. Will he do it? Unless he does, the public must believe the statement published by *The Chronicle* to be the truth.

Whether or not the enthusiasts who advocated the recent convention movement, thought that the condition of the debt was an *irreducible argument* in favor of that measure, it is certain that they proclaimed it to be such. It was the great bugbear relied upon to frighten the people from their property. From the inauguration of the convention campaign, in February last, to the day of election, the canvass was, in a great measure, a set of variations played upon the following passage in the legislative address:

"There is one overwhelming consideration to which we give particular attention, and with it, consider the call of our country. In our opinion, an imperative necessity. One of the most striking provisions of the present Constitution has never been enforced, and yet it contains a direct and positive mandate to the General Assembly, which reads, or commands, the Senate, 'regarding the oath, and who may be bound by the opinion of our Supreme Court in relation to the limit of taxation, know not how to disobey. It is in these words: 'The General Assembly shall, by appropriate laws, provide for the prompt and regular payment of the interest on the public debt.'

"We know very well that any such tax would crush the people into the dust. Yet we have taken an oath which can not be fulfilled without causing a loss of life and limb. We see no way of escape, unless the people will call a Convention, and relieve us from the dilemma, by changing the Constitution in this particular. We cannot believe the true and honest people of North Carolina would prefer to go to prison rather than to pay their debts. We therefore appeal to them to come to our rescue, and their own! Let a Convention be called, that the constitutional provision respecting the Public Debt may be altered, and the debt itself put in the way of being conveniently paid off. However, adjusting for the people, may seem proper. If steps be taken towards the accomplishment of these things, we can and will delay any action in the premises until after the Convention has perfected its task. But the people themselves, if they call a Convention, and to amend the Constitution, striking out the aforesaid provision, how can we avoid interpreting their action to mean that we must proceed to execute that provision, and levy upon them a tax to prevent it? We beg the earnest attention of the people to the foregoing considerations."

This address was signed by 105 Conservative Members of the present Senate and House of Representatives. A plain man might suppose that in the actual circumstances in which the recent election has placed these gentlemen, a tax bill of the proportions indicated in the address, will certainly pass into a law at the next Session and that the people are thereby to be "crushed into the dust." Meanwhile, in fact, no considerable number of persons expects it. The farthest that leaders among the Conservatives go, is that such a bill, for consistency sake, ought to be introduced. No one is hardy enough to pretend that it should be passed. We may say, by the way, that we shall watch with interest for the gentleman who introduces it, even! He is to be the *Curtius* of his party—burying himself forever in a vain attempt to render respectable the solemn pledge of the Conservative members of the Assembly!

The Conservatives have no intention of levying such a tax. The list of *ayes* affixed to the address will be sadly affixed, when Craige, and London call the roll, upon the passage of the bill. Very unpleasant occurrences have transpired in North Carolina, touching the honor and character of many who have represented the people in the General Assembly, or otherwise, since 1865; but, in all candor, we know of nothing more unfortunate and to be lamented, than the fact that 105 of the very gentlemen whom the people elected in 1870 for the expressed purpose of quelling public vice, and restoring the State to the old paths,—105 of the apostles of the new morality,—should have issued an address containing the paragraphs above quoted.

If they were now to resign their seats rather than encounter the terrible alternatives which by their own avowal, are before them as legislators, although the act of sacrifice would be respectable, it could not deliver them from the injury which the confessions of the address have already inflicted.

For instance, they say that "if steps be taken towards the accomplishment of these things"—viz: if an act submitting the call of a Convention be passed, and be ratified by the people,—"we can and will delay any action" in regard to levying the frightful tax. How singular a piece of morality! If the Constitution enjoins a solemn duty, such duty can be suspended by the pendency of a proposal to strike out the injunction! In former times the Constitution forbade non-freeholders to vote for candidates to the State Senate; Gov. Reid proposed to amend it. According to the above extract, the provision as to who should vote for Senators ought to have been considered as suspended as soon as the first step was taken to accomplish Gov. Reid's views. That however was not the way in which matters were managed in *the good old times*. It was supposed and universally held, that a law was binding during the pendency of an attempt to amend, as much as previously, and that it was suspended, or otherwise modified, only by a *successful issue* of such attempt.

Here, however, a number of gentlemen who had presented themselves before the People in 1870 as fit persons to embody the desire of the latter to return to a state of public affairs in which their representatives were both intelligent and conscientious, and who had been elected upon that pretence, come out upon a stage before their constituents, all in a row, and declare that they can avoid a specific constitutional injunction, by suspending the Constitution, during the pendency of a proposition to amend it! The constitutional provision cited by them is: "The General Assembly shall provide [by ec., ec.,] for the prompt and regular payment of the interest on the public debt."

Every child knows what is meant by *prompt and regular*. These gentlemen formed the large, and embodied, majority of an assembly, which

met in November, 1870, knowing that interest on the public debt would require *prompt payment* upon January 1, April 1, and July 1, 1871, and that if the Convention were called, it could not act in time to relieve them of their duty in regard to these instalments,—yet, after avowing a knowledge and keen appreciation of their duty under the Constitution, and parading their *honor* and their *oaths*, they wind up by suspending the Constitution upon the very point involved. "We can and we will!" they say emphatically!

This suspension, be it observed, was not a pretence by the General Assembly, or by the Governor, or "by the Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate," which latter persons are perhaps as competent to that as to some other functions assumed by them of late,—it is a suspension by resolution of a caucus of the Conservative Party! This is as it should be, for the suspension of one or more provisions of the State Constitution, can be a conservative measure only where done by a *conservative secret society*. It requires such high endorsement to preserve it from the charge of being a *pretext destructive of all law*. Some Conservatives frequent secret societies whose objects are to suspend the provisions of the Constitution as to the proper political "place" of the colored man, and to make him "*know his place*" as declared by the fundamental decrees of such societies; other conservative secret societies, we see, suspend other constitutional provisions. The principle running through all these societies is the same: in practice, they can decree the suspension of any constitutional provision that is offensive; even if in protection of life itself! "*they can, and they will*," and we may add, THEY HAVE!

But, unworthy of intelligent conscientiousness as this avowal may be, it is no doubt deprived their appeal of much of the force that otherwise it would have had.

They presented themselves to the People with most piteous lamentations as to their condition: We have taken an oath, "we see no way of escape unless you relieve us," "we cannot believe you expect us to violate our oaths," "we appeal to you to come to our rescue, and your own!" It was the case of the wagoner throwing himself upon the ground, and praying to *Hercules* to help him get his team out of the mire, of which Esop tells us. The People have rigidly followed the precedent set by Hercules. Seeing that, with all their outcry and affected helplessness, they set forth, in the very address which contains their prayer, that they had, of themselves, freed their consciences when involved in a dilemma the very same in principle,—the People, on the 3rd day of this month, gave them the answer which in old time the wagoner received, viz: Whip up your consciences out of their trouble, as you did before!

They will obey these instructions! Having excited general admiration by their ingenuity in discovering and magnifying this point of conscience, they will carry that admiration higher, by their display of ingenuity in evading it! It will turn out, to borrow an apt, if inelegant, figure from Hudibras, that they have excited an "*itch*" upon this matter, merely to illustrate their ability to "scratch it!"

Far be it from us to suggest that we are able to foresee the exact manner in which they will relieve the People herein. We know *some* things that they can do, *all* that they can, we do not! We have *belief, hope, apprehension* and *knowledge*, upon the general topic.

For instance,—

1. We believe that none of the signers of the address will rid themselves of the dilemma by *resignation*; for, it were easier to suspend the Constitution still further, than to resign.

2. We hope that none of them will die!

3. We apprehend that none of them will undergo a *translation* to a better world; for although their conscientiousness has reached an unworldly pitch, yet occurrences of that kind have, up to the time of the meeting of this Assembly, been so infrequent, that new cases are not rashly to be expected.

4. Without hinting at the shape in which these gentlemen will relieve the People in this respect, from what we know, let us consider, that they can exert still further this implied power of suspending the Constitution of the State, of right inherent in Conservative secret societies; or, they may take up the bill introduced at the last session by Mr. Morris, of Henderson, for a repeal of the above section of the Constitution by the *legislative method* of amendment, and then, by the very words of their address, all the while "steps are taking" under this method, their consciences will be dormant, if it take ten years for accomplishment; or, inasmuch as they say in their address, that the mandate of the Constitution as to taxation cannot be avoided by "men of common honesty regardless of their oaths," they may (and rightfully) take ground that this proposition does not include them as they are men of *uncommon honesty*; or they may say (and soundly) that, whereas the address hath it, that "we see no way of escape" from making the levy in question, that may very well consist with there being an hundred such ways;—for, if there were such, they would not be objects of *sense*, and, therefore, not of *sight*. All that they say, is that they do not *see* them! Some suggest that, in order to make this true, each signer *shut his eyes* as he affixed his name, thereby making his

inability to see at that moment entirely true. This, however, we opine to be too great a refinement to attribute to these gentlemen, and prefer our own explanation as above. Certainly, they do not *see* the way of escape! Every body knows that.

Upon the whole then the People are safe?

A question remains, nevertheless, whether whilst the General Assembly were around, impeaching, last winter, they did not, among others, impeach themselves, and whether the above address be not the record of such impeachment,—the judgment having been solemnly awarded, after a long and patient hearing, by the People, on the first Thursday of this present August?

We may discuss this matter farther, at some other time.

The recent election is fruitful of pleasant topics for discussion. We will do no more than *enumerate* some of them, placing them upon record for future elaboration, perhaps:

It was an unnecessary, as well as an impudent application to the people. The rebuff has been based, in a great measure upon a conviction of this on the part of the people. In old times, the people of North Carolina had been used to being asked, during the canvass for the Assembly, whether they wished such Assembly to take steps for calling a Convention, or for amending the Constitution and, so, too, having the result of such election operate as instructions for or against such measure. This was not so here. Elected upon certain grounds (perhaps, in view of what has followed, we might say, *presumptions*) the members of the Assembly made the chief work of their session a matter upon which very few of them had consulted their constituents, and it proved, as is usual, an *Aaron's rod*, to swallow up all other legislation.

It sums up the whole matter to say that, aping the victorious United States, they proposed to *force another reconstruction* upon North Carolina. It turns out that they wanted the necessary power, and have made themselves ridiculous, if they have not also committed virtual suicide. Esop tells their story: An eagle having carried off a sheep in the sight of *Jackdaw*, the latter thought he would do likewise, and having pounced down upon another sheep, became entangled in the wool, and at last was taken in this sorry plight by the shepherd, and carried home, to be made sport of by his children.

They presented themselves to the People with most piteous lamentations as to their condition: We have taken an oath, "we see no way of escape unless you relieve us," "we cannot believe you expect us to violate our oaths," "we appeal to you to come to our rescue, and your own!"

It follows that the people who, as some think, have unnecessarily been born in spirit by their unsuccessful resistance of former projects of reconstruction against their will, by their recent success, will pluck up courage and be more themselves. A very large majority of the people will (without reference to their own votes at the late election) speedily come to value, and hug to their bosoms, the recent victory; and this, in light, especially: 1, of their finding out how notorious a cheat was attempted to be put off upon them upon the Taxation and Debt question; and 2, of their being more and more aware, as they become more cool, of the imminent danger the State was in of a collision with the United States, and the consequent ill-effects to the character and prosperity of the community, no matter how brief such collision may have been, and how readily the State may have given way.

The people have *stood their ground*, and that ground thereby becomes the more their own!

In connection with this latter consideration, it also seems to us that the solid vote against Convention cast by the colored men, may come to be so appreciated by the property holders of the State, as having been given strictly in the interest of these latter, that a fine prospect for a political *entente cordiale* between the two is opened up. The scarecrow of excessive taxation being out of the way, as it will soon be seen never to have been in the way, it will follow, to all men's apprehension, that the vote of the colored men, was as wise for the white *property-holder*, a class peculiarly subject to injury by political storms, as, undeniably, it was for himself. It appears from the recent election, that the colored man, although himself, as the Romans used to say, "*a new man*," and, therefore, to be charged as naturally "*desirous of revolutions*," is capable of giving votes really conservative, and calculated to render secure the class of *property-holders*. We know that in communities where their vote was greatly consolidated at the recent election, he listened intently to discussions during the canvass, in which these points were made to him with great plainness, and at length, viz., that if the movement turned out to be a *revolution*, and was put down as such, he was not so much interested in opposition to the call, as the white *property-holder*, but he was, for other reasons, interested to vote it down, and that if he did it only for the reason under consideration, he would thereby entitle himself to the grateful estimation of the white man, and that such seed would bear good fruit hereafter! Undoubtedly, by gradually maturing convictions, founded upon cool reflection on the risks by him recently encountered, the white man of North Carolina cannot fail to felicitate himself upon, at least, his *good luck* in having been overwhelmed by the massed colored vote of his neighbors and fellow-citizens. Who shall hinder good nature, and good feeling from acting their appropriate parts in such event?

This position in favor of the massed vote recently cast by the colored man against a Convention, is entirely impregnable, and, upon consideration, will restore the good temper of all just conservative gentlemen, who since the recent election, have suffered themselves to talk of re-establishing the "white line."

In this point of view, we especially hail the result in the county of Caswell. Other counties afford very good examples to the same effect, but, as perhaps will be generally conceded, Caswell the best! It is understood that in no part of the State is the colored man less organized, and able to protect himself. The contest was between such a community, and another not very unequal even in point of numbers, and all other respects vastly better equipped, and led by two gentle-

men long versed in political tactics,—men of ability, eloquence, and captivating personal gifts. Upon the one side was *RIGHT*, with simple staff and sash,—upon the other, *WRONG*, in uniform, and with armor glittering and deadly. As ever happens everywhere, in the long run, so there, at once. *RIGHT* was triumphant! Whether it was mere instinct, or whether an inspiration of that Providence which is not far from every one of us, the colored men of the county of Caswell well repented how much is possible for the humblest society of the People to do in defense of their rights. They were opposed to a Convention, and notwithstanding all that had been previously done in Caswell to overawe them, they have made their views to be known and felt; they have chosen delegates of their own way of thinking; their heavy vote has gone to swell the State majority upon the general question; and henceforward they are conscious of the their own strength! It is a matter for general congratulation, and we therefore, congratulate them most heartily!

Now, whether or not the Conservative Party would, in fact, and with the eye of the Federal Government upon them, have undertaken to interfere with the political rights of the colored man, may be questionable; but, that there are no favorable precedents in history for a people recently freed, to entrust their fortunes into the hands of a party *unadjusted* for the sole purpose of defeating their attempts for freedom, is unquestionable! The repentance, in the case before us, is too recent, and affects fundamentals too much, to render it wise to *friendly protestations* by the Conservative Party, should they be repaid with more than *similar coin*. Except for the surprise that has been expressed in high quarters at the actual result,—surprise, and *ill temper*, this would seem undeserving of a pause in our discussion. It is very much, to say that white people do not do so in regard to their own liberty! Hostility, is never followed at once by an unreserved confidence, and embrace. Not even where kindness and a thorough knowledge of each other preceded the hostility. If after hostility good offers come from the other side, there, nevertheless, and as of course, follows a period of jealous watchfulness, and standing on guard. The colored man has to say of the great mass of white men in North Carolina, that they were born and bred in the belief that he was unfit for political privileges, and that some