







HARRISONBURG, VA.

Wednesday, May 28, 1869

THE CONSERVATIVE CONVENTION—ITS ACTION—OUR DUTY.

To the exclusion of almost everything else, we lay before our readers the most material portions of the proceedings of the Conservative State Convention which met in Richmond on the 28th ultimo. They will be read with interest.

No intelligent man will be surprised at the result of their deliberations. To have nominated a separate ticket, upon the principles put forth in the resolutions and address of the former Convention, would have resulted in certain defeat, and would have secured the election of Wells and his negro associates.

The majority report, which was finally adopted, "while expressing its hostility to the leading and general features of the safe constitution, and while urging the necessity of organization for the purpose of defeating such provisions as may be submitted separately, declines to make any recommendation to the Conservative voters of the State, as to their suffrages upon the constitution expurgated of such provisions, or as to the candidates that may be before the people, feeling assured that their good sense and patriotism will lead them to such results as will best subserve the true and substantial interests of the Commonwealth."

The Conservative press of the State generally have adopted the above sentiment, and the larger portion of them will labor zealously to secure the defeat of the Wells ticket.

Whilst we deeply lament that a combination of circumstances, over which the conservative element of the State could exercise no control, necessitated a temporary abandonment of the great principles enunciated by the statesmen of former days, we cannot be insensible to the high duties and responsibilities devolved upon us as a people by the action of the Convention.

We need not now, after what has already appeared in our columns on the subject, discuss the merits of the two tickets now before the voters of the State for the offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General. It is sufficient to say that the Wells ticket is supported by the lower order of carpet bag adventurers, scoundrels of easy virtue, and the unthinking colored people. If elected, therefore, Wells will be the fit representative and the pledged tool of the most abandoned and unprincipled set of reprobates and scoundrels that ever disgraced any country. To place in their hands the government of the State, with all its patronage and vast pecuniary interests, would be to inaugurate a system of oppressive legislation, burdensome taxation, plunder, and malfeasance in office, never before witnessed in this or any other State. The wicked will rule and the land will mourn.

On the other hand, the Walker ticket must have the support of the entire conservative vote to insure its success. It is very true, nearly all the respectable, intelligent members of the Republican party, who have a permanent interest here, will vote for Walker; but then they will number but a few hundred as compared with the seething mass of Radical putridity. This fact devolves a heavy weight of responsibility upon the property-holding Republicans and the conservative element. If saved at all from the destructive rule of an irresponsible mob, who have neither sympathy nor interest with our people, we repeat, it must be by the concurrence of those whose pecuniary interests are so deeply involved in the result.

The papers and demagogues by whom Wells is supported have already commenced the attack upon Walker, because, they say, he is the representative of the property-holding aristocracy; and declare that the contest is between the laboring men and the capitalists of the State. They thus unwittingly admit the truth of the charge that they have no interest with us; that they are therefore an irresponsible mob, whose only desire is to get office.

It is important that Wells should be defeated, it is of the utmost moment that the Conservatives should elect as many members of the next Legislature as possible. The radicals will no doubt have a majority in that body, but unless they should have two thirds, if Walker should be elected, they would be powerless for evil, as the Constitution vests the Governor with a negative upon what he may consider unconstitutional or injurious acts of the Legislature.

Every man must choose his own line of conduct voluntarily, and act with reference to his individual interests and responsibilities as a citizen. To meet these, if he has heretofore acted with the Conservative party, may require a sacrifice of principle; at least for the present, with the hope of gaining eventually some permanent advantage.

The State Journal says Col. Walker is not a Republican.

## FROM MEXICO.

A dispatch from Washington, dated the 26th ult., says the U. S. Consul has arrived from Mexico, bearing important dispatches from Gen. Rosecrans, Minister to that unhappy country. It is supposed these dispatches refer to the regulations between the Minister and the Mexican Government relative to certain treaties that the latter is desirous of entering into for the cession of certain portions of Mexico to the United States for the purpose of raising money to support the Juarez Government. Gen. Rosecrans having been superseded, will not be permitted to remain to complete these negotiations, as the new minister is on his way there.

## BRUTAL ORDER.

Count Yalmaseda, a Spanish General in Cuba, has issued a proclamation, in which he says that "every native male over fifteen years of age found away from home without sufficient cause will be executed;" that "every uninhabited dwelling and every inhabited dwelling where a white flag is undisplayed will be reduced to ashes;" and that "all women away from their houses will come to Bayamo or Jiquini, or they will be brought by force." This sounds very brutal, yet it is no worse than Butler's doings at New Orleans. Sheridan's march through Georgia, or Sheridan's devastation of the Valley.

## DR. BURKE CHRISMAN.

Editors Old Commonwealth:—The gentleman, whose name heads this article, is thought by us, and many others in various parts of this Congressional District, to be the most available candidate for Congress, whose name can now be presented to the people.

Dr. Chrisman is a man of property in the District—identified with us in interest—of liberal conservative views—opposed to all disfranchisements, and well fitted to represent this District in Congress, if the people should select him, and he should desire to be a candidate.

ROCKINGHAM.

## SHEPHERDSTOWN, W. VA.,

May 3, 1869.

DEAR OLD COMMONWEALTH:—As I see your face here at Zittle's sanctum, and know you to be ready for any news or matters of interest in the Valley, I shall send you three items from this end of it, viz:—Here lived James Ramsey, who first propelled a boat by steam in 1786. He was called "Crazy Ramsey," and his boat was dubbed the "Flying Boat," in derision. George Washington corresponded with him upon the subject of navigation by steam. Mrs. Ann Baker, the mother-in-law of Gov. Gilmer, was one of the passengers. The boat moved four miles per hour up stream, and the current here at the place of trial is pretty rapid. Four Ramsey went to England and died there of an apoplectic fit, while prosecuting his great design and laying his plans before the nobility of that realm. A boat of his construction was run on the Thames after his death.

There is a celebrated spring near this town, known as the Morgan Spring, at which Capt. Stinson's company met when about to leave Virginia, in 1776, to go to the relief of Massachusetts. They there made a pledge to each other, that as many as should live fifty years, dating from the day of leaving, should meet at that spring. Strange to say, the pledge was faithfully kept, and in June, 1825, two of the company met there—one of them having walked from the Blue Licks of Kentucky to fill the rare appointment. Bedinger was his name, and he met his only brother there. One more of their comrades was alive and in Kentucky at the time, but was palsied and too feeble to travel so far. Had the steam-car, as now, run over and under the mountains, he too might have been present. These are facts well known to the people of this locality. I had them from the lips of Col. Morgan, who owns the farm upon which the spring is, and who is a lineal descendant of the Morgans of revolutionary fame, and the land which he owns has descended down through his family and name from the estates of Lord Fairfax. When we connect all these facts in our minds, is it any wonder that the people who live a long and happy life, and who are so sacred and thought-inspiring a character are ardently attached to these almost hallowed places, and that the tear of regret "man has its will," when they are forced by circumstances to leave the places made dear by so many ties and sweet associations? Tears are not weak but manly evidences when shed over such scenes as these.

One other remarkable fact, of recent date, and I'll close. Some mountain gentleman, only a few years ago, pined a few bass fish in the Potomac river near Cumberland, and so astonishingly rapid has been the increase of this scaly tribe, that they now swarm in vast numbers and are eating the smaller fish from the waters of the Potomac, possessing themselves, like the Huns and Goths, of all the country. But as the bass is a pretty large and well-flavored fish, it is well received by the lords of the earth, and the smaller tribes meet with some to mourn over their swift departure from these bright waters.

ROCKINGHAM, VA.

The Velocipede, as a means of locomotion, it is asserted, is practically worthless. At a recent trial on the Union course, near New York, a mile in six minutes was the highest speed attained; and the rider could not keep up that rate of speed even for a moderate length of time. As this trial was made under unusually favorable circumstances as to smoothness of track, it may be concluded that the velocipede on ordinary roads is an incubation rather than a help to the rider.

A Canada paper expresses great contempt for Mr. Sumner and Mr. Chandler, especially the latter, who is not to be feared, for he has been tried and found wanting. As to the sentiments of the people of Canada on annexation, the paper observes: "Nobody desires it, and the population is unanimous in preferring the mild reign of England to the eccentricities of a Republic on the eve of bankruptcy."

Snow and rain on Monday.

## Conservative State Convention.

The State Executive Committee and the Superintendents of the Counties of the Conservative party met at the Exchange Hotel Wednesday morning the 23rd ultimo at 12 o'clock.

## COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS.

J. J. Keeler, Dinwiddie; W. B. Shanks, Southampton; John G. Mason, King George; J. H. Kelly, Fredericksburg; Charles May, Lunenburg; W. L. Riddick, Nansemond; A. G. Wilford, Richmond; A. H. Ashburn, Isle of Wight; J. P. Hoyt, Smyth; J. T. Curpew, William White, Norfolk; J. T. Wilcox, Charles City; Richard Wood, Amelia; R. F. Dillard, Nutt; B. B. Wilks, Brunswick; William D. Smith, Clarke; R. S. Lewis, James Barbour, Culpeper; M. Garrett, Essex; William E. Cameron, Petersburg; J. E. Campbell, Washington; J. A. Austin, Henrico; W. B. Rockley, Thompson's Neck; L. B. Anderson, Hanover; R. E. Withers, Lynchburg; B. M. Buckner, Louisa; W. D. Haskins, Mecklenburg; W. H. Perkins, Buckingham; W. B. Pettit, Fluvanna; A. C. Leake, Gloucester; R. L. Jones, Chesterfield; I. F. Woodhouse, Princess Anne; Walter Coles, Pittsylvania; A. Moeley, Wythe; T. W. McCann, Richmond; D. B. Smith, Bedford; J. A. English, Spotsylvania; H. Latham, Alexandria; Joseph McDonald, Bedford; J. G. Parrish, Caroline; T. Randolph, Albemarle; C. M. Button, C. L. Moseley, Lynchburg; Hunter H. Marshall, Charlotte; James Iabban Albemarle; William McLaughlin, Rockbridge; Louis Linkenhoker, Botetourt.

The meeting was organized under a sort of ban of secrecy, the members of the press and outsiders being excluded. Subsequently, by resolution, the members of the Conservative press were admitted. Consequently we are unable to give more than a sketch of proceedings up to the time of our admission.

Thomas Jefferson Randolph, of Albemarle, was chosen an Executive Committee member.

On motion of Mr. Shackelford, citizens present of counties unrepresented were admitted as delegates.

The following Committee on Permanent Organization was appointed—viz: Messrs. Robert Ould, John Goode, Jr., Fayette McMullen, and L. H. Shackelford.

The Committee on Permanent Organization reported the following officers, who were unanimously chosen:

President—R. T. Daniel.  
Vice-Presidents—John R. Edmunds, George P. Tayloe, James Barbour.  
Secretaries—J. R. Fisher, W. D. Coleman, H. K. Elyson, John C. Shields.

Col. Withers addressed the Convention, and concluded by withdrawing his name as the Conservative candidate for Governor.

Letters were read from John L. Mayne, Jr., and Col. James A. Walker, also withdrawing their names as candidates for Attorney General and Lieutenant Governor.

## EVENING SESSION.

The Convention met at 8 o'clock, Mr. Daniel in the chair.

## MAJORITY REPORT.

The Committee on Business made the following report:

"Whereas the people of Virginia, by their delegates duly chosen, met in Convention in this city in the month of December, 1867, and organized the Executive Committee to organize the counties and cities of the State with a view to consolidate the strength of the Conservative party; and whereas the State Executive Committee and the city and county superintendents did, in the month of May, 1868, meet in this city and nominate a State ticket for the suffrages of the people; and whereas the Executive Committee did, on the 23rd ultimo, assemble again to consider the present state of affairs, and each candidate, with patriotic desire to promote the prosperity and welfare of the State, has resigned his candidacy; Now, therefore, be it resolved, That this meeting accept the said resignations of said candidates, and hereby express its high appreciation of the devotion to the best interest of the State, and of their zeal and ability in the discharge of those duties which their candidacy imposed on them.

"2. That notwithstanding these accepted resignations of our nominees, the Conservative voters of the State are urged to organize for the purpose of defeating such obnoxious provisions of the constitution framed by the late Convention in Richmond as may be separately submitted; and to that end, and as well as to secure the election of proper persons to the Legislature, the organizations already in existence are exhorted to increased activity; and in those localities where no organizations have been formed, the people are earnestly urged to meet together and adopt measures for the purpose of preventing the incorporation of such injurious in the organic laws of the State.

"3. That this Convention, while expressing its hostility to the leading and general features of the said constitution, and while urging the necessity of organization for the purpose of defeating such obnoxious provisions, be it submitted separately, declines to make any recommendations to the Conservative voters of the State as to their suffrages upon the constitution expurgated of said provisions, or as to the candidates that may be before the people, feeling well assured that their own good sense and patriotism will lead them to such results as will best subserve the true and substantial interests of the Commonwealth.

## MINORITY REPORT.

The minority of the committee made the following report:

"Whereas the people of Virginia, by their delegates duly chosen, met in Convention in this city in the month of December, 1867, and after solemn and mature deliberation adopted their declaration of principles, setting forth and defining the policy of the white people of this State; and whereas in the declaration of principles it was said that in its own language it did distinctly declare that the government of the State of the Union were formed by white men to be subject to their control, and that suffrage should be regulated by the States as to continue the Federal system under the control and direction of the white race; and that in the opinion of the minority of the people of Virginia, who will sincerely co-operate with all men throughout the Union, of whatever name or party, who will labor to restore the constitution of the States and to continue its government and the rights of the States under the routine of the white race; and whereas the organization of the Conservative party of the State of Virginia, organized by the late Convention, and the action of the people thereunder; and whereas the Congress of the United States have directed an election in this State to be ordered by the President, whose proclamation is daily expected, at which election the Underwood constitution is to be submitted to the people for ratification or rejection, and at the same time an election is to be for State officers; and whereas for the purpose of consolidating and making effective the strength of the Conservative party in the State in opposition to the said constitution, the State Executive Committee and the county and city superintendents, on the 23rd ultimo, assembled again to consider the present state of affairs, and each candidate, with patriotic desire to promote the prosperity and welfare of the State, has resigned his candidacy; Now, therefore, be it resolved, 1. That the declaration of principles unanimously adopted by the said Convention, composed of the representatives of the white men of all parts of the State, is binding upon this body until it shall have been revoked or modified by an equal number of equal powers, and this meeting has no right to abandon the same.

2. That the meeting earnestly recommend

to the people of Virginia to adhere steadfastly to the declaration of principles and to the plan of organization adopted by themselves in Convention assembled, and to continue to follow the leadership of their nominees for Governor, who has embodied the principles of their organization with such conspicuous gallantry and devotion.

3. That the clauses of the Underwood constitution proposed to be submitted to a separate vote are immaterial and insignificant compared to the leading features of that instrument—negro suffrage, negro eligibility to office.

4. That the same number of votes that will strike out the clauses to be submitted to a separate vote will, if polled to that effect, defeat the whole constitution.

5. That the military rule of one of our own race, responsible to his superiors, is far preferable to the domination of an irresponsible multitude of ignorant negroes, who are impelled by these considerations, we call upon all white men, whether native or adopted citizens, to vote down the constitution, and thereby save themselves and their posterity from negro suffrage, negro office-holding, and its legitimate consequence—negro social equality.

6. That even were an abandonment of the above-mentioned principles to be agreed on by this body, the seventh section of the election law entitled "An act authorizing the submission of the constitution, &c.," to the vote of the people, holds the restoration of the State subject to subsequent action of Congress, and that in this fact we find abundant reason to believe other conditions may be imposed upon us.

7. That the act in question imposes a condition precedent in the adoption of the fifth amendment, which is in violation of every principle of constitutional law, and should not of right be endured by the people of Virginia.

## [SECOND DAY.]

Thursday, April 29, 1869.

The Convention was called to order at half-past ten o'clock.

Mr. Marshall moved that the vote be taken on the reports of the committee of thirteen at one o'clock, and that the time be equally divided amongst the speakers on both sides.

Pending the consideration of this motion, Mr. Shackelford suggested that the majority of the committee withdraw their report, in order that the resolution offered by him at the previous session might be taken up, so as to bring business of some kind before the house.

Mr. Goode then withdrew the minority report of the committee, with a view to produce harmony, and to carry in the most honest manner the purpose to overthrow it whenever the opportunity occurred. He considered it his duty to vote and to use his vote to improve and benefit his State. When the other party who had ever attempted to do anything for the South was utterly routed and overthrown, and the Radical party took possession of the government, what was the result? Was there any benefit to the people of wisdom and common sense? Is there any probability that the verdict of the party in power in favor of negro suffrage will ever be reversed? Has any one ever proposed any plan by which negro suffrage can be gotten rid of? If any one possesses any knowledge, let him proclaim it from the house. It could not be voted down. If it could be done, he would stomp the State for Colonel Withers, and to do all he could to secure his election. The gentleman from Norfolk had said, Make a tremendous effort and wait for something to turn up. Make a tremendous effort to be a William Mowbray!

Mr. Edmunds followed in favor of the propositions embodied in the majority report. He claimed that the organization of the white man's party had been adhered to, and that there was no need of any political horizon. The late Presidential election had demonstrated the utility of further opposition to negro suffrage. Negro suffrage was a bad thing, and the Conservative party could not again rally under the old flag with any prospect of success. What, then, is the duty of the people of Virginia? On the one side there is Col. Withers, who has been elected, and who is fully committed to all the obnoxious principles of the extremists, in which are embraced the social equality of the negro. On the other side is Col. Walker, who has put before him the extreme, and backed by gentlemen of intelligence and influence, presents himself for our suffrages. Could there be any doubt about the choice of sane men, between the two, the election of Col. Walker would ensure peace and quiet to Virginia for years, would be the triumph of Conservatism, and at the same time, a proffer of conciliation to the North. Northern immigration is now pouring into the State, and must show the immigrants that they are welcome. Under these circumstances there was no fear whatever of the negro vote. In conclusion, he urged that the adoption of his policy would give us a Legislature chosen by a faithful judiciary, a Legislature chosen by the Conservative vote, and in three months, Virginia would be restored to the Union. One thought that Col. Withers could be elected this time. Let him trade his time, and in four years there would be a white man's party in Virginia, and he could then be carried triumphantly into the gubernatorial chair. Mr. Edmunds said if Mr. Walker's remarks were correct, the Conservative party would be the majority of the party, and made a canvass unequalled in the history of the State for labor and activity. If there was an obligation of honor on any people, it rests on this people to sustain Col. Withers. Intelligence and character triumphed in that canvass over ignorance, immaturity, and enmity was afraid to order an election. Under these circumstances we bear a still small voice from the Hub, which has thrown confusion into the ranks. At a time when every man is in honor bound to come to the rescue and support of this man, comes a paper stating that secret intelligence from Washington, which was made with him, imperative to call a meeting of the Convention. What the 'secret intelligence' was has not been made known. The gentlemen who broke up the repose and peace of a great party come in here and ask for harmony, when they themselves are responsible for the existing differences of opinion in the party. That the Conservative party should take the lead in this matter, we shall take (like Atlas) the weight of Virginia on our shoulders. Twenty-eight gentlemen assembled in Richmond and appointed nine gentlemen to go to Washington and take the affairs of Virginia into their hands. We were told they did a great deal of good. And now they are called the attention of Radical Congressmen to the affairs of Virginia, and arrested the removal of the disabilities of the citizens of Virginia. They succeeded in having our bonds strengthened, and procured another turn of the screw upon us in the shape of the fifteenth amendment. With the efforts of the Committee on the 23rd ultimo, and the monstrous railroad consolidation on the one side, and the election of a box-awful and terrible. He had learned since he had been here that the private interests of individuals had made it necessary to secure the Board of Public Works, and it was said that no man opposed to consolidation would be elected Governor. 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