



THE WATCHMAN. BELLEFONTE, PENNA. THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1898.

The Lecompton Constitution.

Heretofore our remarks relative to the proposed State Government for KANSAS, have been confined to such general principles as are founded upon truth and justice, and constitute the basis of correct Democratic action. For the reason that we did not consider ourselves in possession of a sufficient statement of the facts and circumstances under which the Lecompton Constitution was formed, we have until now refrained from the expression of any decided views, relative to the important subject of allowing Kansas to be admitted into the Federal Union under the Constitution now presented. The American people are, as a general thing, habitually too hasty and reckless in the formation of their opinions; and having once assumed a position, they adhere to it with obstinate tenacity; and blinded by prejudice refuse to investigate calmly and rationally such new lights as may be brought to their view. In consideration of the importance of our republican Government to human liberty, it is incumbent upon every citizen who has a just sense of his obligations to his country, to wait till all the facts in connection with an important transaction are developed, before deciding upon its merits or demerits. Thus only can he be expected to act intelligently and wisely in the performance of his duties as a citizen of the best Government on the face of the earth. Rashness and impetuosity are and have ever been the banes of all republican organizations; leading to incorrect and dangerous action upon subjects and questions that effect the well being and very existence of any Government under which a people thus situated live. Believing as we now do, that we are in possession of a correct and full history of the Lecompton Constitution, from its earliest inception to the present time, we are prepared to speak upon the subject, and being satisfied of the correctness of our conclusion, we shall speak fearlessly in defense of truth and justice, although we should be alone in its support. Our implicit confidence in the wisdom and integrity of JAMES BUCHANAN, has from the first led us to believe that the line of policy marked out by him would prove to be directly in accordance with the ancient and well established doctrines of the Democratic party, and that the further developments of the case would lead to a triumph verdict of the popular mind in his favor. Each additional fact that we have learned in connection with the case, has tended to confirm this opinion, and we are prepared now to boldly declare ourselves favorable to the admission of Kansas into the Union, under the Lecompton Constitution, on an equality with the original States; and we are ready and willing to defend this position to the extent of our ability, believing it to be the only safe, just and proper method of disposing of the question. It is probable, that but few persons would disagree with us in favoring the admission of Kansas, if the Constitution which is to constitute the fundamental law of the new State were free from objection; and in order to avoid any unnecessary issue, we will assume that all concern in the right of the people of Kansas to form a State Government, and be admitted, if their proceedings are strictly in accordance with law and order. Under this view of the case, our reasoning will be confined more to the objections that are made to the Constitution, and the manner in which it was framed, than to the abstract right of admission under any circumstances. The first great objection then made to its admission, is, that the Constitution does not embody the will of the people to be governed by it; and that admission under it would be the coercion of an unwilling people into a State Government. Is this true? If so, if the history of the affair establishes such a proposition, it would be as well to say that it would be as unjust as to force poor "bleeding Kansas" into the American Union. We must investigate affairs in Kansas, just as we would the transactions of some more peaceable and law abiding country. We must trace the history of events, step by step, and when the whole have been gone through, and we have arrived at a conclusion, we must stop and there take a firm stand, until some new fact rolling down the current of time drives us from our position. What then are the facts in this case? From the passage of the Kansas Nebraska Bill, the first legal attempt toward changing the form of Government of the people of Kansas, that we have heard anything of, was the passage of an act by the regular Legislature of the Territory, in July 1855, authorizing a vote of the people on the question of changing their form of Government, and calling a Convention to frame a Constitution previous to applying for admission into the Union. The vote at this election was almost unanimous in favor of the proposed change and Convention, the people thus indicating that they desired to be admitted into the Union under some Constitution. In obedience to this vote, the legal Territorial Legislature on the 19th day of February, 1857, passed a law for taking a census of the people, providing for a Registry of the legal voters, and for an election of delegates to the Constitutional Convention. This law was simple in its provisions, placing in the hands of the people power to secure a full and fair Registry of voters, and the election of delegates that would reflect the will of the people. By its provision was made for vacancies in the office of Register; and one month was allowed after the completion of the Registry for its correction, during which time the names of persons who were omitted from the respective Registries, might be inserted, and such as were improperly inserted might upon competent testimony be erased. Notwithstanding the fairness of this law, we are told that in some places a large number of the voters were not registered, and in some fictitious names such as Horace Greeley, Thomas H. Benton and Wm. H. Seward, were found upon the lists, and in others the officers failed entirely to perform their duty. Let Secretary Stanton, the then acting Governor of the Territory, answer and explain this. In one of his speeches, he says: "It is not my purpose to reply to your statement of facts, I cannot do so from any personal knowledge, but I have heard statements given by members of your own party, (republicans) to the effect that your political friends have very generally—indeed, almost universally—refused to participate in the pending proceedings for registering the names of the legal voters. In some instances they have given fictitious names, and in numerous others they refused to give any names at all. You cannot deny that your party have heretofore resolved not to take part in the registration, and it appears to me that, without indulging in generous suspicions of the integrity of others, you might well attribute any errors and omissions of the officers to the existence of this well-known and controlling fact. Thus it will be seen that the conduct of that party denominated themselves "Free State," was on this occasion, strictly in accordance with all their actions since they first entered the Territory. Engaging in rebellion and opposition to the Government and laws, they now exert themselves to obstruct the free action of those who are proceeding under the protection of law, to establish a State Government. They refuse to place their names upon the list of voters, give names that do not belong to them, and afterwards make it an objection to the Constitution that they were not allowed to vote. Surely they have no right to complain, and no Anti-Lecompton can well doubt the truth of F. P. Stanton. Relative to the disfranchised counties that we are told were disfranchised, the evidence is, that some of them were mere Counties upon maps, without a habitation or a name, while others contained one or two hundred inhabitants, and no one was thickly populated. It is consistent with the past history of Black Republicanism, to make their grievances as great as possible when relating to them, so that we are not surprised to hear them complain of no votes being polled in Counties where no person lives. Perhaps the Buffaloes and Native American Indians are members of their party, and should have been allowed to rule that portion of America called "Kansas." In populated Counties, we have already seen that the Registry law gave the people full power to protect themselves. If the proper officer did not proceed at the time appointed to take a Registry of the voters, the people could call on the Probate Judge to perform this duty; and in case of his absence or refusal, the act provided that the Governor should appoint some suitable person for that purpose. Nothing could be more complete than the law on this point. After the Registry was all completed, the time for amendment gone by, and the lists returned to Acting Governor Stanton, he proceeded as directed by the Territorial law to make an apportionment of the Delegates. This he did with full knowledge of the manner in which the Registry was taken and of the disfranchised Counties; and at least as he has had at any time since. With these facts all before him he apportioned the entire number of Delegates allowed by the law (sixty) to those Counties in which the Registry was taken. Who can complain of this? Surely not the inhabitants of those Counties in which they refused to be Registered absolutely, or neglected to do so, by not providing a proper officer for that purpose. Surely not those Counties in which nobody lives, and most indubitably not those Counties in which the Registry had been taken, and to which all the Delegates were apportioned. On the 3d Monday of June, 1857, the election of Delegates was held; and at this election many of the Registered voters refused to go to the polls. The Delegates thus elected met in Convention at Lecompton in September last, and after a session of some two months, adopted the Constitution now before the people of this nation. After much discussion the great distracting question of Slavery was submitted to a direct vote of the people; the result of which was, 6226 votes for the Constitution with Slavery, and 567 votes for the Constitution without Slavery. Were we a resident of Kansas this would be to us an unmountable objection to the Constitution framed at Lecompton as our fundamental law; but since the people to be effected by it have decided by so large a majority, in favor of retaining the Slavery clause, and we must abide by it. Those who voted as well as those who did not vote, are held to have participated in all of their various elections. For it is a conceded principle of Democracy and Republicanism, that those who do not vote either from neglect or refusal, authorize those who do vote to enact the law, and they will be bound by them. If the Free State party have the majority, as they have always boasted, they certainly have thrown themselves open to condemnation for lying inactive, when they might have moulded the character of a new State. If Jim Lane and his followers had been half as vigilant in securing a full and fair Registry and a large vote, as they have been in scouring and plundering the Territory, the vote of every Free State man might have been secured without difficulty, under the provisions of the law. This article has already extended itself beyond our anticipations, and we must defer for future articles, our remarks on the power of the Convention to make a Constitution, and on the bogus election of the 4th of January. In the mean time we desire it, to be distinctly understood, that we read no Democrat out of the party for differing from us in opinion on this single question. We are in favor of the broadest possible liberty of thought and action, and the spotless integrity of "razzies" one another without regard to doubtful disputations.

From Mexico. The steamer Tennessee arrived at New Orleans on Thursday last with dates to the 26th ult. There was but little change in the condition of affairs, though the new government was violently opposed. General Mejia was committing terrible outrages on the people of Sierra Blanca, who have applied to the constitutional government of Guajuato for aid against him. It was reported that the States of Vera Cruz, Oajaca and Puebla had sent eight thousand five hundred men, with forty-six pieces of artillery against Zulzaga. The troubles in Campechy have been settled, and the whole State of Yucatan is united against Zulzaga. The latter has issued a decree making the duty on goods imported via Vera Cruz and Tampico payable in the capital, otherwise the payment not to be recognized. The El Progreso comments severely on the action of Minister Forsyth in limiting the Representatives of European Powers in recognizing the new authorities. LATER FROM SALT LAKE.—The Independence correspondent of St. Louis Republican, under date of the 16th inst., states that the mail from Salt Lake arrived the previous night. Conductor Denver reports the snow from one to six feet deep on the mountains. He left Camp Scott January 1st, when the troops were in good spirits, earnestly wishing for good weather and reinforcements to make a descent on Salt Lake City. From Mormon prisoners and straggling Utah Indians, Col. Johnston is well advised of the movements of the Saints, who are making active preparations for resisting the troops in the spring. Their municipal regulations are very stringent, and suspicion fastens upon everybody in the least inclined to favor the actions of the United States Government. Governor Offenberg is performing the duties of his office as far as he is able. The outward bound mails are making good progress. Many Indians were met on the route and were all friendly. Hon. 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HARPER'S MAGAZINE.—The March number of this publication has come to hand, and fully sustains the reputation for which it has long been celebrated. Its illustrations are magnificent, among which we notice several that have been taken from places that came under our observation during a tour through the western country, a few months ago. The scenery along the Mississippi river is very correctly represented, and conveys strongly to the mind of one who has been formerly an eye witness to its natural beauties and business relations, the idea of actual reality. The editor's drawing indeed a treasure in its way. Harper is always welcome to our table. This Magazine can be had at the Book Store of Geo. Livingston, Esq. The financial difficulties in 1857, in England, were of greater extent than any which had previously occurred for a long time. There were no fewer than one thousand four hundred and twenty-nine bankruptcies gazetted. Of these, seven hundred and sixty-five were in the country, and six hundred and sixty-four in London alone. In Liverpool there were one hundred and thirteen; in Manchester one hundred and fourteen; in Birmingham two hundred and nineteen; in Leeds one hundred and twenty-four; and in Bristol one hundred and one. VERY SENSIBLE.—The Eastern Argus says, Governor Packer has publicly expressed his determination not to appoint more than 12 new Aids, during the three years of his administration. He says he don't want all his friends to be Lieutenant Colonels—that he needs privates in his army as well as officers. The Governor is a very sensible man. The liberality shown by our Governor's of late years, in the granting of these commissions rendered the whole thing supremely ridiculous. A dozen capable and well trained Aids are enough in all conscience, for a Democratic Governor. NEW COURTESIES.—We call the attention of our readers to new and well executed counterfeits which have just made their appearance. One of them is a \$5 note on the Winstead Bank, Connecticut, and the other a \$5 note on the Union Bank of Frenchtown, New Jersey. Storekeepers and others will do well to be warned against these notes, which may be detected by a critical inspection. AN EDITORIAL FESTIVAL.—At an editorial festival, which was held in Philadelphia on the 17th inst., the preliminary steps were taken for the organization of an editorial association for the State. A president and secretary were appointed, together with a committee, authorized to issue a circular to all the editors of the State of Pennsylvania inviting them to assemble in Philadelphia on the third Wednesday in April next. The numerous friends of the American Sunday School Union, will be pleased to learn that the actual loss, arising from the recent defalcation, will not exceed \$40,000, and that the managers, with the aid of a few personal friends, have determined to pay the entire loss out of their own pockets.

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Of these, seven hundred and sixty-five were in the country, and six hundred and sixty-four in London alone. In Liverpool there were one hundred and thirteen; in Manchester one hundred and fourteen; in Birmingham two hundred and nineteen; in Leeds one hundred and twenty-four; and in Bristol one hundred and one. VERY SENSIBLE.—The Eastern Argus says, Governor Packer has publicly expressed his determination not to appoint more than 12 new Aids, during the three years of his administration. He says he don't want all his friends to be Lieutenant Colonels—that he needs privates in his army as well as officers. The Governor is a very sensible man. The liberality shown by our Governor's of late years, in the granting of these commissions rendered the whole thing supremely ridiculous. A dozen capable and well trained Aids are enough in all conscience, for a Democratic Governor. NEW COURTESIES.—We call the attention of our readers to new and well executed counterfeits which have just made their appearance. One of them is a \$5 note on the Winstead Bank, Connecticut, and the other a \$5 note on the Union Bank of Frenchtown, New Jersey. Storekeepers and others will do well to be warned against these notes, which may be detected by a critical inspection. AN EDITORIAL FESTIVAL.—At an editorial festival, which was held in Philadelphia on the 17th inst., the preliminary steps were taken for the organization of an editorial association for the State. A president and secretary were appointed, together with a committee, authorized to issue a circular to all the editors of the State of Pennsylvania inviting them to assemble in Philadelphia on the third Wednesday in April next. The numerous friends of the American Sunday School Union, will be pleased to learn that the actual loss, arising from the recent defalcation, will not exceed \$40,000, and that the managers, with the aid of a few personal friends, have determined to pay the entire loss out of their own pockets.

From Mexico. The steamer Tennessee arrived at New Orleans on Thursday last with dates to the 26th ult. There was but little change in the condition of affairs, though the new government was violently opposed. General Mejia was committing terrible outrages on the people of Sierra Blanca, who have applied to the constitutional government of Guajuato for aid against him. It was reported that the States of Vera Cruz, Oajaca and Puebla had sent eight thousand five hundred men, with forty-six pieces of artillery against Zulzaga. The troubles in Campechy have been settled, and the whole State of Yucatan is united against Zulzaga. The latter has issued a decree making the duty on goods imported via Vera Cruz and Tampico payable in the capital, otherwise the payment not to be recognized. The El Progreso comments severely on the action of Minister Forsyth in limiting the Representatives of European Powers in recognizing the new authorities. LATER FROM SALT LAKE.—The Independence correspondent of St. Louis Republican, under date of the 16th inst., states that the mail from Salt Lake arrived the previous night. Conductor Denver reports the snow from one to six feet deep on the mountains. He left Camp Scott January 1st, when the troops were in good spirits, earnestly wishing for good weather and reinforcements to make a descent on Salt Lake City. From Mormon prisoners and straggling Utah Indians, Col. Johnston is well advised of the movements of the Saints, who are making active preparations for resisting the troops in the spring. Their municipal regulations are very stringent, and suspicion fastens upon everybody in the least inclined to favor the actions of the United States Government. Governor Offenberg is performing the duties of his office as far as he is able. The outward bound mails are making good progress. Many Indians were met on the route and were all friendly. Hon. 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THE WATCHMAN. BELLEFONTE, PENNA. THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1898.

The Lecompton Constitution. Heretofore our remarks relative to the proposed State Government for KANSAS, have been confined to such general principles as are founded upon truth and justice, and constitute the basis of correct Democratic action.

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