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Miscellaneous.

Letter from Ira C. Mitchell, Esq.

BELLEFONTE (Pa.,) Jan 1, 1861.

To the Editor of the Philadelphia Press:

The suggestion lately contained in your paper, that there ought to be free communication between the people, relative to the present national crisis, would seem to be one worthy of followers. The public press, innumerably scattered over our country, affords very superior advantages for the American people to arrive at a common understanding with reference to the disease affecting the body politic—its nature, extent, and remedy—and since the letter of our eminent friend, Daniel Dougherty, Esq., was given to the public, I have carefully observed the columns of your paper, expecting others to follow his commendable example.

I shall not trespass very lengthily upon your readers. These are not the times for rhetoric or resolutions, but practical suggestions and effective action alone become us. While yet the tottering forms of revolutionary patriots linger on the shores of time, the sacrilegious hand of fanatical and corrupt men and traitors is raised to destroy the magnificent edifice of human freedom, reared at the cost of so much treasure, affliction, and blood. The heart of the patriot is chilled by the vivid apprehension that the muttering thunders of disunion, which have so long alarmed us, are about to shake the Government to pieces. South Carolina has attempted to constitute herself a separate and independent nation, and the first practical question which suggests itself, is the one which, in my humble judgment, furnishes the key for the solution of the entire difficulty (diplomatically at least): What relation does a State thus acting occupy toward the Federal Government? The Sovereignty Convention of the seceding State proceeds upon the assumption that the United States is a mere league between equal, sovereign, and independent States; that each member of the Confederacy shall be the sole arbiter of her own wrongs, decide her own complaints, and when dissatisfied, determine and execute the manner of redress. In other words, they assume that so feeble and inadequate for the "formation of a more perfect Union," are the means provided by the Federal Constitution, that if one State deems itself burdened by a duty upon imports, another regards a law granting free homesteads injurious to her local interests, and another is dissatisfied with something else, they may each, by means of an ordinance, declare themselves absolved from the compact, violate Federal laws, and proceed in total disregard of the Federal Constitution.

This doctrine renders an unauthorized State Convention superior to the Congress of the United States; and, while it requires three-fourths of the States to amend the Constitution, admits the right and power of one to subvert it entirely. But the error of their position must be apparent to the most casual student of our governmental structure.—That the Republic is a Confederacy of what *were* sovereign States cannot be denied; but it is equally true that in the act of thus confederating, these sovereignties parted with and delegated to the Federal Government a sufficient portion of their original sovereignty to constitute a power paramount, for all the purposes of the confederation, to that retained by the States or the people thereof.—The objects of the confederation are clearly enumerated in the preamble to the Constitution, while the powers delegated are specifically defined in the body of that instrument. The Constitution and the laws passed in pursuance thereof are declared to be the supreme law of the land, and every naturalized citizen—every municipal, county, State, and Federal officer—is sworn to support them.—"We, the people of the United States," when they adopted the Constitution and formed the Federal Union, created a *Government*, and invested it with all necessary powers for efficiency and self-preservation. The objections to the old Confederacy were its want of vitality—its failure to confer power on the Central Government to enforce its enactments; and to remedy this grand defect the present Constitution was framed and adopted, placing both the sword and the purse at the command of the Federal Government

From this hasty and necessarily imperfect review of the organization of our Government, it becomes apparent that all Conventions, resolutions, and ordinances of the people of any State declaring themselves out of the Union are simply harmless, so long as no physical interference is offered to the execution of Federal laws. The moment this latter contingency occurs, it is the undoubted duty of the Executive sufficiently to fortify all officers to enable them fully and completely to perform their respective duties. So long as the laws are executed the Union is maintained, and it can be destroyed only when resistance to Federal authority becomes so formidable, in point of numbers or strength, as to prevent those who are devoted to the Constitution and the laws from executing them. Then we have *revolution*, the participants in which are rebels and traitors. If they succeed in throwing off the existing form of Government and substituting a new, they become heroes, and their treason goes unpunished—otherwise they are amenable to violated laws.—There can be no constitutional right of secession or nullification. Existing forms of government can only be changed by revolution; and revolution, in opposition to subsisting authority, can only be accomplished by rebellion. There must be coercion on one side or the other. Either the Federal authorities must coerce the people of a State to obey the laws, or be themselves coerced to permit their violation. I have faith that there are still on the side of the Union enough patriotic hearts to rally around the standard of the stars and stripes, and vigorously enforce in every State and Territory obedience to the laws; and, at the time of writing, the indications are that the patriotic hosts of America will not be in want of a leader; but that the venerable military chieftain, Winfield Scott, will make the preservation of the Union the crowning glory of his life.

It is highly gratifying and auspicious that, at this perilous crisis, political leaders of all parties, with singular unanimity, join in recommending the repeal of all laws which *antagonize, in any manner, the fugitive slave* law. The North owes this act of patriotism, not alone to the South, but to her own honor. Doubts have been entertained in various quarters relative to the enactments of Pennsylvania on this subject, and many have expressed the opinion that we have no law in conflict with the constitutional rights of our Southern brethren. In my humble judgment, the ninety fifth section of the revised penal code does, in effect, completely nullify the fugitive slave law. In addition to its provisions against kidnapping, it provides as follows, viz: "If any person or persons claiming any negro or molatto as a fugitive from servitude or labor shall, *under any pretence of authority whatsoever*, violently and tumultuously seize upon and carry away to any place, or attempt to seize and carry away in a riotous, violent, tumultuous, and unreasonable manner, and so as to disturb and endanger the public peace, any negro or mulatto within this Commonwealth, either with or without the intention of taking such negro or mulatto before any district or circuit judge, the person or persons so offending against the peace of this Commonwealth shall be guilty of a 'misdemeanor,' &c.

Now it is clear that the officer, in the execution of his warrant for the arrest of a fugitive slave, cannot, *unless interfered with*, be guilty of a breach of the peace. Then, if a riot occurs, it must be from the attempts of those who sympathize with the fugitive to prevent his arrest. They therefore as the original violators of law and disturbers of the public peace, are the proper persons to be punished, instead of the owner or officer who, in pursuance of law, is proceeding to arrest the fugitive. In almost every section of our Commonwealth, the recapture of a slave would be made tumultuous and violent by anti-slavery individuals (whether black or white) in the vicinity. Yet, by the terms of this statute, it matters not who creates the disturbance or tumult, those who, by authority of law, are claiming the slave must suffer the penalty. Thus the enactment serves as a terror to those who might have occasion to avail themselves of the constitutional provision for the return of the fugitive. Without comment on the other provisions of the statute, it is quite apparent that the provision alluded to, is the fruit of anti-slavery principles, and that its author, whoever he may be, designed to ingeniously interfere *with the execution of the fugitive slave* law. Let it be at once repealed, or, rather, let it be reversed, and a penalty provided against those who "violently and tumultuously" interfere with any person who, by virtue of legal authority, "claims any mulatto," &c. Surely conservative Pennsylvania will not be slow to do her part toward reconciliation and harmony.

It is much to be regretted that, when our glorious Union is rocking to and fro, shaken by sectional dissensions, when the notes of intestine war are already sounding in our ears, when the peace and safety of the family fireside are endangered, men high in position and in the estimation of their countrymen, should forget that our fathers succeeded in forming the Union only by compromises and concessions. It is lamentable to hear say that they are opposed to compromises—that the antagonism between freedom and slavery may as well be fought out now as at any other time. They will find a different example in the recorded lives of those whose names are written in letters of light upon the pages of their country's history—Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Clay, Webster, and their compatriots. We should ever bear in mind that the fundamental idea of our complex system of Government is the diversity of local interests existing within our boundaries, and endeavor to accommodate our legislation as much as possible to this diversity. For what would we exchange our blessed Government? What political sacrifice will weigh against the Union? Who can conceive the horrors of division, destruction, and civil war? History tells us of the carnage and devastation which ensued in the disruption of mighty nations in the past, and it becomes us, pre-eminently, in view of the exalted civilization and refinement of which we boast, to be guided by the voice of wisdom, and escape, if possible, the doom which will inevitably fall upon us if treason is permitted to go unpunished, and rebellion to rule the hour.

The true basis of adjustment is contained in the amendments to the Constitution, proposed in the Senate, by Judge Douglas.—When the people of every portion of the Confederacy can be brought to agree "to mind their own business," and let the people of every other mind theirs, heart burnings, jealousies, and conflict of interests will cease. Sectional animosity will die and be heard of no more. A vast empire like ours can only be preserved in harmony by engrafting upon our fundamental law—the great doctrine of non-intervention by the General Government with the local and domestic affairs of State or Territory. We must banish forever from the halls of Congress the irritating question of slavery, and submit it in good faith to the people directly interested in it. Then and not till then, will distrust and suspicion cease, and the links which unite us be burnished pure and bright. When politicians and demagogues no longer have a *motive* for inflaming the public mind with regard to slavery, it will not be agitated, but rejoicing in the blessings of perpetual union, the people of each municipality will peacefully elect their officers and enact their laws for the proper government of their own people, and the regulation of their their own interests. Northern fanatics will cease their trade of persecution against the South, and we will dwell together as in the past, a prosperous, happy, and united people. Oh, let the spirit of compromise go forth and animate every heart! Let the preservation of the Union be the supreme desire of every patriot, and soon the dark clouds which lower over us will be dissipated by the Sun of Peace.

Mr. Dougherty's suggestion that the Legislature should provide for a State Convention, for the purpose of securing co operation and an expression of the sentiments of the people of Pennsylvania, meets with very general favor in this locality.

Sincerely hoping that the American galaxy, without one star obliterated or obscured, may continue to shed the glorious light of freedom upon the world, till the latest generations, I am,

Your fellow citizen,
IRA C. MITCHELL.

Three Things that a Woman can't do.

There are three things that a woman can't do. First, she can't sharpen a lead pencil. Give her one and see. Mark how jaggedly she hacks away every particle of wood from round the lead, leaving an unsupported spike of the latter, which breaks immediately when you try to use it. You can almost forgive the male creature his compassionate contempt, as chucking her under the chin he snaches it from her awkward paw, and rounds and tapers it in the most ravishing manner for durable use. I wish to hear no more on that point, because, when I once make up my mind, "all the King's men" can't change it.

Well, then, Secondly. A woman can't do up a bundle. She takes a whole newspaper to wrap up a paper of pins, and a coil of rope to tie it, and it will come undone at that. When I go shopping which is sometimes my hard lot to do—I look on with the fascinated gaze of a bird in the neighborhood of a magnetic serpent, to watch clerks do up bundles. How the paper falls just into the right crease; how deftly they turn it over, and tuck it under and tie it up, and then throw it down upon the counter as if they had done the most common place thing in the world, instead of a deed which might—and, faith, does—task the ingenuity of angels!! It is perfectly astonishing.

Thirdly—I may allude to the fact that a woman cannot carry an umbrella; or rather to the very peculiar manner in which they perform that duty; but I won't. I scorn to turn traitor to a sex who, whatever may be their faults, are always loyal to each other. So I shall say, as I might otherwise have said, that when they unfurl the parachute alluded to, they put it right down over their noses, take the middle of the sidewalk, raking off men's hats and women's bonnets as they go, and walking right into the breakfast of some unfortunate wright, with that disregard of the consequent gasp which, to be understood, must be felt, as the offender cocks up one corner of the parachute and looks defiantly at the victim who has the effrontery to come into the world and hazard the whalebone and handle of her 'umberell!' No, I won't speak of anything of the kind; besides, has not a celebrated writer remarked that, when "dear woman is cross, it is only because she is sick." Let us hope he is right. We all know that it is not the cause of man's crossness. Give him his favorite dish, and you may dine off him afterwards—if you want to.

The annuity fund collected for Tom Sayers at a single newspaper office in London, and which amounts to the extraordinary sum of £2,814 will be so secured that it cannot be touched by Tom's creditors, should he be so imprudent as to get himself involved; neither will Tom himself be able to assign away or anticipate his income. It is moreover expressly provided that in the event of his again entering the ring, the trustees shall at once devote the whole amount to the interest of his children, so that it will be seen that all future challenges will be utterly useless.

Isaac Fowler, late postmaster of New York, is now in Mexico, and said to be in very destitute circumstances.

"There's more in that fellow's head than you suspect." "No there ain't," said Dick, "for I always thought he had 'em."

General Jackson on Union and Coercion.

In the crisis which now besets this nation, the opinions and declarations of the wise and great statesmen of an earlier period of the Republic are naturally looked to as light for the guidance of the present generation. The opinions of no one have been oftener quoted than those of General Jackson. It is appropriate therefore, when we hear a Union of force advocated in high places, and advocated in the name of Jackson, to quote from the Farewell Address of that great man a pertinent passage, applying directly on this point:

"If the evil should come upon us, and the citizens of one section of the country are arrayed in arms against those of another, in doubtful conflict, let the battle result as it may, there will be an end of the Union and with it an end of the hopes of freedom. The victory of the injured would not secure to them the blessings of liberty: it would avenge their wrongs, but they would themselves share in the common ruin.

"But the Constitution cannot be maintained, nor the Union preserved, in opposition to public feeling by the mere exertion of the coercive powers confided to the government. The foundation must be laid in the affections of the people; in the security it gives to life, liberty, character, and property, in every quarter of the country; and in the fraternal attachments which the citizens of the several States bear to one another, as members of one political family, mutually contributing to promote the happiness of each other. Hence the citizens of every State should studiously avoid everything calculated to wound the sensibility, or offend the just pride of the people of other States; and they should frown upon any proceedings within their own borders likely to disturb the tranquility of their political brethren in other portions of the Union. In a country so extensive as the United States and with pursuits so varied, the internal regulations of the several States must frequently differ from one another in important particulars; and this difference is unavoidably increased by the varying principles upon which the American colonies were originally planted; their social relations before the revolution, and therefore, of necessity influencing their policy since they became free and independent States. But each State has the unquestionable right to regulate its own internal concerns according to its own pleasure; and while it does not interfere with the rights of the Union, every State must be the sole judge of the measures proper to secure the safety of its citizens and promote their happiness; and all efforts on the part of the people of other States to cast *odium upon their institutions*, and all measures calculated to disturb their rights of property, or to put in jeopardy their peace and internal tranquility, are in direct opposition to the spirit in which the Union was formed, and must endanger its safety. Motives of philanthropy may be assigned for this unwarrantable interference, and weak *men may persuade* themselves for a moment that they are laboring in the cause of humanity, and asserting the rights of the human race; but every one, upon sober reflection, will see that nothing but mischief can come from these improper assaults upon the feelings and the rights of others. Rest assured, that the men found busy in this work of discord are not worthy of your confidence, and deserve your strongest reprobation."

A MELANCHOLY END TO AN UNFORTUNATE LIFE.—A young widow woman, who gave her maiden name as Catharine Hall, and said that she was from New Albany, Ind., was killed in attempting to get upon the New Albany train at Greencastle, the other day, after the train was in motion. She said that she had been to Kansas under promise of marriage, and, being grossly deceived and deserted, she had started home penniless and alone, stealing rides until the conductors put her off, and begging food at stations until the next train came along. She had got nearly home, and having been put off this train, had run back and caught hold of the rear car to steal a ride a little further. She welcomed her death.

A young lady said to her beau after fifteen years courtship: "Charles, I am going out of town to-morrow.' 'Where?' 'I don't know.' 'When are you coming back?' 'I am going to look for something which you have not, never had, and yet can give me without loss to yourself.' 'You are very welcome to it; but what is it?' "A husband!" "Why, you might have had that fifteen years ago, if you had only said the word; but I was afraid to ask you the question."

The successful men in the business world are not those who merely labor hard with their hands, but those who think and plan much. Thought is developed by contact with other minds, either by speaking or reading. Farmers, who have less opportunity than others for conversation, should supply the deficiency, as far as possible, by reading the thoughts of others.

A young lady who was employed in braiding a guard chain for a gentleman's watch, was asked what it was for. "A bell rope, sir," replied she. "I acknowledge it is a *belle* rope," rejoined he, 'and a pretty one, too; but I suspect we shall find a *beau* attached to it when it is finished."

General Wool on the Crisis.

The following letter from this distinguished soldier and patriot, to his old friend, Gen. Cass, will be read with interest at this time:

TROY, Dec. 6, 1860

MY DEAR GENERAL: Old associations and former friendship induce me to venture to address to you a few words on the state of the country. My letter is headed *private*, because I am not authorized to address you officially.

I have read with pleasure the President's Message. South Carolina says she intends to leave the Union. Her representatives in Congress says she has already left the Union. It would seem that she is neither to be conciliated or comforted. I command the Eastern Department, which includes South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. You know me well. I have ever been a firm, decided, faithful and devoted friend of my country. If I can aid the President to preserve the Union, I hope he will command my services. It will never do for him or you to leave Washington without every star in this Union is in its place. Therefore, no time should be lost in adopting measures to defeat those who are conspiring against the Union. Hesitancy or delay may be no less fatal to the Union than to the President, or your own high standing as a statesman.

It seems to me that troops should be sent to Charleston to man the forts in that harbor. You have eight companies at Fort Monroe, Va. Three or four of these companies should be sent without a moment's delay to Fort Moultrie. It will save the Union and the President much trouble. It is said that to send at this time troops to that harbor would produce great excitement among the people. That is nonsense, when the people are as much excited as they can be, and the leaders are determined to execute their meditated purpose of separating the State from the Union. So long as you command the entrance to the City of Charleston, South Carolina cannot separate herself from the Union. Do not leave the forts in the harbor in a condition to induce an attempt to take possession of them. It might easily be done at this time. If South Carolina should take them it might, as she anticipates, induce other States to join her.

Permit me to entreat you to urge the President to send at once three or four companies of artillery to Fort Moultrie. The Union can be preserved, but it requires firm, decided, prompt and energetic measures on the part of the President. He has only to exert the power conferred upon him by the Constitution and Laws of Congress, and all will be safe, and he will prevent a civil war, which never fails to call forth all the baser passions of the human heart. If a separation should take place, you may rest assured blood would flow in torrents, followed by pestilence, famine and desolation, and Senator Seward's irrepressible conflict will be brought to a conclusion much sooner than he could possibly have anticipated. Let me conjure you to save the Union, and thereby avoid the bloody and desolating example of the States of Mexico.

A separation of the States will bring with it the desolation of the Cotton States, which are unprepared for war. Their weakness will be found in the number of their slaves, with but few of the essentials to carry on war, while the free States have all the elements and materials for war, and to a greater extent than any other people on the face of the globe.

Think of these things, my dear General, and save the country, and save the prosperous South from pestilence, famine and desolation. Peaceable secession is not to be thought of. Even if it should take place, in three months we would have a bloody war on hands.

Very truly your friend,
JOHN E. WOOL.

The Hon. LEWIS CASS, Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

ROMAN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT WASHING.—A journal of Augsburg contains the following singular announcement: "We think right to call general attention to the public wash house of the hospital of this town, which is perfectly organized in every respect. Not only have all the latest improvements been introduced in it, but regard is had to the difference in the religious creeds of the customers. Thus the foul linen of Roman Catholics and that of Protestants are washed in separate tubs. The washed linen is afterwards placed in a wheel which, it is ture, is consecrated to both forms of worship; and there, by a centrifugal apparatus belonging equally to both religions, it is freed from the water it contains. But the Roman Catholic linen is afterwards carried into the Catholic drying place, and the Protestant into that appointed for itself; and then it is distributed to its owners.

The Federal Government have taken the necessary steps to have a requisite number of United States troops to protect the public property in the District of Columbia. Mayor Berret will organize a competent police force to repel the invasion of any irrepressible bodies of men, come from what quarter they may. He will also not hesitate to call upon the President for the use of the Federal troops to suppress any mob that is gotten up, and to maintain the peace and order of Washington city as usual. He does not, however, apprehend any danger.

A Letter from the Interior of Fort Sumpter.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM AN OFFICER IN FORT SUMPTER, CHARLESTON HARBOR, TO HIS FATHER.

FORT SUMPTER, Dec. 26, 1860.

MY DEAR FATHER: Before this reaches you, you will probably have learned that we have literally "taken the bull by the horns." Soon after sunset this evening we evacuated Fort Moultrie, and are now established in this impregnable fortress, where we are perfectly unapproachable; while at the same time, we command perfectly the harbor and Fort Moultrie itself. Vessels have been sent down every night, and have watched us closely, with a view to prevent this very move, but we have weathered them. Hurrah for Major Anderson! We have a man that is not afraid of responsibility, and who had more judgment and a better sense of duty, than have ordinarily guided public men.

At Fort Moultrie, we could not fail to have succumbed before the large force that was probably on the point of being launched against us. Between batteries, a close fire of riflemen and a few columns of assault, we must have been forced to have yielded, although it would not have been without the loss perhaps, of every man there.

Major Anderson has been delighted with the temper and spirit of this little command, not a man of which would have flinched from any struggle that might have befallen us. We are not to be touched here. It is four times as large as Fort Moultrie, but the walls are sixty feet high, and no landing can be made. There is but one regret—that is, that Fort Moultrie could not have been blown up. To night, however, everything that can be destroyed will be. I am sure a general feeling of relief will be experienced by the country at large at this step, taken solely upon Major Anderson's responsibility.

Not a man at the fort had the slightest intimation of this move, and only one or two officers, until the moment it was executed.—Our property and the families are all safe here, with six months provisions, hospital stores, &c. The guns at Moultrie are spiked, and the flag staff cut down, so that no Palmetto flag can ever float on that stick.—There is already a great excitement in the city, signal rockets are fired from the island, but it was too late; we have decidedly got the bull by the muzzle. The revenue can be collected now, and the Administration can do its duty if it will. We all think we have done the right thing, because we are stronger than ever; and although we left our home with great regret, and disliked much to waste the labor that has been lavished there, we are unquestionably now in our right place and position as soldiers and citizens. We did not leave from fear, but because there our blood would have been uselessly shed. Here such a thing is impossible unless these people are determined to butt their heads out against these walls, and I hope they have brains enough left not to attempt that. To-morrow morning the stars and stripes will be hoisted over our new position, although the sight will sting South Carolina to the quick

The citizens of Beaufort, S. C., have erected a redoubt upon the outskirts of their town, to prevent them from attack. It consists of a half sunken battery, with a moat ten feet wide, pierced for three eighteen pounders, now in possession of the town authorities. The ramparts are compactly sodded with turf out from the neighborhood, at an elevation of about thirty-five feet above high water mark. It commands Port Royal river towards the southeast, the front, and also the rear of the town.

SOUTH CAROLINA SEEKING RECRUITS IN NEW YORK.—A short time since Mr. Milber, son of Police Sergeant Milber, of the Seventh ward, was approached by a man in Broadway, and, after some preliminary conversation, was offered a new suit of clothes, $25 a month, and his expenses defrayed to Charleston, if he would accompany the unknown man South. It is said that similar propositions have been made to others.

Pius IX has received as Peter's Pence, 10,752 000 francs, which, though large in itself, is but little for the working of an expensive Government. The Pope, however, notwithstanding the harmony of the Holy See, will not listen to any cession of its provinces. To a person who dared in his presence to make an allusion to the pecuniary propositions which may be proposed, he said: "*Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem.*"

The Mobile Wine Company report that, should the season be favorable, they expect to make this year 10,000 gallons, or 500 gallons to the acre. The actual capital stock of the company is now $20,000. It is now proposed to add to this $10,000. During the two years which the company has been in existence, the stockholders have paid in forty per cent. on the capital subscribed.

GONE.—Well, young ladies, leap year is passed and those of you who did not take our advice and, as the preachers say, "improve the occasion," cannot blame us that the year 1861 finds you running into old maids. However, don't despair, remember we read in the bible of a young lady who was not married until after she was over five hundred years of age. Think of that!