The Columbian.

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THE COLUMBIAN,

A Democratic Newspaper,

IS PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING AT

BLOOMSBURG, PENN'A.

THE principles of this paper are of the Jeffersonian School of politics. Those principles will neve be compromised, yet courtesy and kindess shall not be forgotten in discussing them, whether with individuals, or with contemporaries of the Press The unity, happiness, and prosperity of the country is our aim and object; and as the means to secure that, we shall labor honestly and earnestly for the harmony, success and growth of our organization.

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☞ OFFICE—Court House Alley, below the *Columbian* Office. [Jan1'67.

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Office in Unangst's Building, Main Street, West of the American House. [my24'67.

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☞ Office at the house opposite Shive's Block, Bloomsburg, Pa.
Calls promptly attended to both night and day.
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June 28, 1867.

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Over Widmayer & Jacoby's Ice Cream Saloon,
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Hair Dyeing and Whiskers colored black or brown. Hair Tonic to destroy dandruff and beautifying the hair; will restore hair to its original color without soiling the finest fabric, constantly on hand. [apr12'67.

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WATCHMAKER AND JEWELRY,
Main Street, near the Court House,
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Constantly on hand a fine assortment of
AMERICAN AND SWISS WATCHES,
Clocks, Jewelry, Silverware and Spectacles
Particular attention paid to the repairing Watches, Clocks, Jewelry and Spectacles.
☞ Masonic marks made to order. All work Warranted. [apr19'67.

SPEECH OF
HON. C. R. BUCKALEW,
Delivered in the Court House, Bloomsburg,
Saturday Evening, September 28th.
[REPORTED BY J. J. MURPHY.]

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: The great war which broke out and continued four years between the Northern and Southern sections of our country came to an end in April, 1865; at least, it then came to an end as a military question. There are, however, persons among us who seem to labor under the impression that it has continued down to the present time, and that it is yet in existence, for they support and applaud measures of national policy which are based upon the idea that that war is yet in existence, and that certain legal principles consequent upon war therefore continue and justify peculiar measures of public policy. A thing so absurd as this does not require debate, does not require refutation in any intelligent community in any section of our country.

Unquestionably our great civil war, a war of unexampled magnitude in the New World, a war the burdens and the passions of which reached every community and almost every fireside in the land, did both in point of fact and in point of law terminate in April, 1865, by the surrender of those armies which under distinguished Military Commanders, —I mean distinguished in point of ability,—had been arrayed against us in the Southern country and had for years conducted a struggle with us, oftentimes doubtful in its issue, and causing the deepest apprehensions among all of us concerning the continuence of our Republican system of government and of the Union with which it was associated. The armies of Lee and Johnston surrendered. The few vesssels which the Confederate government had sent out as privateers were also either surrendered or were fleeing from our armed vessels of war in remote seas and in distant oceans. Those armies surrendered to General Grant and to General Sherman upon a single condition; and what was that? That so long as they conducted themselves peaceably and did not resist the authority of the United States, they should not be molested or called in question in any way whatever by the United States.—That parole which was taken by the whole of the Southern Confederate forces then in the field has been kept both in spirit and in letter down to this day. Nobody can question that there has been no further resistance to the armies of the United States, and there has been no resistance to the civil authority of the United States. Our courts have uninterrupted jurisdiction over the whole of the South. Nay, so complete, so universal has been this acquiescence in our authority that even that Military Government which was established by act of Congress in March last, and which is now in existence in the Southern States, and which bears with a severe and heavy hand upon the populations in that section, is submitted to without question and without complaint. If there ever was a people in any period of the history of the world and in any country upon its broad surface who kept faith, who performed an obligation assumed by them, the people of the South are that people with reference to the agreement which was made between their leaders and General Grant and General Sherman who represented the Federal Government in the field, and whose agreement with the Confederate forces was approved by the executive administration at Washington, and accepted without complaint or objection throughout the country by the American people.

The war then, gentlemen, ended in April 1865. What was achieved by that war? What was accomplished by it? You are as competent to judge of this question as the profoundest lawyer or statesman in the country, because it requires for its solution nothing but good sense, good common judgment undisturbed and unperverted by passion and prejudice. This is all that is requisite. Now what was accomplished by the war? We would suppose, gentlemen, that the object of the war was accomplished when victory was achieved.

Now then we go back to the question, what was the object of the war which we prosecuted so long and at such cost to ourselves, in which we expended half a million of precious lives and poured out treasure by hundreds of millions and incurred a debt of unexampeled magnitude in the history of the world; that is, as a debt incurred within the same period of time? Why did we arm ourselves? why did we clothe ourselves with the terror and thunder of battle and rage fiercely and violently throughout the Southern country until the people there were thoroughly subdued and humbled before us? We announced to the world the reason of our conduct and the object we had in view; and, stated in a single sentence, it was this: we went to war and we waged war to preserve the union of the American States. That was our announced purpose, and because we announced it our fellow citizens everywhere throughout the adhering States came forward with alacrity to uphold the arm of the Federal power in the struggle. Individual means were contributed voluntarily; appropriations of money were given ungrudgingly both in Congress and in the Legislatures of the States; a Sanitary Commission was organized and other war charities drawing heavily upon the liberality of the people. Nay, so patriotic and determined were our population in that great war, that although the political majority which controlled the Federal Administration by which it was managed, misconducted itself as we supposed, descended to many acts of maladministration and of abuse of power on peaceful citizens, and deprived our people of their constitutional rights and privileges—notwithstanding all these things and many others which I will not stop to enumerate, there was, as a question of honest fact to be written down in history, a general concurrence in carrying on the war and in supporting the authorities to whom its management had been committed and who had the legal right to control it.

If these charges of disloyalty, which have been heard so long and which are yet impudently repeated, upon nearly one-half the population of Pennsylvania and of the other Northern States, had been true; if they had represented the actual fact as it stood during the war, that war would have had a widely different conclusion and termination. Instead of victory, there would have been defeat. Instead of the subjugation of our enemy, we ourselves would have failed in the war, and with shame and humiliation we would have been obliged to submit to the inevitable, and with reluctance, if not grief to take up our future national course as a fragment of a country; as a severed fragment only of that Union of which we had formerly constituted an integral part. No; these charges were in the main and substantially, untrue and unjust. In 1863 in our State Legislature, at the session at which I was elected to the Senate of the U. S. resolutions were adopted by the Democratic majority in the lower House, the House of Representatives, on the subject of the war. Then our cause stood trembling in the balance. Then great doubt and great apprehension were felt about the result. The political majority in the lower branches of our Legislature, adopted resolutions which gave the platform upon which they stood during the war, and upon which they will be judged by history. If I had those resolutions here I would read them to-night. I shall take pride to myself hereafter when belied and calumniated in common with others, in pointing to that platform, in the construction of which, and in the support of which, I participated.

What then, gentlemen, was accomplished by the war, so generally supported and so triumphant in its close? One would think we had accomplished the object for which we fought; a restoration of the Union, an extension once more of the Constitution of the United States over the whole of the States as they stood before the war began. For what is the Union? It is an association of States established and united by the Constitution, and by nothing else. Take that away and there is no Union; there is no Federal Government; there are no United States to be numbered among the powers of the earth. Therefore, in 1865, at the end of the war, when the Southern armies had surrendered, not only was the Union restored, but in order to its restoration, inseparably connected with its restoration and indispensable to it, the Constitution of the United States was restored every where in our country; not alone in its authority, not alone in the power which it conferred upon Federal officers from the President downward, but also in its privileges, in its benefits, in its guarantees of liberty and of representation to the people of all the States which compose the Union created under it. All this is clear to common judgment and to common sense as I said before, and it does not require learning or high wisdom to understand it or explain it.

Gentlemen, did this result for which we fought in fact come to us? I have endeavored to show you that it came legally; it came as a matter of right; it came as a logical conclusion from the premises; that it was the result of victory; and that to this result the whole American people were entitled and they have been entitled to it from that moment to this. But this privilege of peace, of Constitutional rule, of reunion, has been withheld from the American people, and it has been withheld from you and I just as much as it has been withheld from persons in any other section of the country. As citizens of a great Republic composed of many States, we are entitled not only to enjoy, individually in our own persons, those liberties and those political privileges which our ancestors established and which they sanctified by their labors and sufferings, by their patriotic zeal in the cause of American Independence and Liberty, but also to demand them for all others who live in our country, whether in our own State or in any other State; and whenever they are withheld, it is our privilege,—aye and our duty also,—to demand that they shall be extended to, and shall be enjoyed by all.

Now, Gentlemen, what is the plain fact? Entitled as we were to reunion, entitled to constitutional rule, entitled to thorough peace throughout our country and to all the fruits of peace, in April 1865, I here arraign before you the political majority in Congress because down to this moment they have withheld that result from the American people. That is their offence; that is the wrong, the iniquity for which I arraign them, and for which you ought to pronounce judgment against them in the only manner in which they can be condemned, and appropriately condemned; I mean at the ballot box.

Let us go over the history of two years and a half that have elapsed since the war ended. I shall endeavor to be as brief as possible and not weary you, but in order that we may reach intelligent and clear conclusions it is necessary to travel over the past somewhat, to trace events down to the present time. By this preliminary examination we shall be enabled to judge the existing situation of our public affairs and pronounce a proper and useful judgment upon them.

After the close of the war the President of the United States appointed provisional Governors for the several States in the South. Those Governors issued proclamations to the people inviting them,—not commanding them,—to proceed and reorganize their State Governments. The theory which was held by the President was, that the State Governments as organized for the purposes of the war were invalid; that their acts were unauthorized; and that it was proper, if not necessary, that there should be reorganization of the local or State Governments. That was his view. It is not necessary for us now to pass upon it and to ascertain whether it was correct or not. We are only concerned with the fact. The provisional Governors appointed by the President then invited the people of the several States to select delegates to Conventions by whom new Constitution should be formed, and upon the adoption of such Constitutions to select officers for the State Governments and also Representatives and Senators to serve in the Congress of the United States. There has been some talk in the country about this proceeding initiated by the President, and it has been disputed whether he was authorized to commence it and to encourage its being carried on. Gentlemen, the President of the United States has not one particle of authority for the creation of any Constitution anywhere, and the Congress of the United States has just as little power as the President has; that is, it has none at all. [Applause.] Unquestionably the only manner in which an American Constitution can be made, and in which any Republican Constitution can be made, in the very nature of things, is by the people themselves, the people concerned, the people who are to be bound by such Constitution, who are to be obedient to it and for whose protection and to subserve whose interests it is created. The new Constitutions made in the South in 1865 upon invitation of the President derived no authority or validity from anything he did, but they were legal and valid and effectual Constitutional instruments because the people of the several States chose the delegates who made them & afterward, when they were submitted to their votes, accepted them; precisely as in Pennsylvania we would accept an amendment to our Constitution if it were submitted by the Legislature of the State under a particular clause of our Constitution authorizing such submission, or as we would accept it if it were made by a Convention of delegates which we had previously selected for the purpose.

Now then you see how clear this proposition is. Those constitutions made in the South were legal and valid and proper because in point of fact they were made by the people and accepted by them. Under them, they organized State Governments, which are yet in existence, and selected Senators and Representatives for the Congress of the United States. In December 1865, when Congress convened, most of those States were entirely organized, and prepared, through their Representatives, to take part in the Government of the United States. A few were not then through with proceedings of reorganization, but they completed what it was necessary to do shortly afterwards; so that early in 1866 every one of the States which had been concerned in the rebellion was at the City of Washington by its Senators and Representatives, prepared to take part in the Federal Government,—to participate in those constitutional powers, to enjoy those constitutional rights, and to be bound by those constitutional duties which existed as to them before the war began.

The President in his annual message to Congress in 1865, stated what he had done in relation to reorganization; he called it the restoration of the Union; and he submitted to Congress itself the decision of the question regarding the admission of Senators and Representatives. He had no power over that question. Each House, by the Constitution, is made the exclusive judge of the qualifications, elections, and returns of its own members. Shortly afterwards, in response to a resolution passed by the Senate, he sent in a special message in which he recommended the acceptance of the Southern Representatives, and along with that message he transmitted a very important communication from General Grant, in which the General stated that he he had then visited the Southern section of our country, had mingled with the people there, and had ascertained what their views were with regard to restoration; and he said,—and his words are yet upon record, and they are instructive and important to every citizen who desires to form an honest opinion on this whole subject,—that the Southern people had accepted the result of th war in good faith; they had accepted the decision made by the highest authority known to human institutions, that is, by arms; and that they were desirous of resuming their former places in the Union—of performing the duties and enjoying the advantages connected with citizenship in the United States. This was early in 1866. Now what did Congress do? The two Houses were in session and they remained in session a period of eight months from the time of their meeting on the first Monday of December, 1865. What did they do on this subject of reconstruction? They did not admit the Senators and Representatives sent up under the proceeding instigated by the President; they did not accept the Representatives who appeared before them, nor did they themselves propose and adopt any law or resolution on the subject of reconstruction during that whole time. Nothing was done in that way by Congress. After a little interval of time complaint was made about the President's ideas on the subject of reconstruction. This, that, and the other point of criticism were ventured upon. Finally, the critics became somewhat bolder and commenced denouncing him; but, observe, this was months after the session of Congress began, and in spite of the fact that during 1865 while this proceeding of restoration, was going on under the President's plan, there was a general acquiescence in it throughout the country; very little complaint was heard against it in any quarter. I say that session ran on for a period of eight months, during all which time no bill or resolution was passed on the subject of reconstruction to hasten the restoration of the Union, to give us back peace, to restore the Constitution in all respects throughout the country. Nay, they purposely delayed this work, important and vital as it was. One would think that if there was anything wrong about the President's plan and his mode of accomplishing our great object, they would have suggested some better plan, or at least some plan of their own, and have allowed the people of the United States to consider that, and pass judgment upon it; but they did no such thing. The matter was shuffled off and kept off until the end of the session.

But what was going on all this time? We have got now far enough past those events to look back and consider them calmly. Men were a little warm in their minds while they were occurring, a little in a passion; the war feeling remained. We can look back now, however, with greater clearness of vision Before Congress assembled in 1865, before the House of Representatives was organized and its members sworn, there was an informal meeting of the Representatives who constituted the majority, in a private room. They held what was called a caucus; not a very elegant word, but one that we are obliged to use because no other one indicates precisely the idea which it conveys. For my part, I have very little of respect for or of confidence in, meeting of that description, and have had very little to do with them, in public life. There may be great emergencies when it may be proper for a party of the members of a Legislative body, of Congress or of a State Legislature, to meet and consult together; but to have legislation and the policy of Government fixed up in secret in that way, as a thing of system is a great abuse and an outrage upon the people who are governed by the laws that spring from such irresponsible bodies. I say there was a caucus or secret meeting of the majority members of the House of Representatives before the 39th Congress was organized, at the beginning of December 1865, and what happened there? Our old acquaintance, Thaddeus Stevens of this State, was early in attendence at the room where that meeting was to be held, and he looked after the organization of the caucus, and had certain resolutions introduced and adopted. The caucus adjourned within fifteen minutes I think after its meeting.

Now what were those resolutions? The leading matter contained in them was this: that all memorials, bills, resolutions and papers of whatever description that should be introduced into either House of Congress on the subject of restoration or reconstruction of the Union should be referred to a joint committee of the two Houses; that joint committee to consist of fifteen members, six members of the Senate and nine members of the House; and that such papers whatever they might be, relating to that great subject were to have such reference without debate. No man was to open his mouth concerning them: and until that joint committee, thus constituted of members from each House, reported on the subject of reconstruction, there should be no action whatever taken by either House upon it. The members of both Houses were to be tied up, their hands tied, their mouths closed until this committee from its secret chamber spoke its opinion and relieved the Representatives of the people and of the States from a condition of abject silence and incapacity, self-imposed.

Now, gentlemen, during that session Congress acted under that scheme, because the caucus resolution was introduced in the House and passed there, and sent to the Senate where it was somewhat amended, and passed. The Joint Committe was established, and that Joint Committee took charge of reconstruction during those eight months; and thus it was that this great subject, in which the whole American people were interested, in all parts of the country, was throttled in Congress, was turned over to a secret committee presided over by Thaddeus Stevens; and the Congress of the United States at the end of eight months adjourned without having performed any duty whatever on this subject. In fact, they did nothing upon it except by speeches, by inflammatory harangues, by every art and device of which they were capable, to inflame the public mind; to get up if possible, a feeling of opposition, of hatred and dislike towards the President of the United States, and towards the people of the South.

On the eve of adjournment, however, a Constitutional Amendment was introduced, which passed both Houses of Congress, and was submitted to the Legislatures of the several States for their consideration. You will remember that the amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery had been passed at a previous session of Congress, two or three years before, and about this time it had been adopted by nearly all the States represented in Congress, and by most if not all the new State Governments that had been reorganized South, and it undoubtedly had become a part of the Constitution of the United States. But here at this session of 1866, another amendment about the end of the session was submitted which it was alleged had some reference to the subject of reconstruction. That amendment contained a good deal of matter of which I shall not speak. I will only allude to one point which it contained. It provided that hereafter representation in each State of the American Union should in a certain way, be based upon the electors of the State. The argument was that our old rule in the Constitution that representation in Congress should be based upon population was incorrect or improper, and that it would be much better to base it upon the voters of the several States; that the true Republican idea is that the people shall rule themselves, that they shall all have an equal voice, but as they cannot all meet together they choose representatives to act for them; consequently, in distributing representatives in a great country like ours, the representatives ought to be distributed according to the number of voters in each State. There is plausibility in that reasoning; and that was the ground upon which the argument was conducted in favor of that amendment both in and out of Congress. But that amendment, although it professed to be founded upon that argument, departed from it entirely in its terms. It was adroitly worded and fixed up, and had a sinister object. It provided that whenever in any State the right of suffrage should be withheld from any portion of the male inhabitants over twenty-one years of age on account of race or color, there should be a loss of represent ation for that State in proportion to the extent of the population of such race or color the males of which should be so disfranchised. The practical result was this: The people of the South, and the people of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri along with them, were required to allow the negroes within their borders to become electors just like white people or to lose a share of their power in the Government of the United States. For instance, if Pennsylvania continued to refuse the negroes within her borders the right of voting on account of color, there might be a dockage of one Member of Congress from this State when the next appointment came to be made; the next distribution of Members of Congress to the States by law. That was the idea; and it was applied throughout the country. Now, observe the adroit manner in which that amendment was constructed. It was to force negro suffrage upon all the States under penalty of losing a portion of their political power; but at the same time all the foreigners, all the females, all the minors that constituted a part of the population in a State, for instance, in New York or Massachusetts, were still to be counted for purposes of representation in Congress. That Constitutional Amendment would only cut, and cut home, in the South and in the Central States, whereas New England would have all her non-voting population counted; she would retain her representatives; nay, upon an examination of the effect of that amendment, it was found that New England would gain two members by it while other sections of the country would lose. I have delayed you thus long in explaining that amendment simply because it has not been much debated, and perhaps is not very generally understood.

I say, the only thing in connection with reconstruction done at the first or long session of the 39th Congress was the submission of that Constitutional Amendment which is yet pending, which is not adopted, and perhaps never will be by the States, unless our new fellow-citizens of African descent down South choose to take it after they have reorganized State Governments there.

Congress adjourned in the summer of 1866, and we had an election last year at which the Republican party was generally triumphant in the North. Their speakers went upon the stump and talked about "Copperheads," and about "rebels," and about "not giving up the fruits and glory of the war," and about "traitors," and many other things equally interesting and equally important to the formation of popular judgment. These topics were the burden of their song. They appealed to the passions of the war a year and a half after it was closed, endeavoring to keep them alive, and to keep men voting on old issues instead of the new ones, the present ones, the pressing questions of public policy and of public administration which now come home to our intrests and ought to come home to our judgments also. They went back to the old matter of the war debates, rehashing it over; and they were successful on the whole in most portions of the North and West. It was concluded by the people to give them a further lease of power, and they retained, therefore, their preponderance in Congress. Congress met again in the month of December last for the short session ending on the fourth of March. What was then done by it on this subject of reconstruction? Why they considered it and the debate went on and on until the second of March when a bill was passed called a Reconstruction bill. I shall speak of it in a moment in connection with two supplementary acts which were passed afterwards.

The fortieth Congress convened on the fourth of March under a special act of Congress and remained in session about a month, adjourned over, got together again in the month of July and remained in session most of that month, and then adjourned over to the twenty-first of November, when it is to reconvene; so that there will be three fragmentary sessions of the fortieth Congress before the usual time of meeting, which is, the first Mondy of December; to wit: a session in March, a session in July, and another piece of a session in November. And yet our interesting friend, Mr. Sumner, was deeply grieved that Congress was sitting so little during the present year! It would suit him exactly to have it sit all the time and to have about twenty bills passed where one is now enacted.

On the twenty-third of March, the new Congress, the fortieth, passed a supplementary Reconstruction act, and then in July they passed what was called an explanatory reconstruction act, in which while they proceeded to state what their former laws meant, they managed to put in a great deal of new matter and to make up really a new law

Now Gentlemen, what is the character of those enactments of which I have spoken, the Reconstruction act of the 2nd of March, the Supplementary act of the 23rd of March, and the Explanatory act passed in July? I will state it in a few words, and then you can judge the plan of the political majority in Congress and determine for yourselves whether it is preferable to that scheme of restoration which the President of the United States proposed in 1865, or preferable to any other plan or scheme which might be devised. In the first place, the ten States of the South were divided into five military districts, the first district consisting of the State of Virginia; the second of North Carolina and South Carolina; the third of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida; the fourth of Mississippi and Arkansas; and the fifth of Louisiana and Texas. General Schofield was assigned to the first; General Sickles to the second; General Pope to the third; General Ord to the fourth; and General Sheridan, somewhat distinguished for gallantry in Virginia in the war, to the fifth district. This was accomplished under the Reconstruction law of the 2nd of March, the first that was passed. That law in its original form, as it passed the House and was sent to the Senate, armed these military commanders with authority to preserve the peace, to repress all popular disturbance, and to protect the rights of person and properly throughout the South; and for this purpose they were authorized to resist the interference of any State authority in that section. It was alleged that the negroes were being slaughtered terribly down there; they were murdered in Texas, Alabama, and elsewhere; very interesting persons were hurried out of existence, and it was necessary therefore that a just and benignant government like that of the United States should extend its military protection to them and not permit them to be made the objects of popular fury or of private vengeance. This was good, Christian reasoning, and it was respectable logic also. If there had been power for the purpose and if there had been expediency to sustain the policy undertaken, it might have borne a fair character and been entitled to be spoken of in language of commendation, assuming of course that the facts charged were true.

When the bill came to the Senate and the members of that body, astute and experienced men, came to consider it, they saw that it was wofully deficient; that it established a military government throughout those ten Southern States without any provision that it should ever come to an end. They foresaw the remarks with which the measure would be met throughout the country; that the people would say to them, "you are objecting to Andrew Johnson and to the restoration of the Union under his ideas, and yet now, in the second year after the close of the war, instead of restoring the Union or authorizing steps to be taken for that purpose, you are simply passing a despotism bill for the South,—a bill giving the people there military government, and that without any hope of deliverance in future from its power by anything which you provide." They thought the bill would not be popular, and for that reason of course it was not expedient. Therefore, the Senate preceeded to amend Mr. Stevens pure military bill. He prefers to go straight to his object, and he never has a scruple about anything: but Senators more prudent and more astute did not choose to follow him on that occasion. They proposed and attached to the bill a scheme of reconstruction; and that was the first measure of the kind deliberately proposed by the majority in Congress other than that of the constitutional amendment of which I have spoken.

Mr. Sherman, as the spokesman and organ of his political friends, proposed that the people of the South might hold conventions, form constitutions and elect members to Congress, and if their constitutions were approved by Congress the States should be readmitted into the Union and entitled to their former rights; but in that proceeding of reorganization all the male citizens over twenty-one years of age, without distinction of race or color should be entitled to vote; that is (to tell the whole story in a word) the South should have the privilege of being reconstructed, or more accurately, should have the right to reconstruct itself and to send its Senators and Representatives to Congress, provided always that it was to be done with the assistance and by the admission to suffrage of all the male negroes over twenty-one years of age. Upon my suggestion that there was no limitation as to district residence and matters of that sort, they put in by way of amendment a provision that the person voting should have resided in the State one year, which is the only limitation upon suffrage in the bill beside those of sex and age. That bill of the 2nd of March then contained two features as it was enacted into a law and passed afterwards over the President's veto: first, military government in the South for the protection of person and property and the maintenance of public order; and secondly, a scheme of reconstruction (involving negro suffrage) to be managed and conducted by the people of the South themselves. The military had nothing to do with reconstruction. This Senate amendment left that altogether to the people and their local State governments to regulate for themselves

This law was passed finally over the Presidential veto two days before the termination of the thirty-ninth Congress. The 40th Congress convened on the 4th of March, and on the 23d it passed a supplementary act as I before stated. Why was this done? I will tell you in a word why it was done. It was ascertained that the people of the country received the Reconstruction act of the 2nd of March without much disfavor or complaint. There was no great amount of clamor or of objection in the country to it. There appeared at least to be a general popular acquiescence. The authors of that law therefore became emboldened. They thought there was no danger in going on and doing something more. Consequently, on the 23d of March they passed their supplementary act, mainly for the purpose of turning over the whole subject of reconstruction to the Generals and the military who had been put in command. By that time they knew who the Generals were. They saw that all of them were ardent Republicans, in political accord with them, that their sympathies and feelings were to be trusted, and because they supposed that the people of the country would assent to it, would submit to it, would acquiesce in it, they passed their supplementary law taking the whole subject of reconstruction out of the hands of the people, so far as its management was concerned, and turning it over to the military authorities. And now those Generals in command have the appointment of every register throughout the whole southern country, the appointment of all the men who enumerate the electors and admit them to the privilege of registration. It is to be remembered that those registered are the only persons who can vote, the only persons who can sit on juries, the only persons who are to be American citizens in point of fact and in point of right and privilege. The Generals appoint the persons who make the registries throughout those States. They also appoint the persons who hold the elections, and returns are to be made to them; and after the conventions are held the returns of the votes on the constitutions are to be sent them, and they are to transmit the results to Washington. I repeat then that by this law of the 23d of March the control of the subject of reconstruction was taken out of the hands of the people of the South and of their State governments and conferred upon the military commanders placed over the southern districts.

The supplementary act passed in July, described in short, was to confer additional powers upon those military officers and to place the proceeding of reconstruction more completely within their power and control. In these laws the former idea which entered into the constitutional amendment was embodied throughout, and that was, the admission of the negro population of the South to the right of suffrage, both in choosing delegates to the constitutional conventions and afterwards in voting upon the Constitutions when they were formed, to the same extent to which the right of suffrage might be enjoyed by the whites.

There was, however, in these laws another feature which was not supposed to be important, which did not elicit much of debate, which in fact was put on by the House on the act of the 2nd of March as an amendment after the Senate had amended the bill; and that was the disfranchisement of certain persons. When that House amendment was submitted to the Senate for consideration we were told that the number of persons that would be disfranchised under it would be from 6,000 to 10,000; the provision being that the persons who had held office under the United States or under particular States at any former time and as such officers had sworn to support the Constitution of the United States, and had afterwards engaged in rebellion, should not vote at either one of those elections. Those officials, it was alleged, would amount to some 6,000 or 10,000 in all and those were the persons to be excluded from the privilege of voting at the first and second elections which were to be held in connection with the reconstruction of the South. In the course of the debate on that proposition I expressed the opinion that the number disfranchised would be much larger; that instead of its being but from 6,000 to 10,000 in the ten States of the South, as Mr. Sherman supposed and asserted, (and he, by the way, was the author and sponsor of the scheme of reconstruction then proposed and enacted,) it was more likely to be 60,000, or possibly a still higher number. That was supposed to be a very extravagant speculation and estimate. Now, gentlemen, I will show you in a moment what the result has been, by which it will appear that instead of there being but from 6,000 to 10,000 of the white voters of the South disfranchised by way of example, and because, having been formerly sworn to support the constitution of the United States, they afterwards played false to that oath,-to be sure, most of them were out of office at the time,—the number is probably a quarter of a million, and so large a portion, so large a mass of the voters in the respective States of the South that each and every one of those States, with one or two exceptions, is unquestionably Africanized, or the absolute and complete political control of them placed in the hands of the new negro voters created, and created for the first time by the acts of Congress to which I have alluded.

And by the way, gentlemen, observe that this change of suffrage has not been decreed by the vote or act of the people of the United States anywhere. The people in no State have voted on this subject and agreed to extend suffrage, as we formerly voted and agreed when we amended our State Constitution. The people of the North have never voted on this subject nor have the people of any one of the States of the South had an opportunity to express their views upon it. It is a scheme imposed by act of Congress, without a particle of popular assent from the people of the United States in any quarter of the Union, either in that which is to be principally affected by this measure or in our own section, where we have political power, or suppose we have political power, to control and regulate the action of the Federal Government through our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

Now, gentleman, I have troubled you with this discourse, concerning the past, tracing the history of reconstruction from the time when the war came to a conclusion two years and a half ago, in order that, as I stated in the outset, we may be able more clearly and fully to comprehend the existing situation of public affairs and our political duties regarding them. At this time the principal subject to be passed upon by the American people at the elections is this: are we in favor of the policy of the majority in Congress on the subject of suffrage and the reorganization of the Union? We have waited patiently two years and a half since the war ended to hear from them on this subject. We have stood by and observed what they have done,—not what they have said merely but what they have done. Here is their policy before us, and we are now to judge it.

Now, gentlemen, let us see what this scheme of reconstruction means, viewed from the practical point of view. First, let us see what, according to the census, the populations of these States with which reconstruction is concerned, are: In 1860 the populations were as follows:

	Whites.	*Blacks.*
Alabama,	526,431.	437,770.
Arkansas,	324,191.	111,259.
Lousiana,	357,629.	346,884.
Mississippi,	353,901.	437,404.
South Carolina,	291,388.	412,320.
North Carolina,	631,100.	361,522.
Florida,	77,747.	62,677.
Georgia,	591,588.	461,202.
Texas,	421,294.	182,921.
Virginia,	1,047,411.	548,907.

The State of Virginia, however, was divided by authority of an Act of Congress (of 1862) and a new State was formed called West Virginia, which has taken from that State a little less than one-third of its population; and in that portion of Virginia included in the New State, the preponderance of the whites over the blacks, is still greater than in the old State.

You see from these figures, gentlemen, the relative proportions of whites and blacks who inhabit those several States. Now how stand the registrations which have been taken in those States? In the State of Lousiana the enumeration is closed and stands, whites, 44,732; blacks, 82,907. There, is a State which by the census shows a majority of white population, and yet under the registration of voters, the numbers stand 44,000 to 82,000. In other words there is a registered negro voting population, qualified to sit upon juries of 81,000, while the number of white inhabitants qualified as voters and jurymen, is but 44,000. In the State of South Carolina the registration is whites, 21,176, blacks, 46,019 In Virginia whites, 115,157; blacks, 101,490. In Georgia whites, 95,503; blacks, 93,417. In Mississippi, whites, 52,154; blacks, 70,019; and in North Carolina, whites, 44,508; blacks, 40,605. In Florida, whites, 2,583; blacks, 6,078; and in Alabama whites, 72,747; blacks, 88,248. I believe that comprises all except Texas and Arkansrs, from which we have no report.

The inevitable conclusion to which we must come is this: that in nearly all these States which are to be reconstructed under these laws of Congress the blacks are made to control and dominate the elections which are to be held. Take the case of Lousiana with an excess of white population, and yet by military manipulation the numbers are not only reversed, but the black vote is made to exceed the white, in the proportion of two to one; and in all the other States, with the exception of two or three there is made out an excess of black voting population over the white. And in the exceptional States so nearly is the scale balanced that a few ambitious or worthless persons in the white population uniting with the black for their own purposes either of private gain or ambition will give them control.

What then must we conclude? Not that we are to have what we were told in Congress and elsewhere we would have a fair participation by the negroes in the reorganization of these States in the South, but we are to have absolute control by them established in all or nearly all of those States. In those few in which it is doubtful, there is a base vote coming from a class well known as the "mean whites" which will doubtless give the scale a preponderance in the same direction; and this result is produced by the most unreasonable and unscrupulous disfranchisment of the white population to the extent doubtless of more than a quarter of a million altogether in all those States. I might read from a pamphlet that I have here from the Governor of Texas exhibiting the details of military administration in that State to show how these registrations are made up; but I shall not detain you by doing so.

How is it possible that such an iniquity as this registration in Louisiana could be perpetrated? We can conceive how it could occar. General Sheridan, unskilled in civil life, untrained in political contests, an officer frank and gallant no doubt, goes to the city of New Orleans and is brought into connection there with a few sharp politicians and radicals like T. J. Durant and B. Rush Plumley, who have his ear. He makes his appointments on their recommendation, not knowing the people, he being a new and strange man sent there for his military prowess in the war. They get his ear. He makes for them the appointments of the persons who take these registrations. At their instance he removes Governor Wells; he removes Judge Abell; both of whom were Union men, and, so far as we know, behaving themselves properly at the time. The truth is he falls into the hands of perhaps the most despicable set, politically speaking, that are to be found in our country, and they perform this work; their appointees take these registrations, and hence this result comes; and eventually when we hold up this iniquity what do the political majority do? Answer the facts? Show that this registration is honest? Show that even the harsh, hard, bitter laws passed by Congress are honestly administered? No. They take shelter behind General Sheridan, and talk as if we were assailing him and persecuting him. He is but an incident; he is but an individual in all this case. Here is a question affecting a vast body of American citizens in a State and the policy of the Federal government; and are our mouths to be closed, is our indignation to be restrained because a gallant officer has been made an instrument in this iniquity and has been overreached by artful and unscrupulous men? No! we must denounce the iniquity even while we seek to excuse the General in command upon the ground that his training—his life and pursuits—had not qualified him for the duties to which he was assigned and for resisting the arts and influence of evil men.

There is an additional point in this connection which I desire to state, and that is, the question of expense. Now the whole cost of this system of reconstruction in the South is charged upon the Treasury of the United States. It is of course impossible for us to ascertain the amount exactly or even to approach it very closely by estimate. I have seen it stated in the National Intelligencer and the Louisville Journal, (and they allege that their statement is based upon an examination of particulars,) that the expense of the military administration will amount to $45,000,000. Whatever the fact may be, it is clear that the expenditure must be very large, must be in fact enormous for the mere support of the officers and soldiers who are required to hold military occupation in the southern country and control this reorganization of the States. Then again, there is an enormous expenditure in taking the registrations, (because they extend into every local community throughout the whole of the ten States) and in holding conventions, and in holding elections subsequently for the purpose of voting upon the Constitutions. In the Reconstruction act of March we voted $500,000 to this department of outlay. At the late July session an estimate from General Sickles was submitted to Congress asking for $500,000 additional for the States of North Carolina and South Carolina alone, and a bill was introduced for over $1,600,000 additional. It was reduced on my motion to $1,000,000, and then was passed, —a bill appropriating $1,000,000 additional for the civil expenses of reconstruction. Of course these appropriations have nothing to do with the military expenditures, because they are covered by the general appropriations for the army of the United States, which have been enormous, unexampled, and, I doubt not, (and for this Mr. Stanton is very much accountable,) profligate also. These enormous expenditures will in due time appear, after they are incurred and when it will be impossible to limit them or to throw off the burdens which they impose upon the people of the United States. We are paying all this for what purpose? To give the Republican party control of ten additional States and to debase suffrage to the level at which they propose to put it.

Under this head of expense there should be included also the expenditure for the Freedmen's Bureau, an institution of a very peculiar character and of very peculiar action. The amount of the cost of that Bureau is quite unknown to the people. Two sessions ago, Gen. Howard, who is at the head of it, asked for an appropriation of about $11,000,000. How much money has been expended for that Bureau, and how much will be expended hereafter, no one can tell. In due time, when it is too late perhaps, we shall ascertain the amount. But the main office and function of that Bureau, and intended so, during the present year, has been to organize the elections in the South. Hundreds and hundreds of agents having control of the negro population and disbursing money from the Treasury of the United States, supplying them with food and clothing, have marshalled them to the registrations will marshal them to the elections and give direction to the reorganization of those States. So far as my knowledge and belief extend, there is not one man in the employment of that Bureau, either at Washington or in the Southern States, who is not a strong Radical party man selected for that reason, and holding his place upon condition of being such, and doing the work for which he was selected. That Bureau asked us for $11,000,000 in one appropriation, and the money is poured out of the Treasury bounteously by a political majority who ask nothing in return for the public money expended except political power for themselves and the accomplishment of the policy which they support in the government of the United States.

What is to come next? The several measures proposed by the majority in Congress, as I stated before, have been acquiesced in by the country, or were acquiesced in down to the present year. And why? What was the great reason? Although the war was over, and although the people desired reunion, desired concord, desired peace and the restoration of constitutional rule and all the political blessings which they formerly enjoyed, yet they acquiesced in one thing after another supposing each would be the last. They were asked to assent to this, that, and the other proposition or law, and they did so upon the plea that such assent was necessary to peace, to make an end of disputes; and now again the argument that we hear for the Africanization of one-third of our country, and that, too, without any assent of the people anywhere—they have taken a snap judgment; they have never submitted this subject to the judgment of the people anywhere—is, that thereby we will end the negro question. We are now asked

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