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EVENING BULLETIN

Friday, September 10, 1869.

THE DISTRESS OF THE DEMOCRACY.—The Democratic party is in a singular condition of internal disturbance just now. For years past the "roughs" of that interesting organization have been allowed to manage its affairs, run its conventions, make its nominations, stuff its ballot-boxes, and in various other ways direct its operations. They have not been recognized exactly as leaders, but they have been used as confidential and faithful and unscrupulous servants by their political superiors, who have paid them their wages, approved all their escapades, supported them by their votes and encouraged them to bolder acts of lawlessness and violence and fraud. This relation between the "roughs" and the "respectables" has continued for years past, until the relative positions have gradually shifted and the servants and masters have at last quite changed places.

The Democratic party was the servant of the Rebellion, before and during the war. Now it is the servant of its own "roughs." Year by year this element has become more open in its defiance of public decency and in its efforts to gain absolute control of the government of this city. Enjoying an almost total immunity at the hands of the law, its recklessness has been encouraged to more daring outrages upon the ballot-box, more flagrant commission of crime, more high-handed insolence of language and action.

Meantime the other wing of the Democracy has been growing alarmed. It finds that the rowdy element, which it formerly used as a tool, has assumed independent control of the affairs of the party. The city ticket now presented by the Democratic party of Philadelphia is so bad that the *Age*, the Democracy's only organ of any consequence, shrinks from endorsing it. Aberm, Stewart, Hurley, and the rest, more than even the calm digestion of the party organ can manage, and it preserves a sullen dignity by nursing the folly of its friends while it thus showing up their party before the people of Philadelphia without even the thin covering of outward respectability, and hoping to win support from such a community as this for a set of men against whom public sentiment openly revolts.

As an antidote for this supreme folly the "respectables" have rushed to the opposite extreme, and forgetting all their "Democratic" professions, have set up Mr. Asa Packer as a Golden Calf, a model of wealthy respectability with whom they fondly hope to off-set the work of their troublesome colleagues, the "roughs."

Thus far the shallow device has not met with any very remarkable success.

The Roughs have no notion of surrendering to the Respectables. They know that they are not only the numerical majority of the party, but that they are the active and reliable working force in carrying out all these peculiar devices by which the Democracy achieves its victories. They are not abashed by the rebukes of the *Age* or dazzled by the effulgence of Mr. Packer's millions. They have no idea of withdrawing their representatives from the nomination, much less of permitting the question to any honest expression of public opinion. The assassination of Detective Brooks is a proclamation of their intention to resist law, and the threats of Alderman McMullin are an announcement of their determination to continue their old game of fraud and violence at the polls.

These undisguised demonstrations of these present controllers of the Democratic party, in the one case, and of the Democratic "whisky ring" in the other, are working most wholesome effects in this community. They have stirred up public attention to an extraordinary degree, and put decent men of all parties fully on their guard. The Republican press has sounded the alarm, and although it cannot wake the echoes to the same extent as the *Age* office it has done what is far more to the purpose, in awaking the people to the necessity of putting a stern curb upon the outlawry of the Democracy. Even the decorous *Ledger*, so rarely committing itself directly upon the political issues of the day, comes to the rescue, today, in an admirable protest against the spirit which prompted the threats of Alderman McMullin. Our neighbor truly says, in discourging on this important subject:

"We have no idea, however, that any such programme as that contained in these reported threats can be carried out in Philadelphia after they are once made public. We do not believe it can be done in the Fourth Ward even. There are a good many reckless men in that locality, but still the large majority of the people there are as industrious, upright, and perfectly peaceable as any in the city. We do not believe there is one man in ten in that Ward who would deliberately undertake such an act as 'murder.' But whether that be so or not, there is a sufficient number of men of all parties in this city to overwhelm and crush out any such attempt. Those who suppose that the people of this city can be bullied into any submission of forcible violence, will be woefully mistaken. If Alderman McMullin has been rash enough to utter such threats, and there is anything but idle vaporing in his words, he will find on the side of the law and the authorities thousands of men as brave and fearless as he can possibly be, although they are not in the habit of exhibiting their courage in so reckless and unreasonable ways. His "crowds" would be outnumbered a hundred to one. There has been a great deal too much of this sort of thing, and it is time that all those who feel like indulging in it should be made to feel that there is no decent man of any party who will give countenance to it, or do anything but denounce it, and that there must be an end of these discreditable and reprehensible actions."

THE CRY FOR HELP.—The excitement and bewilderment which were the inevitable consequences of the terrible disaster at the Avondale mine, caused an exaggeration of the number of men who were entombed and killed. Instead of *two* hundred there were but one hundred and eight men in the mine when the flames swept up the shaft, and shut out the blessed air, and with it hope and life for the inmates. But knowledge of this overestimate detracts very little from the horror of the disaster. It stands, in ghastly singularity, the saddest, most heartrending accident of this kind that ever occurred in this country; and whether there was one man or a hundred, we cannot, as we read the simple but graphic stories of the incidents at the mine, but exercise a wandering in imagination to the bottom of that black and stifling pit, to conceive of the fierce struggles of the victims as they battled bravely and inefficiently for life. The number of sufferers is, in a smaller one we thought, but still it is fearfully great, and unless we are quick to give substantial expression of the sympathy that manifested itself in the last Presidential canvass, violent in their opposition to the Congressional plan of reconstruction and wavering in their denunciation of General Grant and loyal men generally.

The gross inconsistency of the Attorney-General's decision is too apparent to require lengthened comment. If the Legislature elect is competent to perform the grave and momentous act of ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution, it is surely within its competency to fulfil all lesser legislative functions. The body which can have a voice in the amendment of the supreme law of the Republic cannot be incapable of performing at the statute law of a State. Many gentlemen, the equals, at least, of Attorney-General Hoar in learning and ability, differ from him in a note to his decision on the test-oath question, they holding the clear intent of Congress to be, what the letter of the law means, that the grave and important work of reconstruction shall in every case be intrusted to loyal hands alone.

It is fortunate that in the bill ordering an election to be held in Virginia, Congress expressly retained a final revisionary power over the whole subject, so that the reconstruction of the State cannot be finally consummated without its full sanction. If it is not good law to follow the example set by the Democratic members of the Georgia Legislature, in giving to the candidates receiving the next highest numbers of votes the seats of the negro members whom they had declared ineligible and expelled because of their color, Congress should at least adopt the suggestion of this journal, and order a new election to be held in every district the elect members of which are disqualified by reason of their inability to subscribe to the test-oath. If by this means the reconstruction of the State is delayed, the Democratic party therein have only themselves to thank for it. Weeks before the election was held they were notified by General Canby, through a letter to the Chairman of their Executive Committee, Mr. Daniels, that the test-oath would be required of the members of the Legislature to be elected; but they were playing a bold game, and ignored the admonition, relying upon their infinite craftiness and audacity to carry them "safely" over or around this pitfall in their pathway. What have they not sacrificed to secure the election of the Legislature which will convene in a few weeks in the city of Richmond? They have placed in the Gubernatorial chair a detested "Yankee," whom, to their chagrin, he is a Yankee, not one of them would disavow if he wished, to take into his private parlor and introduce to his wife and family. The Lieutenant-Governorship and the Attorney-Generalship of the State they have given to men of avowed Union proclivities, and who since the close of the war have fully identified themselves with the Republican party and openly advocated its principles. This, to the hereditary office-holders who have heretofore controlled the politics of Virginia, and who consider their right to official position as sacred as the divine right of kings, who rule by the grace of God, is surely sacrifice enough; but to this they have added the sacrifices of a Constitution in which all that is essential to the liberty of the whole people of the State is fully embodied, conceding as it does to every man perfect equality in respect to the exercise of the rights and prerogatives of citizenship. All this they knew they could do with safety so long as they maintained control of the Legislature. Judge Ould, of Richmond (known, to many of our "boys in blue" as the rebel commissioner for the exchange of prisoners), and who plumed himself upon getting fine, healthy soldiers in exchange for the wan, starved men sent over, said in a speech delivered in that city during the progress of the campaign: "Give me the Legislature, and I don't care who makes your Constitution!" With a two-third majority of unrepentant rebels in the Legislature, they can be safely regardless as to who becomes the Governor of the State.

Let the Democratic party of Virginia, by become freed from all apprehension of interference from without—as it will be, when the State is fully restored to the Union and the military withdrawn—and if they cannot deprive the negro of the privilege of voting, they will, at least, endeavor to render his free and unmolested exercise of the right of suffrage impossible. This they may, for a little while, measurably succeed in accomplishing; but sooner or later, as the ballot is the great emancipator, sure, sooner or later, to secure justice and protection to its possessors. They will attempt to retard the advancement of the negro in the moral and intellectual scale, and his consequent emancipation from their control, by refusing to enforce those clauses of the Constitution providing for theeducation of the masses of the State.

Still, these purposes of the Democratic party in Virginia are but incidental; they are subordinate to their all-absorbing desire to once more become potential in the national councils, and again contront in the political arena the foes against whom they valiantly warred upon the battle-field. Above all, let it never be forgotten that it is not merely the paltry spoils of insubstantial rewards of position for which they intend striving, for they have vast pecuniary interests at stake, and will not, without years of mighty endeavors, yield a hope of securing some compensation for their emancipated slaves, and some return for those promises to pay into which their hoarded wealth has been transmuted. That is the thought which ever lies close to their hearts, and of ever their days of triumph comes their ultimatum will be: "Pay all, or none."

Let Congress, when it shall assemble, soon thoughtfully the question of reconstruction in Virginia, and reflect long before they allow that State to be restored to its Representation under the rule of men who will trample loyalty under their tyrannous feet, and, when its hour is ripe, lift their traitorous hands to drag down into the mire of repudiation the honor of the Government which they still have such inexpressible bitterness.

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