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"FOR THE GOOD THAT LACKS ASSISTANCE: FOR THE WRONG THAT NEEDS RESISTANCE."

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13, 1869.

The disgraceful scenes that occurred in the Hall of the House on Wednesday last, during the count of the electoral votes of the States, will be long remembered by all who witnessed them, as a painful exhibition of the pernicious fruits of the Reconstruction Acts of Congress. Had the legislative branch of our Government never departed from its solemn and unanimous declaration of July, 1861, that the war should be prosecuted solely for the preservation of the Union, and "the maintenance of the rights, dignity and equality of the States unimpaired," and, under the lead of the pro-revolutionist Strvssxs, degraded the States lately in rebellion to the condition of conquered provinces, only to be restored to their places in the Union upon compliance with the unconstitutional conditions prescribed by Congress, such a gross breach of parliamentary decorum as that which sprung out of the attempted exclusion of the vote of Georgia from the electoral count, could never have happened. Your readers have been already made acquainted with the proceedings of the joint convention, so that it will be unnecessary for me to repeat them in detail. A review, however, of the extraordinary incidents which attended them, may not be uninteresting.

In order to a clear understanding of what transpired, it must be premised that, a day or two previous, both branches of Congress adopted what is called a "concurrent resolution," providing in substance that, whereas the question of the right of Georgia to representation in Congress, and therefore to participation in the Presidential election, was then pending and undetermined, if the counting or omitting to count the electoral vote of that State should not essentially change the result, in that case it should be reported in two forms—the one including the vote of Georgia and the other excluding it, but in either case declaring Grant and Colfax elected. Thus prepared to meet the only difficulty that was apprehended, the two Houses met on the appointed day at one o'clock, old Ben Wade in the chair. All went along harmoniously until the vote of Louisiana was announced, when the irrepressible Mullins jumped up and objected to its being counted, without assigning any reasons therefor. Judge Woodward, from the Democratic side, raised the point of order that the objection was not a specific one and therefore should not be entertained. But old Ben, whose rulings are usually governed by a stubborn will rather than by parliamentary law, "couldn't see the p'int," and hastily decided that the Senate should withdraw. So the two branches separated to deliberate on what should be done with the vote of Louisiana. The question was soon settled, the Senate and House both deciding, by large majorities, that Louisiana should be counted in. It is worthy of remark, however, that such prominent Radicals as Chandler, Howard,

Samner and Wilson, in one branch, and Ashley (the "Impeacher,") Banks, Boatwell, Ben Butler, Dawes, Julian, Paine, Van Wyck, and others, seventy in all, were found following the lead of the Tennessee mountebank, Mullins. The Convention reassembled, and the counting of the votes was resumed—those for Grant and Colfax being announced alternately by Messrs. Conklin and Wilson, the Radical tellers, and those for Seymour and Blair by Mr. Pruyn, the Democratic teller. When the 33 votes of New York were read off by the latter, with an air of manifest pride in the choice his native State had made, a murmur of approval, which almost burst out into loud acclamation, was heard from the crowded galleries. The count went on, quietly and rather monotonously, until the votes of all the States were announced, but Georgia—last, though not least on this occasion, in the thoughts of "the assembled wisdom of the nation." The certificate from the authorities of this "erring sister" was handed to Mr. Pruyn, who, amid breathless silence, announced that, on the 9th of December, 1868, the nine electoral votes of Georgia had been cast for Seymour and Blair. Then came the tug of war, Butler—a champion of much sterner stuff than Mullins—entered the lists and threw down the gauntlet. In the tones of a Stentor, he said: "I object to the vote of the State of Georgia being counted, and send my objections, in writing, to the Chair." The objections, four in number, were read. They recited, in substance: 1st. That the Electoral College had not met on the first Wednesday (2nd) of December, as required by law, but on the second Wednesday (8th) of the month. 2nd. That when the electors were chosen, Georgia had not been admitted to representation in Congress. 3rd. That at the date of said election, Georgia had not complied with the Reconstruction Acts of Congress. 4th. That no fair election was held in Georgia on the 3rd of November last. All this, in plain English, meant only that because the people of Georgia, in spite of the Reconstruction laws, had the audacity to vote for Seymour and Blair, they should have no voice in the election of President. The point of order was raised that, provisions having been made, by the concurrent resolution, for the case of Georgia, Butler's objections should not be entertained. Butler rose to debate the question, but was promptly called to order by Fernando Wood, who insisted that the rule forbade discussion. After a little sharp cross-firing, which was attested by a round of vigorous blows from the Presiding Officer's gavel, Old Ben, with mock gravity, and with far more truth than was to be expected in an official declaration, said: "The Chair is very much disposed to hold the Senate and the House to their own doings—to the joint resolution which they passed—the purport of which is, if we understand it, that if the votes of the State of Georgia did not alter the result of the election, they might be counted, and if they did alter the result, they were not to be counted."

This frank admission of the true meaning of the concurrent resolution, brought down the House in roars of laughter, which were perfectly natural, although unsuited to an occasion when dignity and order should have been observed. Butler insisted that as this was a question of "high constitutional law," it should be considered by the two Houses separately. Loud cries of "Yes! Yes!" from one side of the House, and "No! No!" from the other, here ensued, and portended the coming storm. Wade used his gavel as dexterously as an auctioneer handles his hammer, but all to no purpose. He then rose, as if to give a decision, but evidently embarrassed by the

pertinacity of Butler and his adherents, he wavered and took his seat again without saying a word. The shouting and laughter were renewed, when Old Ben, as the easiest way of escape from the disorderly scene he was unable to suppress, decided that the Senate should retire to deliberate. After an hour's noisy discussion, the House, repudiating its previous agreement to the concurrent resolution, decided, by a vote of 160 to 41, that Georgia should be thrown out. The only Radicals who voted in the minority, were Baker of Illinois, and Hawkins, of Tennessee. Simultaneously with this action of the House, the Senate, by a vote of 31 to 28, decided to adhere to the terms of the special order as to the count of the electoral vote of Georgia. At half-past 4, the Senate again entered the hall of the House, and Old Ben resumed the chair. Stifened in the back by the decision of the Senate, he at once proceeded to business, with a determination that clearly showed his intention to see it through. Butler's objections were overruled, and the tellers were directed to announce the vote of Georgia. Butler protested against it, and with a loud voice and an excited manner, defiantly exclaimed that the House would not be overruled by the Senate in that way. Wade took no notice of him, but repeated the order to the tellers to go on and complete the count. Butler bawled "Mr. President!" with all his might, amid cries of "Order! Order!" from one side, and "Go on, Butler!" from the other. But Wade was deaf and immovable, save that his gavel went up and down like the thumps of a forge-hammer. Butler, quivering with rage, appealed from the decision of the Chair, and taking courage from the approving shouts of the members who surrounded him, added "We will see whether we have any rights here!" Wade coolly refused to entertain the appeal, and endeavored to enforce his authority by a lively repetition of the forge-hammer exercise. The Hall of the House has been the scene of many a brawl, but the angry controversy that here ensued, beggars description. For a time the Convention threatened to resolve itself into an insurated mob, and Butler, regardless of consequences, stood ready for his part as ringleader. High above all the cries that made confusion worse confounded, his voice was heard, shouting "Let the Convention be dissolved!" At this critical moment, when Wade seemed powerless to restore order, Colfax, the adroit and wary tactician,—apprehensive, doubtless, lest the failure of the Convention to perform its duties, might present an obstruction in his pathway to the Vice President's Chair on the 4th of March—came to Old Ben's rescue, and commanding members of the House to come to order, directed the Sergeant-at-Arms to arrest any of them who continued to disturb the Convention. The prompt advance of this officer in the direction of Butler and the malcontents from whom the disorder had proceeded, had the desired effect, and the fear of arrest accomplished what the Presiding Officer's authority had utterly failed to enforce. The tellers completed their work—the result was formally announced, and Old Ben declared Grant and Colfax duly elected President and Vice President of the United States. Without waiting for a formal motion to adjourn, he added: "The joint convention having completed the business which brought it here, will now retire to the Senate chamber." This ludicrous blunder provoked another shout of laughter, mirthful on the side of Wade's friends—derisive on the part of his beaten assailants. The Senators obeyed the order, and retired, with their official dignity evidently much disturbed. The House, glad to

be relieved from the rule of Wade, breathed freer, and was soon itself again. Butler seized the first opportunity to get the floor, and introduced a resolution, censuring Wade's conduct in the Chair, as "a gross act of oppression and an invasion of the rights of the House." This resolution led to a spicy and, at times, acrimonious debate of two days' duration, between Butler, Schenck and Beaton, in support of it, and Shellabarger, Thomas, Bingham, Woodward, Garfield and Logan, against it. During the discussion, the Speaker called Mr. Dawes to the Chair, and took the floor in reply to Mr. Schenck, and in justification of the ruling of Ben Wade, as well as his own interference for the enforcement of order. Bingham seized the opportunity to pay off some of his old scores against Butler, and, in his speech, denounced the conduct of the "Hero of Fort Fisher," as revolutionary and anarchical, and even more criminal than the late rebellion itself. Butler, who went into this fight with the boastful assertion that he "never backed down," soon saw that he was getting the worst of it, and to save himself from total defeat, agreed, at the last moment, to soften his resolution down to a mere reference of the subject to a select committee, for the purpose of amending the rules which govern the action of the Conventions of the two Houses. But, it wouldn't do. The whole affair was finally disposed of on Friday, by the adoption of Logan's motion to lay the whole subject on the table, by a vote of 130 yeas to 55 nays. The Democratic members, although they didn't care which side whipped, in this fight between Butler and Wade, voted with the majority, with two or three exceptions, because an adverse vote might have been construed into a quasi endorsement of Butler's position that the joint convention, under any circumstances, had a right to exclude the electoral vote of Georgia.

I have thus given your readers more lengthily than I intended, but as briefly as a proper understanding of the subject would allow, a review of the proceedings which will make the 10th day of February, 1869, memorable in the legislative annals of the nation. From them the people may draw two important and, to themselves, pregnant conclusions:

1st. Had the result of the Presidential election depended upon the votes of the so-called "Reconstructed States," and had they decided the issue in favor of Seymour and Blair, the electoral votes of those States would have been excluded, and Grant and Colfax would have been declared President and Vice President, by the arbitrary power of Congress.

2d. Should the people, by longer submission to the unconstitutional legislation of Congress over the rights of the States, by which that body, among other things, claims authority to reject the electoral votes of States in the Union, regularly cast and duly certified, a precedent will be, and even has been, established, by which, at any future time, the will of the people may be defeated, and a President and Vice President imposed upon them, in opposition to their own choice, by the mere dictum of Congress.

HERALD.—Advices from Cuba state that the city of Trinidad, in the central department, has been declared in a state of siege. An engagement has taken place at Mancagua between the troops and revolutionists. Official accounts claim a victory for the Government. The report of losses is not given on either side.

Mexican Bandits strip all the clothes off the stage passengers they catch, and send them on their way naked.

The Boston Advertiser calls Representatives Mullins and Butler, "two lovely cherries moulded on one stem."