The Pittsburgh Gazette

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## A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

The holding of a Convention to revise the Constitution of Pennsylvania is attracting increased attention from the press and from prominent citizens. A deep feeling pervades the Commonwealth on account of the scandalous manner in which public affairs are managed at Harrisburg, and a determination has been formed that a remedy shall be devised and applied. The shamelessness with which money was demanded at the last session, not by a few, but by most of the members, as the condition upon which they would hinder or help legislation, has become widely known, and has created an indignation that will not be easily pacified.

In the earlier stages of legislative corruption it was the habit of even debauched and mercenary members to act upon a class of bills, known under the designation of "public," with at least a show of decency and conscience, and to exact gratifications only on bills popularly known as "private." That distinction, which preserved a lingering tradition that "public" business was to be transacted upon high considerations of utility and principle, has been swept away. Instances have become frequent of members bluntly demanding on matters purely public, "How much money is there to be had?"

Towards the close of the last session some gentlemen had determined to institute criminal proceedings against various members for taking bribes. These gentlemen were appalled when met by a threat to retaliate upon the members from their own county; and a show of hands was made, disclosing incontestible evidence that it could be done and that effectua ly. Rather than bring their own neighbors and acquaintances into disrepute and trouble, the proceedings were unwisely abandoned.

On a previous occasion we referred to an attempt made by the members in framing the General Appropriation Bill, to vote themselves larger salaries than they were entitled to. We explained how the bottom of the Treasury was reached, and how, after trying to turn the Sinking Fund into the General Fund, that it also might be exhausted, the salaries were made considerably less than was intended, because the money could not be found to make them larger. But another scheme was resorted to, last winter, on a larger scale than ever before, for increasing the emoluments. The greater portion of the Senators and Representatives took on sons with them, who were appointed to places of one sort or another about the Legislature. So many of the members were concerned in this dodge that they were enabled to make the pay of these youngsters all they dared. This practice is greatly to be reprobated. It has come to amount to taking indirectly from the Treasury sums that the members dare not take directly.

In the present temper of the people—and it is not likely to cool—a Constitutional Convention would provide stringent remedies for existing abuses. The prevailing nepotism would be knocked unceremoniously on the head. Private legislation, as it is termed, would be absolutely prohibited. The requirement would be made absolute that all [illegible] applicable [illegible] and that the Courts of the proper jurisdiction in connection with the Legislature should have the sole charge and duty of acting upon all applications of citizens desiring corporate franchises, and all existing companies desiring amendments, conformed to the rule established. The session would be limited to not exceeding sixty days, the pay of members rigidly fixed, and the number of the members very much increased. Provision would doubtless be made for compelling parties giving bribes, or suspected of giving them, to become witnesses against members taking bribes.

In the Republican ranks the feeling is decided, that the Williamsport State Convention ought to take strong ground in favor of a Constitutional Convention.

## A DIFFERENCE DISCRIMINATED.

A year and a half ago a formidable conspiracy was entered into for the purpose of breaking up existing political organizations, and inaugurating what was called in the days of President MONROE, "an era of good feeling." Those who entered into this combination knew full well that political parties are indispensable under all forms of government; and that the more directly the people participate in conducting public affairs, the greater the need of parties, and the more invincible the impossibility of getting rid of them. So long as men differ in judgment—and that will be as long as men remain men—they will group together in clans, each clan endeavoring to give predominance to its own ideas. Nor is this prejudicial. Far otherwise. In this way is accomplished in the realm of politics what the winds and tides do for the material world.

Many men who started in this extraordinary enterprise, with reared crests and proud voices, soon found to their dismay, that it was doomed to swift discomfiture, and they turned square about, and entered upon the other tack; assuming to be at least veterans, if not commanders. If they exhibited a lack of good sense in getting themselves into a false position, they showed agility and discretion in getting out. All were not so prudent. Not a few kept on, notwithstanding the numerous desertions from their ranks, seemingly confident they distinguished infallible signs of a millenium, in which even the wild beasts of all the parties should lie down lovingly thune kraal, extensive as the country. As if this infatuation was not absurd enough, they demand fraternity with a truculence and an acerbity that would add repulsiveness to common bullies. These "ra ra of good feeling" advocates think the true manner of reducing all men to their way of thinking is by "apostolic fists and knocks," of which Mr. GREELEY, for instance, can bear feeling testimony. Especially do these pugnacious peace men detest the Republican party; and seek its extirpation. Sometimes they insist it has done all the valuable work it is capable of, and ought to be gathered without ceremony to the limbo of useless rubbish. They proclaim that it is dominated by bad men, who direct its energies to reprehensible ends, and from whose mastery they have endeavored to take it, but without success. Ay, there's the rub. They essayed to rule, and failed. Because they were not trusted, they think none should be. At other times they present themselves before the party, bland and suave, and while they give it the kiss of filial affection, they stab it under the fifth rib.

It is worthy of consideration that while these discontented souls are demanding the disbandment of the Republican party; are denouncing it as harsh, vindictive, proscriptive, intolerant; the military leaders of the rebellion are, with almost unanimous consent, testifying to its lenity, moderation, and magnanimity. They understand what responsibilities those incur who embark in a revolt against the constituted authorities and are put down. They know what severities the rules of war, in such cases, allow and justify; and they are astonished and overcome in being permitted to remain securely at home, surrounded by their families, amply protected in their property, and permitted to engage, as of old, in any lawful pursuit. They go even farther than this in their acknowledgments. General LONGSTREET, for example, in a letter published in these columns yesterday, perceives that the Democratic party, clings tenaciously to the dead past; that it insists on issues which events have decided and swept away; that it presents no points of actual contact with men who leave the dead to bury the dead, through a desire to act well their part with the living; while the Republican party meets with efficiency and propriety the case as it really stands, in a spirit of enlarged patriotism, and a fixed determination to do the best that can be done under the circumstances.

## OUR DISABLED SOLDIERS.

Correspondence of the Pittsburgh Gazette.

"What shall our disabled soldiers do?" is the caption of an editorial in the New York *Weekly Tribune* of June 5th, inst. Mr. Greeley thinks this is a momentous question, and I agree with him. But would not a more fitting way of stating the question be "What shall *we do for* our disabled soldiers?"

Mr. Greeley, while admitting the fact that thousands of our brave soldiers have lost either an arm or a leg—some, indeed, even both of these—in the service of our country; that others have been rendered blind, or deaf, and still others who have come back saddened and hopeless, with health and strength completely wrecked by the hardships endured in her defense, calls on individuals to support and employ these brave cripples at such wages as they (the soldiers) can earn.

Is there not something foolish, nay, dishonorable, in asking individuals to maintain our disabled soldiers when we have or ought to have a Government not only able, but willing to take care of them? A Government, too, for whose treasured life they have crippled their own.

Mr. G. also states that the paltry $100 bounty is of but momentary consequence to any of them, and, in the aggregate, adds an enormous burden to the national debt! And after calling on individuals to support these soldiers—the maimed, the blind, the broken down in constitution—there is given another panacea for those bravo boys who were so fortunate as to lose but *one* arm in the service, namely: to learn to write with the left hand, and eke out a subsistence for themselves and their families by such copying as can be obtained. Heaven look down and help our brave defenders if this is all that can be done for them! If it is, the adage is verified that "Republics are ungrateful." But is there no other way of aiding our soldiers more than the plan given? I think there is.

First, let the Government ascertain (and this can easily be done by the Assessors and their Assistants in every district and division in the United States) how many of them are utterly helpless;