

Democrat and Sentinel.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOVERNMENT, LIKE THE DEWS OF HEAVEN, SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ALIKE UPON THE HIGH AND THE LOW, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

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NATIONAL POLITICS.

SPEECH OF HON. HOWELL COBB, OF GEORGIA.

We publish below the able speech of the Hon. Howell Cobb, of Georgia, made in the House of Representatives on Friday the 21st ult. It is a bold and manly defence of the principles and policy of the Democratic party, and will be heartily responded to by every true-hearted Democrat who may peruse it:—

Mr. Cobb—Mr. Clerk, we are at the close of the third week of the session without an organization, and the charge has been made from every quarter of the House that the Democratic party is responsible for it. As a member of that party, acting with it, and giving to its actions here since the commencement of this session my hearty and cordial approval, I rise to say a word or two in reference to the position which it occupies before the country, and to justify and defend that position. When the charge is made by those who profess to have a majority in this House, those whose sentiments have been reflected by the senior member, the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. Giddings,] the most of whom are casting their votes for the honorable gentleman from Massachusetts for Speaker, the only reply that I feel called upon to make in behalf of the Democratic party is, that we are in the minority. It is a source of great gratification to them, and they have congratulated the country upon it. The minority, therefore, is not responsible for this want of organization.

The charge is made by another political organization in this House, and a more extended reply is perhaps demanded. It has been said repeatedly, and it has gone to the country, that the failure of the national men of this House to unite in the election of a Speaker is attributable to the resolution passed by the Democratic caucus which nominated the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. Richardson] for Speaker; that the resolution has created a barrier between the Democratic party and those who hold national sentiments on some subjects in common with that party, and that that barrier cannot be passed by them; and, therefore, that we are responsible for the failure to organize. It requires a brief return to the history of the past two years to respond to this charge.

At the time, sir, when the contest was waging and waxing warm in all the Southern States; when all the political organizations in the Northern States out of the Democratic party were warring upon it on account of its nationality; when for years it had stood firm against these assaults from every quarter and from every faction, there suddenly springs up a secret political organization, shown by subsequent history to be either the offspring or the natural ally of this free soil organization which had for years warred upon the national principles of the Democratic party. Elections transpired; the friends of this national principle, which had been illustrated in the passage of the Nebraska and Kansas bill, and which had been maintained for years by the national Democracy of the North, were stricken down. I need only ask you to cast your eyes over this House and notice those who now occupy the seats once filled by the friends of the Constitution, and desire you to tell me through whose instrumentality those men were driven from this hall, and their places supplied by those who now respond to the sentiments of the gentleman from Ohio, and who cast their votes for the gentleman from Massachusetts. This was not the work of old organizations existing at the North. They were incapable of effecting it. It was when those sympathizing with them in their free-soil sentiments struck down, if you please, the banners carried in broad daylight, and resorted to their midnight assemblages, hid out from the light of day, and there conspiring against the best interests of this country and the constitutional rights of that section of it which I have the honor in part to represent, combining their secret power and influence with the open enemies of the Constitution and the rights of the States, were enabled to destroy and break down the power of the national Democratic party in the Northern States, and to fill their seats with the advocates of those principles to which I have alluded. Sir, when the tidings of these results were heard by the people of my section of the country, there was one general expression of regret and mortification from all who could forget their enmity to the Democratic party. If there were any who rejoiced in those results, if there were any whose feelings and views were represented by that portion of the public press which heralded in, not the triumph of Free Soilism, but the defeat of national Democracy, such, I trust, were few in numbers. It created, however, these results: a universal feeling throughout all the Southern States that the time had arrived when of us there should be but one voice, one people, one party, in defence of rights dear to us as the constitution of the country, which were now being warred upon by a sectional organization at the North, which was—as was indicated by the return of members to this House—carrying before it triumph and success throughout the Northern and Western States. We felt, all of our peo-

ple felt, that the time had come when we should stand firm and true by those men and that party of the North who, by their votes and conduct, had proven themselves true to the Constitution. There was no man in that hour who would have risen before a Southern constituency and called to the stand northern Free Soilers to prove the want of soundness and nationality, and true principles, in the men who had been sacrificed in their defence of their constitutional rights. Why was the South not a unit? Why did not she speak but one voice in common with those national Democrats who, in times past, stood by her, and have stood here, in defence of the constitution, a firm and unbroken phalanx, from the commencement of the session down to the present moment? Sir, I do not feel authorized to speak of what occurred in other States, but I will speak in reference to what transpired in my own. In the hour in which this universal sentiment prevailed, there was unknown to us, unknown to the Democratic party as it then stands organized, a secret political organization springing up in our midst, and, before we were aware of it, a large portion of our people were bound by solemn oaths and obligations to subject their fellow-citizens to a new test, unknown to the past political history of our country, and, as we honestly believe, then and now, violative of the constitutional rights of many good, worthy, and patriotic citizens of this land. Sir, the Democratic party of my own State stood prepared to unite with every man, North and South, who would stand by the constitution, and seeing that the question to which I have alluded had overwhelmed all other questions, had indeed become the paramount question of the day as illustrated here, we wanted to be united, we wanted to speak as one man, with one voice, and one heart, as there was a universal spirit and feeling of sympathy throughout our region. But this secret party broke upon us—if I may be permitted to use the homely illustration—like a clap of thunder from a clear sky, proving that there existed in our midst a secret political organization having for its principle the proscription of Catholic and foreign-born citizens, and these new tests were to be applied to judge of the orthodoxy of every man in our State before we were to be permitted to co-operate with them. Gentlemen say there were no such tests submitted, no such tests to be found in their Philadelphia platform, and none such to be found in their published declaration of principles. I reply that I know not how it may be in their own States, but in mine I looked not merely to your Philadelphia platform, I did not content myself inquiring as to their published declarations, but being enabled to see a little further into this matter, I inquired into their oaths and obligations to ascertain what tests they intended to apply to myself and to those acting with me. In order that I may be distinctly understood, and that gentlemen may comprehend my reasons for the course I have marked out for myself, I beg leave to read two or three lines only of these oaths taken by a portion, if not all, of the Know-Nothing or American party of my own State, as follows:—

"That you will not vote, or give your influence for any man for any office in the gift of the people, unless he be an American born citizen in favor of Americans ruling America, nor if he be a Roman Catholic."

Sir, I leave it to those whose tastes lead them to inquire to discover whether this was openly set forth in the Philadelphia platform. I find it in the oath. And further:—

"That you will, when elected or appointed to any official station conferred on you by the power to do so, remove all foreigners, aliens, or Roman Catholics from office or place, and that you will in no case appoint such to any office or place in your gift."

Sir, those principles were openly defended and justified by the representatives of this party in the canvass in the State of Georgia, and when they applied to me and to my friends this new test, we rejected it.

Who is responsible for the division in my State? Who is responsible for the fact that Georgia, upon this floor, does not speak one united voice? I put no test to my friends of the American party. I raise no barriers between them and myself. They elected, they put them there, and they are responsible for it. If gentlemen, when they say that their party is not in favor of proscription, mean that they have not taken, and do not justify, these oaths, then I will go with such gentlemen to inquire where and what their principles are; but if they are the defenders, the advocates, and the apologists of these oaths, then I say the barrier between us is deep, wide and impassable until, by their own act, they have removed it. (Applause.)

In my State the contest was carried on upon the issue formed upon those principles upon which, in common with her sister States in all portions of the Union, pronounced against those principles, and upon that issue her representatives of the Democratic party met here at the commencement of this session. What did they do? They placed in nomination for the office of Speaker the gentleman from Illinois. We have the testimony of more than one of our friends voting against him on this floor that there is no personal objection to his election.

A Voice. Or political either. Mr. Cobb. There may be political with some—I say there is no personal objection to him. Why can they not support him, and vote for him, agreeing as they do with him upon this great issue involved in the Kansas and Nebraska act? Why, sir, because of the resolution adopted by our caucus. That resolution extends to our countrymen all over the land our heartfelt congratulations upon the triumph of the principle embodied in that Kansas-Nebraska act in many of the States. But our friends desire us to withdraw those congratulations. What for? Is there any objection to that expression of the feeling of the Democratic party in caucus? Does that constitute an impediment to the support a national man may desire to give to the nomi-

nee of the Democratic party? I apprehend not. Certainly, it cannot to those who profess to occupy a national position. But we extended our congratulations to our countrymen upon the triumph of civil and religious freedom, as antagonistic to the doctrines and the principles of those oaths which I have read in your hearing. If they do not defend, justify, and approve the principles embodied in those oaths, the resolution does not touch them. If they do justify those doctrines, then let me ask of them what they demand at our hands? They themselves have erected the barrier. We have triumphed over it; and, because we express our congratulations to the country at the triumph we have gained over it, they demand us to retreat and withdraw those words of congratulation.

Mr. Reade—Mr. Clerk, I thought the gentleman said that his party were in the minority, and had not triumphed.

Mr. Cobb—Either the gentleman has not listened attentively, or I have spoken to very little purpose. I am speaking now of the triumphs which the Democratic party has gained since the Congressional elections, and the voice of the people declared in their favor by the defeat, in the various States of this Union, of those who went before them holding the banner of these proscriptive oaths and obligations.

Mr. Reade—If the gentleman will permit me, I understand him to mean, in speaking of the triumph of this party, their triumph in the country. I would, then, ask him this—How can his party have triumphed in the country, unless the elections show it; and how can those elections show it except by the return of a majority of Democratic members of this House? If you have not a majority in the House, then were you triumphant?

Mr. Cobb—How much trouble will it give the gentleman from North Carolina to work out this problem, that the Democratic party has triumphed in the Northern States since the elections for members of the present Congress, and that many members now holding seats are doing so in defiance of public sentiment at home, as shown by the result of these recent elections. I hope the gentlemen will take his leisure, and let us know the result when he has ascertained it.

I was alluding, sir, to the position which we occupy, and the demands made by our friends.

If, Mr. Clerk, the principles embodied in those oaths and obligations do not find any representatives upon this floor connected with the national American organization, then the resolution passed by the Democratic caucus, constitutes no impediment in the way of their giving their support to the nominee of that party. If, however, they do defend and approve those principles, then I ask them what they intend to do, and what they propose to do, to withdraw our congratulations to the country when they refuse to withdraw the obnoxious principles to which I have alluded? As desirable as the organization of this House may be to the large majority of the people of this country for the organization to fall into our hands, I say frankly and candidly to my friends of the national American organization that the Democratic organization of this House will never be purchased by my aid and my vote, by the sacrifice of the principal involved in the resolution passed by the Democratic caucus on the 1st of December. Sir, three great principles are illustrated and foreshadowed by that resolution; the rights of the States, freedom of conscience, and the rights of the foreign-born citizens. When the war has ceased by the Republican party, as they term themselves, upon the first principle, and when the war ceases by the American party upon the two others, it will be time then to consider the necessity of urging these issues longer before the country. When that time arrives we shall not only be in Georgia and the South, but throughout this broad land, in every State, one people, expressing one voice and one sentiment.

Another objection is made because the gentleman from Illinois is the regular nominee of the Democratic party for Speaker, as well as because he represents the principles of the party, and we are asked to withdraw him and select another candidate, or to unite in the election of another man—in other words, they have no personal objection to the candidate of the party, the gentleman from Illinois, and there being no political objection to him which does not equally apply to every other member of the Democratic party; yet they ask us to nominate another candidate, or to give our votes to another person. For what purpose? There can be but two purposes:—One is to abandon the principles upon which we have stood. I have disposed of that. The other is to waive the organization of the Democratic party. Sir, I ask my friends, is this a time for us to entertain the proposition of waiving the Democratic organization? Today, though reduced in numbers upon this floor, it occupies before the country perhaps a prouder position than it ever did before. My Southern friends, do you ask me to waive or to abandon the Democratic organization in the hour in which purged of the last Free Soil sentiment, and acting in harmony, it has enlarged its sphere of usefulness, and is entering upon a new career of triumph of national principles? If you do I cannot respond to the demand. Believing, as I do, in my honest judgment, that the best interests of this country, if not its very existence depend upon the preservation of the national Democratic party and its principles, I will never abandon that organization so long as the banner which floats over it has inscribed upon its folds the principles to which, in heart, in spirit, body and mind, I am thoroughly and unflinchingly devoted, now and forever.

But, sir, some other representatives of this national American party have expressed feelings and sentiments by no manner of means in accordance with the feelings and the views presented by my friend from Alabama, [Mr. Walker,] who opened the debate upon this

question. My friend from Kentucky over the way [Mr. H. Marshall] utterly repudiated the idea that we should unite and co-operate together in the organization of this House. He has nailed his banner to the mast, and if it is his will and pleasure to stand by it, be it so! But it is ungenerous to charge me with undue devotion to my banner when they themselves are prepared to fall and die or triumph by theirs. The gentleman from Kentucky, his colleague, [Mr. Cox,] does not ask us merely to abandon our organization and our principles, but to join with him in the election of the candidate for whom he has cast his vote.

Mr. Cox—I did not mention the name of any gentleman.

Mr. Cobb—A gentleman, then, of his party.

Mr. Cox—Certainly, of my party. I said that if the Democratic party united with the Southern American, they could elect an American; but I could not speak for my party, and say that if I come over to the Democratic party my friends would follow the example.

Mr. Cobb—I had understood the gentleman as inviting me to cast my vote for the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. Fuller,] but he says for some member of his party. I will say frankly and candidly to the gentleman from Kentucky, that if this House is never organized, my vote will never be given for a representative of any party, or for any member of that party, who has inscribed upon his party, or his personal banner, those oaths and obligations; and I should regret extremely, apart from that consideration, to cast my vote for the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. Fuller,] because, in the act of doing it, there would come up before me the ghost of the murdered Wright, who by that gentleman's constituency, and by his aid and co-operation, was stricken down because he gave his vote for the Nebraska bill, which my friend from Pennsylvania [Mr. Fuller] says if he had been a member he never would have voted against.

Mr. Cox. If the gentleman will permit me to make a remark, it is this: He declares that on account of the proscriptive character of the American party, he can never vote for a candidate of that party. I leave it to the country to judge whether he has proscribed that party himself, or whether or not the American party were the proscribers. I ask for a good man, and do not care to what party he belongs.

Mr. Cobb. A man does not represent the fundamental principles of the constitution of the country, as I understand them, who is the defender and the advocate of those oaths and obligations, and for such a man I never will vote. The salvation of this country is not to be secured by the union and co-operation of men who are separated upon fundamental constitutional principles.

I have not risen, Mr. Clerk, to go into a discussion of these principles which have been brought before the House, but I did feel that silence longer would be unjustifiable, when, from every quarter, I heard this assault made upon the Democratic party, and it held responsible for the want of organization. I am not, sir, disposed to go into the discussion of any principles outside of those looking to the question of the responsibility for the organization of the House; but at the proper time I desire to be heard upon the principles of this Nebraska and Kansas act, and upon the difference of opinion which exist in the Democratic party; and I think that I shall be able to show, though there do exist differences of opinion upon points immaterial, that, upon the great leading, practical idea contained in the bill, there is but one voice and one sentiment in the Democratic party.

Adopt what theory you please of this Nebraska act; and, though there may be a variance upon abstract questions connected with these theories, yet it will be found that each theory leads, in the end to the same practical result—that is, that the people shall determine for themselves the nature and character of their domestic institutions. This I shall attempt to elucidate before this House at the proper time. My object in the remarks I have submitted, is to speak of the organization and the difficulties attending it. I have given my own views, justified my own conduct in reference to the past, and that will constitute my justification for the future. I am upon the line which duty and my principles have marked out for me, and I shall continue upon that line to the closing scene of this drama.

From the American Celt. That Convention at the Astor House.

Look closely at it, and study its features. It is composed in the main of fellows who never pulled an angry trigger in their lives; of Corporals and Colonels who could not head an assault against an ant hill in a scientific manner; of Adjutants whose knowledge of tactics have never soared above the making of shoes, or the selling of quack medicines. There is but one man, Oliver Byrne, in the gathering who could slip a gun, or superintend the projected salute to Dublin; all the rest are, at best, a batch of obscure men misled by narrow judgments and a false idea of patriotism, or worthless scribblers who point their pens in Spruce-street, and torture their little minds devising political Perham Lotteries "to raise the wind."

Not one of these latter is known by reputation to five hundred of our countrymen on either side of the Atlantic—not one of these has ever written or spoken ten sentences in accordance with good morality or the religion of our people. On the other hand, ever since they came into life under the shade of John Mitchell, they have eschewed all the nice amenities of life—judged in the most extravagant disrespect for the Church, and sickened and saddened our best men, clerical and lay, by their literary burlesques upon Irish politics and Catholic principles. These are the Fathers, the Sponsors, the Alpha and Omega, of this movement. Possessing no spark of patriotism or religion themselves, they make a precarious livelihood by caricaturing those of better men. Without a Past to which they can look back with pleasure—without a Present, such as an honest man would live—without a prospective Future, such as a virtuous or conscientious mind might hope for, they drag out their lives strutting in a small way with the spurs which Mitchell shed in his "sets-to" with Christianity, and wheedling their countrymen by patriotic pretences. These, we say, are the prime-movers in this matter: now look at their victims.

Those good-hearted men, such as—of Boston,—of Brooklyn, and—of this city, have every man of them, been seduced into this illegal chink by misrepresentations. They do not think, as they sit there, that they are conspiring against the country they have sworn to protect; they do not think, as they grow giddy and young with the passing excitement, that ten millions of their countrymen will blush at their folly, or curse their roccancy; and they cannot, would not, believe that the Church disowns them and shuts them out from her sacraments. Yet all this is, or will be, true. They are cut off, in their old age, from the preceptor of their youth and the consoler of their manhood. They are on the high road to the States' Prison and disgrace. They are on the eve of reaping crops of curses from all the pines of their emigration, and all the spectators of their flight. We pity and we respect these men. They are dupes; persons who mean well, but act badly. Their goodness lies in their weakness. If "good intentions" justified or palliated crime they could not be criminals. We repeat, we are grieved to see good men tricked by sharpers; but the fault is theirs, if they will be victims in spite of our warnings.

These two classes, Reader, schemers and earnest dupes, comprise the body before us. Answer—are the Irish in America represented by them?

In any other country than this we would treat this Convention with ridicule; we would kill it with kindness; we would take away its powers of mischief by a quiet opposition. But here at this time we are compelled against our wish to treat it with a seriousness, which under other circumstances, it could not deserve.

Within a week it will be used as a jibe word and an argument against us by our enemies. It will be quoted as an evidence of Irish sentiment, as an earnest of Irish irreligion, as another sad parody upon the previous struggles of our countrymen for their unhappy mother land. We desire to anticipate these judgments, and to put in our demurrer in advance, to any and all deductions hurtful to the Irish Exodus, which may be based upon them. Both in its objects (which are socialistic and subversive of the historical Irish cause) and in its means, (which set aside the duty of citizens and the discipline of the Catholic Church,) it is a *malum in se* upon the Irish of America, and as such, we protest against it. It represents them in the same manner that a check-forgery represents the man whose name he forges. It fleches a reputation not its own. It trades in a borrowed character. It is, in short, creature of a badly prosecuted swindle, in which some persons have sacrificed portions of their little savings, without any security for the repayment of their investments, and without entertaining any reasonable hopes of ever seeing them expended for a feasible object. We write this to show that it is not in any manner a creation of the Irish mind of America, or in sympathy with Irish American sentiment.

Whoever mistakes its import and influence after this explanation mistakes it wilfully and knowingly. Whoever after this attempts to mete out the condemnation and odium which it has earned, or will earn, to the Irish of America, must assume that they learn nothing from experience—that they are leathens and publicans—that they disregard the Law and defy their Pastors—and that this Convention itself is sustained by Bishops, Priests, Laics, and is a fair index of Irish respectability and talent—all preposterous assumptions!

A camel will pass through the eye of a needle, oil and water affiliate—and a tadpole swallow a hyppogriff before the Irish degenerate into disciples of the Infidels and Socialists, who planned this Know-Nothing Conventicle. Reader—turn your eyes from the Astor and the Filibusters—we have now done with them.

The capital of Nebraska Territory is to cost \$500,000. Mr. Boyce, of Maine, has taken the contract to build it of brick.

From the Metropolitan for December. The Last Grand Master of Malta. *Ma foi tout pour vous.* The boisterous badly, is my motto. "But what will Europe say when it reads an absolute renunciation of all claims on Malta, Goso, and Comino, made by our Order, almost without resistance?" "And what, pray, has your Order done for France, that I should seek to guard its honor and its interests? You are the secret allies of England, and the open friends of Russia, and you have perched at our feet, when we had no other part to band that could relieve our wants." "But, General—the rest of the story was cut short by a deep sigh.

"Come, come, my good friend," said the General, "Malta is now in the hands of the French Republic, and nobody can wrest it from them. You, at all events, have no reason to consider yourself ill-treated. Look at article 24. 'A pension of three hundred thousand francs a year, not to cease unless it be replaced by a duchy in Germany.'"

The speaker at these words placed the point of his fore finger on a parchment that lay before him, and raised his eyes to those of his interlocutor. The conversation was carried on in the Palazzo Palace at Valetto, the capital of the Island of Malta, on the 16th of June, 1798. The speakers, two military personages of high rank, were seated at a table covered with papers and documents.—One was dressed in the uniform of a General of the Republic of France. The other was a tall German Knight, with blue eyes, fair skin, and grey cheeks. He wore the robe of St. John, and his breast was adorned with the Grand Cross of the Order.

Their colloquy was now ended by the signing of two copies of a written agreement to which they affixed their names as follows:—Signed, "Br. Ferdinand de Houspesh, G. M. of the Order of St. John." Signed, "Bonaparte." The Grand Master now rose, and was courteously escorted by the General to the door, where he took his leave. The Grand Master wended his way slowly along the strada reale, and having reached the esplanade in front of the great Church of St. John, he dismissed his attendants, who retired to the Hospitery or Palace of the Grand Master, while Houspesh ascended the steps leading to the Church. Twilight was now spreading its grey wings over the city, his troubled soul needed the quietness and solitude of the hour. Leaning against a pillar of the facade, he cast his eyes upon the city.

This fair and famous city, this whole island, with the neighboring islands of Goso and Comino, all these haughty knights of every nation—all these fortifications, down to curtain and fosse, scarp and ravelin, had been subject to his command up to the present day. "Still all is not lost; three hundred thousand francs a year, or a dukedom in Germany is something to be considered," quoth the Grand Master. "But will not all Europe spurn me as a traitor, or at best a coward?"

The Grand Master could find no satisfactory answer to this serious question. He shut his eyes convulsively to banish the hateful thought, and buried his face in his hands. How long his sad and painful reveries lasted the Knight was unable to explain, nor could he account for his manner of entering the church. He found himself, however, kneeling not far from the door of the subterranean chapel which contains the tombs of the Grand Masters of the Order. As he gazed down the gloomy stairway leading from the church to the vault, he perceived a dim spark of light, which gradually quickened into fire, and grew larger and brighter, shedding around a blue and illumined gleam. By this light he saw a confused sparkling of helmets and shields, swords and spurs, and then a group of Knights of St. John, who moved upon one after the other from the vault, and marched towards the wicket of the railing before the grand altar. He observed that every Knight wore the insignia of a Grand Master, and as they passed into the sanctuary he recognized distinctly the features of Nicholas Cottoner, Manoel de Vilhena, Lisle Adam, Pinto, Zondaridi, and the great Lavallette, whose appearance was identical with the statues or painted portraits on the monuments in the aisles of the church.

Suddenly a report of all the cannon in the hundred and one forts of the island burst upon his ear with a deafening crash. Each slab now trembled, flashed and blew open, and from each started up a warrior. The whole space was filled with the sparkling armor, and the nodding plumes of the dead came to life again. A Knight in the armor of Auvergne marched up the middle aisle and unfolded the grand gonfalon of the Order in front of the altar, and at his side stood pages bearing the well known "sword of Religion," that which Philip II. had bestowed upon the great Lavallette.

At the foot of the altar stood a bishop, arrayed in full pontificals, supported by deacons, sub-deacons, and the ranks of the minor clergy. Every one knelt as the venerable prelate made the sign of the cross, and began to recite the "introit."—"The 'Gloria in excelsis' and 'Credo in unum Deum,' were intoned. High Mass went on, and when the Bishop chanted "Ite missa est," he was conducted to his throne, disrobed of the brilliant vestments he had worn while officiating at mass, and clothed with a plain white coat without ornaments. The deacon, who was a priest of the Order of St. John, now stood before the bishop and said: "Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord, the Knights of the Order of St. John here present ask you, whether it is pleasing to you that the chair of honor of this chapter be filled?" The Bishop answered—"Placet." The master of ceremonies and two placants in complete armor approached the terrified Houspesh in the