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Survey of the World.

The Political Field

Charles A. Towne, nominated by the Populists for Vice-President, has written a letter declining the nomination in favor of Stevenson, the Democratic candidate, whom he will support in the campaign. This makes the Demo-Populist fusion complete, as the Populists nominated Bryan for the first place. Bryan has addressed to the Democratic Notification Committee a long letter, to which we refer elsewhere. General Palmer, candidate of the Gold Democrats in 1896 for President, has announced his intention to vote this year for McKinley, saying that Bryan is "the high priest of Populism," which is "already strong enough to menace the best interests of safe government;" that Bryan will surely be defeated; that McKinley has the confidence of the best element in the country, and that while he differs with him on many questions, "between him and Bryan there is but one course." The Democratic committee is making special effort to exert influence upon German-American voters. The Republicans have issued a statement designed to show that if Bryan should be elected, his election would carry with it a reduction of the gold majority in the Senate to a margin of only one or two votes, and might even turn the scale in favor of silver. At the recent election in Alabama, the Democratic majority was about 70,000, more than half of the Populists having returned to the Democratic party. The Democrats have nine-tenths of the Legislature, which will pass a constitutional amendment to disfranchise the negroes. The Wisconsin Republicans have nominated ex-Congressman La Follette for Governor; the most interesting part of

their platform is a demand for the abolition by statute of caucuses and conventions for the nomination of candidates for Congress, State offices, the Legislature, and county offices, in order that all nominations may be made directly by the people at the primaries. Reports from Colorado foreshadow a striking change in the strength of parties at the national election. The Silver Republican party has been reduced to a small number; the Populist party has fallen away; many of the prominent mine-owners have joined the Republicans; cattlemen and flock-owners are taking the same course; and while Bryan may carry the State, his plurality, it is said, will be small, altho in 1896 he had 161,000 votes against only 26,000 for McKinley. Returns from the primaries for the nomination of members of the Legislature in Pennsylvania show a large increase in the number of candidates opposed to Quay, who cannot be re-elected.

Coler and Croker in New York

The political situation in the State of New York has become very interesting on account of the candidacy of the young Comptroller of the city of New York, Mr. Coler, for the office of Governor. He is opposed by Croker and the entire Tammany group, for the sufficient reason that in the city government he has steadfastly opposed them, in the interest of the people. Croker's candidate is State Senator Mackey, of Buffalo, but Coler has the support of ex-Senator Hill and Mayor McGuire, of Syracuse, the chairman of the State Committee, and it is expected that his name will be presented in the Democratic convention by the sixty-three delegates from Brooklyn. To

the guaranteed right of suffrage and representation; and those in a little brief authority are the masters who select the rulers and servants of the people. At first it was cheating negroes, but now it is depriving of the right to an honest bal-

lot and fair count those who were born free.

These men may attempt a repetition of these methods, but there is retribution in history. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

RALPH, N. C.

The North Carolina Suffrage Amendment

By the Rev. A. J. McKelway,

EDITOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN STANDARD, CHARLOTTE, N. C.

IT is small trouble to support an inverted pyramid. The trouble comes when the support is withdrawn. The attempt was made to base the government of the Southern States upon the capacity of a race which had never risen above barbarism in Africa and had just been rescued from the ignorance and dependence of slavery. The Fifteenth Amendment was the support in law and the presence of United States soldiers the prop of force. The prop was soon withdrawn and now it has been discovered that the Amendment was less scientifically framed than it was ingeniously planned. The pyramid has toppled and has been set upon the broad base of the governing power of the Anglo-Saxon race, of which no purer strain can be found than lives in the South and which is the ruling race wherever found in the world.

There have been two eras of negro rule in North Carolina. One is sufficiently characterized as the carpet-bag era, with its historic features of a plundered treasury, a dismantled university, closed public schools, because of stolen public money, and threatened anarchy. This era closed with the election of Governor Vance in 1876, the year in which Samuel J. Tilden or Rutherford B. Hayes was elected President, with sufficient doubt as to which one, to cut the nerve of further military domination in the South. Negro rule had indicted itself.

The white people, most of whom had been disfranchised when their former slaves were enfranchised, having obtained control of the State Government, prevented the government of the negro majority in the Eastern counties by giving

the appointment of county magistrates to the Legislature, the magistrates electing the county commissioners. This was not popular government, however, altho New York State has resorted to similar expedients to check the supremacy of Tammany Hall in New York City. The magistrates were appointed on the recommendation of the local politicians and this inevitably led to the formation of "rings," with the result of retiring the able and high-minded men from politics and the staining of an otherwise fair page of Anglo-Saxon history with the crime of fraudulent elections, a crime condoned on the ground that civilization itself was at stake.

In 1894 the Populist party combined with the Republican and the two gained control of the Legislature. In 1896, by the nomination of a Populist candidate for Governor, the Republican candidate was elected, Governor Russell, who had been nominated over a better man by his control of the venal negro delegates to the Republican convention, a danger, by the way, which may easily become a national one, but which the Republic has thus far escaped. Governor Russell was elected by a plurality of 9,000, and the second experiment of negro government began, backed by the Legislature, the Governorship and the Superior and Supreme courts. A generation had passed since the enfranchisement of the negroes. Again negro government indicted itself.

In the first year of Governor Russell's administration there were four times as many cases of the rape of white women by negro men as in the twenty-five years preceding. The Democratic system of county government was abolished and

negro officials appointed and elected, wherever possible, for it must be remembered that while the negroes are in the minority in the State, they are in the majority in many of the Eastern counties and in overwhelming majority in the Republican party. There were unspeakable scandals in the administration of State institutions. In Wilmington the city charter was changed by the Legislature, under the influence of Governor Russell, so that half the aldermen were appointed by the Governor. Wilmington was the largest and wealthiest of the aristocratic cities of the East that suffered the fate of negro rule. There was a carnival of crime, burglaries of nightly occurrence, incendiary fires of frequent occurrence, and, what was hardest to bear, insulting language and conduct to white women, whenever it could be indulged in with impunity. And there were no arrests of offenders.

The 30,000 white Republicans attempted the impossible task of forcing an iniquitous and inefficient government upon 174,000 white voters, for argument's sake their equals in blood, brains, courage and all the virtues that make manhood. For the 125,000 negroes who voted in 1896 had to be eliminated from the fighting strength of the party in case the bullet had to back the decision of the ballot. Happily the ability to preserve what the ballot had won was tested on a smaller arena than the State. May it never come to the test in the nation!

A clash between the races occurred in Wilmington following the election of 1898. A score of negroes were shot in as many minutes and five white men wounded. The negroes fled, panic-stricken, to the swamps. The city government was powerless and at the suggestion of a citizens' committee, the Aldermen resigned one by one and elected their successors with unanimity and promptness—nothing in all their official life became them like the leaving of it. The responsibility of government assumed by the white people, order took the place of anarchy, law was enforced, whites and blacks disarmed, and the blacks protected.

The Democratic Legislature of '99 proposed a constitutional amendment for ratification at the polls, limiting the suffrage by an educational qualification. At

the same time a new registration was ordered with especial strictness as to proof of age and residence, which of course bore more hardly on the floating negro population than on the whites. The registration law may have been unjustly executed in some instances, and the only violent scenes of the campaign were the arrest of Democratic registrars, with the result of solidifying the white vote, and the conviction of a few negroes of perjury. A little while before the new registration the Red Shirts blossomed out. The fashion spread westward from the East.

It is difficult to speak of the Red Shirts without a smile. They victimized the negroes with a huge practical joke, the point of which was the ridiculous timidity of the black advocates of *manhood* suffrage. A dozen men would meet at a cross-road, on horseback, clad in red shirts of calico, flannel or silk, according to taste of the owner and the enthusiasm of his womankind. They would gallop through the country, and the negro would quietly make up his mind that his interest in political affairs was not a large one, anyhow. It would be wise not to vote, and wiser not to register to prevent being dragooned into voting on election day. One of the ruses the Red Shirts employed was calling at a negro's house and asking for a negro whom they knew to be elsewhere. Upon receiving the information of his absence they would quietly ride off, and word would be immediately sent by the negroes that the Red Shirts were looking for the absent one. He would invariably prolong his absence from public places.

I saw one procession of Red Shirts, a mile long, at a public speaking, a yelling file of horsemen, galloping wildly. Nor was the red color all a joke. I knew, because I know the people among whom I live, that not a man of them, not a half grown boy, would have spared his life-blood if it had been necessary to good government through white supremacy. Their fathers had fought, on this very soil, Ferguson at King's Mountain and turned the tide of the Revolutionary struggle by harassing the line of Cornwallis's march, on the very road along which the Red Shirts passed, earning from him the title of Hornet's Nest for this section. And their fathers had fol-

lowed Lee and Jackson and had left more of their slain on Virginia soil than Virginia did herself. How was it ever imagined that these men would be ruled by the race that has just acknowledged its incapacity by giving away the franchise with which it was endowed? Less than a score of negroes registered in Wilmington. The white registration was larger than ever before. Many prominent Republicans and Populists supported the amendment, and it was carried by a majority of nearly 60,000. A Governor was elected at the same time, who is one of the ablest and purest men in our State, and his promotion is to some of us the beginning of a new era in our political history, as the passage of the amendment is the end of intimidation and fraud in elections.

The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reads:

"The right of citizens in the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or by any State, on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

The amendment to the Constitution of North Carolina contains this section:

"Every person presenting himself for registration shall be able to read and write any section of the Constitution in the English language. But no male person who was on January 1, 1867, or at any time prior thereto, entitled to vote under the laws of any State in the United States wherein he then resided, and no lineal descendant of any such person, shall be denied the right to register and vote at any election in this State by reason of his failure to possess the educational qualifications herein described, provided he shall have registered in accordance with the terms of this section, prior to December, 1908."

The question is, Does the section violate the Fifteenth Amendment? We freely grant that the intentions of the framers of the two amendments were far enough apart. Do the amendments themselves clash, and will the Supreme Court so decide?

It will be noticed that the first clause is an educational qualification, which is constitutional enough. It will be further noticed that the "grandfather clause," as it is called, is an extension of the suffrage instead of its denial or abridgement.

The educated negro, tho a former slave, can register. He is not denied a vote on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude. Neither is the illiterate negro whose ancestors voted before 1867. But the illiterate white is re-

fused registration whose father was a citizen of Ireland after 1867, and so the distinction as to race and color is difficult to prove in law.

Another question is, Who will bring the matter to the test of constitutionality? The Democrats have sworn not to do it. The Republicans would lose the best part of their vote, both as to numbers and character, if the educational qualification is made to apply to the mountaineers of the Western counties. What case in law will the individual have who pleads, not that he is refused registration by an educational qualification, but that an illiterate white is allowed to register?

As to the ethical character of the amendment, it is well known that the illiterate whites of the mountains are far better citizens and far more intelligent voters than the illiterate negroes. They had their part in making the State. They divided on the issues of the Civil War, and on the questions that have arisen since. They are a noble, manly people.

Moreover, only eight years must elapse before all young men, of either race, coming of age, must stand the educational test.

And, then, what of the white minority, that is governing Hawaii and will govern Cuba and the Philippines? And what of the Chinese vote on the Pacific slope?

Already in North Carolina there is a kindlier feeling toward the negro, now that he is no longer a menace to good government. Already there is a breath of freedom in the air, and with the shadow of negro domination no longer impending, men will divide on national questions as in the old days when the State sometimes voted for the Democrats and sometimes for the Whigs. Already men with local reforms to press, with bad municipal government to reform, are growing exultant. The Liquor Dealers' Association in the State is in despair. Prohibition will be the rule in the smaller towns of North Carolina, and the local dispensary system where prohibition cannot be made to prohibit. And there are men enough in North Carolina who have writhed under the dishonor of its political victories through unworthy means, to make effective the determination that the negro shall have fair play in the years to come.