



Montgomery's Correspondent

The Montgomery correspondent of the Montgomery Advertiser, attempts to assign the motives which governed the people of Alabama in the late elections for Governor and for members of the Legislature. He also explains his opinion as to the sentiments entertained by the members of the Legislature in regard to the "party of precipitation" or original secessionists. He says, substantially, that the original secessionists, and that no man tainted with the odor of original secessionism, no man who was ever so remotely allied with the party of "precipitation" can count below the Legislature.

We deny both of these assertions. They are not true, and coming as they do from a man who was not an original seceder—for the writer is not other person than Mr. John Forsyth—we cast back his imputations with scorn, and repel his ribaldry with contempt. We have come to a pretty pass, indeed, when Mr. Forsyth attempts to place his heel on the necks of the secessionists, the bold and patriotic party which inaugurated this war in preference to submitting to the execution, the outrage, and the tyranny of the North. He would have submitted to be a slave—to be a lover of wood and a drawer of water—and now when he thinks that he can gratify his revenge by dealing an insidious blow against the party composed of the most gallant spirits in the South, he adopts the present conjuncture in our affairs to give that blow, hoping, no doubt, that it will rebound in some political advantage to himself, and as many of the original secessionists have got into power, he will come in for a share of the loaves and fishes. This was his motive for the attack, but whether he will get his reward is another question. He has failed to convince the citizens of Mobile of his extraordinary capacity for legislation, and we suspect that the people of Alabama have very little use for a man who in 1850 was a violent secessionist, and who in 1863 was just as violent a submissionist.

But to the question. He says that members of the old Whig party have been chosen for all the leading offices in the late elections, and mentions it as a rebuke of the original secessionists—that is, that the people of Alabama are angry with the men who preferred war to submission. Now if this is not assailing the people of Alabama of being traitors, then we are at a loss to know what constitutes treason. But no. This was not the cause of the vote in the recent election. It was the result of far different motives, and was caused by that feeling which always follows great excitements. We shall pass by the election for Governor for the present, and say something about the general election. We admit that it has the appearance of discrediting the councils which inaugurated the war, but such was not in reality the motive which governed the election. It was this, and the political history of the South from the year 1776, down to 1863, proves the truth of what we assert. Relaxation invariably follows great excitement, and the vigilance of a victorious party always relaxes after a triumph. This we hold to be incontrovertible. There is another doctrine which we also hold to be equally incontrovertible, namely—that a victorious party is ever inclined to be generous to their late opponents, and seek to restore harmony by a compromise of differences. Hence it was that in the Revolution of 1776, we saw Edward Laurens sent to Congress from South Carolina, and he performed the office of President of that body after the rebels had gained the ascendancy in Charleston, for previous to that time Mr. Laurens came near being hanged in Charleston as a Tory. The "Transactions of the South Carolina Historical Society" prove this fact. In the year of 1812, the Federalists were violently opposed to the war with England, but no sooner was the Republican party triumphant and the war declared, than Mr. Madison, to conciliate his opponents, appointed many Federalists to office, and among these was Colonel William Drayton. In 1834, when the Nullifiers of South Carolina had triumphed over the Union or Submission party, they extended the hand of friendship, and such was the excess of their generosity, that the Union party got possession of most of the offices in the State. In all these cases a generous forbearance tends to reconcile differences, and such a course leads to relaxation of vigilance and discipline. The defeated party takes advantage of this supineness, and after being warned at the hearts of friendship, and strikes at the hand of his benefactor, and had taken his frozen body out of the soil. This is the case with parties that have recognized their differences. And similar to this is the action of the Confederate States in the existing war. It has been said, and perhaps well said, that our victories have been really disasters, as they tended to a relaxation of discipline and a neglect of ascertaining and husbanding our resources for the conflicts in the future. We have heard the battle of Manassas denounced as the most fatal event that could have befallen our arms, and so of our other victories, as if indeed we had underrated the enemy, and neglected the precautions which are always requisite to ensure success, particularly in a war against a great power.

Without going to greater length into the argument, we shall now state that in 1863, the Secession party in Alabama was completely successful, but so soon as victory crowned their arms, the old rules of history began to work. They began to conciliate and compromise, just as the Nullifiers had done in 1834, and with precisely the same result. They called up Jere. Calhoun and made him a Major General. They called up Mr. John Forsyth, and sent him as a Commissioner to Washington. Compromise was inaugurated—kissing was the order of the day—and the most objectionable men were chosen to fill some of the most elevated and honorable positions in the Confederate Government. Third-rate county court lawyers were elected to Congress, and the office of the Secretary of War was actually appropriated by those who sought to fill the same office.

highest position in the army. This is the fact, and the fact being so, it is not surprising that the original secessionists being great favorites to the people, they should have been chosen to fill the highest offices in the Government. In fact, the relaxation which always follows great excitements had ensued. The successful party relaxed its vigilance, and after a little slumber, and a little folding of the hands, the power it had wielded in the State passed away, of which we have an evidence in the late elections for Governor, and members of the Legislature. This is the true state of the case. This is the true history, not only of the parties in this State, but of parties everywhere, when there has been a compromise, or an adjustment of difficulties and differences. The original Secession party has been deposed, we admit, but we deny that there has been any condemnation of the Secessionists, or of the policy inaugurated by them in the withdrawal of Alabama from the old Union; for if this were true, it would prove conclusively that their opponents were Submissionists and therefore traitors. This inference follows from the reasoning of Mr. Forsyth. But such is not the fact. The truth—the whole truth—and nothing but the truth is that the original Secessionists did not exist themselves in the late elections, and that their opponents did. We know this to be a fact. We know that in the gubernatorial election, the friends of Mr. Watts were everywhere active and zealous, sending printed documents into every hole and corner of the State. They had a right to do this, but they had no right to publish such a document as was issued at Selma, attacking Gov. Shorter, and striving for his defeat by unfounded statements, and by appeals to the lowest and most grovelling passions of the people. We repeat that the friends of Mr. Watts had a right to advocate his election by every honest and honorable means in their power. We took no part in the contest. We refused to publish articles from either party, believing that in our present condition, we should be better employed in preparing the State to resist the invasions of the enemy, than in scuffling over party State offices, for all offices are dwarfed by the magnitude of the present gigantic crisis. We have no doubt that the zeal exhibited by the friends of Mr. Watts was limited by the old Whig party in the election for members of the Legislature. They were zealous, active, and vigilant, and their opponents were inert, inactive and inefficient. Hence the result. Hence it is that we see the old Whig party in power in Alabama. The war with all its pressing necessities, and its exigencies, has not been able to quench the old party spirit. It is useless to tell us that it is the old Whig party in name merely. We deny it. It is the same old Whig party with its old party leaders, and who have preserved their organization in defiance of the wonderful changes which have taken place in the last three years. We do not denounce them, for they are equally bent on prosecuting the war, but we think it is time for the original Secessionists to wake up like a strong man after sleep, and reassert their proud position by conducting the revolution to its happy destiny.

But we have another word to say to Mr. Forsyth. He accuses the original Secessionists, or "party of precipitation," as he elegantly distinguishes the gentlemen who precipitated the revolution, of being a little cowardly, "as it has been found by experience that those who were most eager to begin the fight are the first to tire of it and cry 'hold, enough!'" We were to say that the accusation was a falsehood, it would be deemed rather harsh. If we were to say that it was foolish, it would be regarded as being a little too near the truth. But what shall we say of such language? Shall we treat it as being simply ridiculous, or shall we ask him to tell us of the mighty deeds which he has performed since the war began? We have not heard of any of his battles—in fact, we don't believe that he has shouldered a gun in this war. It is said that he did not shoot Keotucky last summer, as one of Gen. Bragg's aides do claim, but the warlike spirit soon oozed out, and now, having been on a campaign, we suppose that he plants himself on a soldier, and, like Ollapod in the play, he is able to gallop a jalap al libitum. Where has he seen any signs which authorize him to assert that those who were most eager to begin the fight are the first to tire of it, and cry "hold, enough?" Has President Davis exhibited any lack of spirit in his conduct of the war? Has Gov. Shorter, or Gov. Bonham, or Gov. Brown, or Gov. Pettus, or Gov. Reynolds, or Gov. Libbick, or any other of the prominent leaders in the seceded States, shown any signs of having tired of the fight? None of them have done so. Not one of them has expressed any other opinion but that the war should be prosecuted to the bitter end, to whom, then, does he allude? To the prominent members of the original Secession party in the seceded States? Where has he seen any signs that they have slackened their war, and the battlefields of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, have witnessed their gallantry, their constancy, and their devotion to the great cause in which we are engaged. We, therefore, pronounce the charge to be a slander. It is untrue. It cannot be sustained for an instant with any of the remotest semblance of truth. It rests merely on the assertion of one who has been disappointed in not obtaining certain honors which he did not desire, and who, to vent his spleen against those who inaugurated the war, stoops to slander as a vain for his wounds. But he shall not make the charge without being refuted and confounded. He has falsely charged the original secessionists with being recreant to the cause of Independence, and we denounce him as a slanderer.

The Mobile Register of Wednesday says two Yankee gunboats in the sound fired the range of their guns yesterday morning upon Grant's Island, throwing between sixty and seventy shot and shell from their rifled guns. The practice was very good, but did no damage whatever. The garrison replied with a few shots, which went near the gunboats. Fort Ganzo, often mentioned in accounts from Charleston, is the work which was known at the capture of Fort Sumter, and the Ottumunga Point Battery, or in upon the same site.

The Knoxville Chronicle of the 27th says that every indication proves conclusively that the inauguration of active operations will take place in that section in a very short time, and adds, we have every reason to believe that Burnside, with a heavy body of Federal troops, is marching through Kentucky in this direction for the purpose of co-operating with Rosecrans. Our military authorities have already taken the most precautionary steps to secure Government supplies of every description, which were once deposited in this city. The Register of the same date says, all the indications are that the decisive battle of the revolution is to be fought in East Tennessee. Rosecrans and Burnside are approaching with the whole available force of Abolitionists, and the Rebel asserts that official advice have been received of the movement indicated by Burnside.

The true military situation of the Tennessee river, says the Appeal, is difficult to learn, but enough has transpired to leave no doubt that Rosecrans is now making an important movement. Corresponding movements are also on foot among our own forces, of which, of course, we are at liberty to say but little. We may mention, however, that our forces have been withdrawn from the vicinity of Bridgeport and Shell Mound on the river. The enemy made his appearance at Blythe's Ferry, twenty-five miles above, at Harrison's, twelve miles above, and at Chattanooga, simultaneously. They had previously occupied Shell Mound and Bridgeport in some force. It was reported and believed at Chattanooga yesterday that the forces at Bridgeport and Shell Mound had crossed, but the demonstrations at Chattanooga and above were believed to be mere reconnoissances.

There has been no firing from the enemy's batteries opposite Chattanooga since Saturday evening, but the enemy continues to hold his position. The town has been almost entirely evacuated—the public stores have been removed, and almost all the non-combatants have sought a place of safety. Mr. Paul, of the Rebel, has removed the greater portion of his material, retaining only enough to publish his journal. All the public offices have been closed. It is thought by many that the crossing of the river below Chattanooga indicates that Rosecrans' general advance will be made in that direction. Other suggest that his main army will move up Southeast Valley, and endeavor to penetrate East Tennessee in the vicinity of Athens. Reports have circulated that the latter movement is going on, but there is nothing certain known. Many days cannot transpire without positive developments, and in the mean time rumor is busy.

We have encouraging accounts as to the spirits of our own army. The proximity of the old enemy is regarded as a favorable omen for a fight that will be decisive, and of the result no fears are felt. We would please to learn that there has been a decided improvement in the condition of the commissary department, which was needed.

Fort Sumter

The editor of the Savannah Republican, who visited Fort Johnson on James' Island during the recent attack on Sumter, says that the southern face of the fort is one vast ruin. A pile of rubbish, brick, mortar, stone, timber and gun, rises from the water and forms an inclined plane to the original parapet, some fifty feet in height. Many of the guns on this face are still in their carriages and pointing over the water. The interior of this, as well as the eastern side, was packed with sand bags, and for this reason, notwithstanding the walls have been battered down, there is no caving in, and also little diminution of the work. It also offers far more resistance to the shot of the enemy than the north or west side is capable of, and hence but little more damage can be inflicted from the Morris Island batteries. The only shot that now tell are those which pass over and strike the interior of the northern wall, or rake the parapet. This fact has annoyed the enemy no little, and an attack was made before daylight this morning from another quarter. The invincible Ironclads and three or four monitors came up under cover of a thick haze to within a short distance of the fort, and opened a terrific fire upon the sea or eastern face. Sumter proved her vitality by returning vigorously, and Moultrie, and our ironclads, which have awoken at last from their long sleep, coming to the rescue, the Yankees were soon compelled to retire. Several shots were put into the walls of the fort, but no serious damage was sustained. There are some very ugly apertures on the north side, but the walls still stand, and will probably continue to do so. It is Gen. Ripley's determination not to evacuate it, though it clearly would be wise to withdraw all the men not necessary to work the few remaining guns, as so large a body would appear to be an unnecessary exposure of life.

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The Committee on the subject of the proposed amendment to the Constitution, which would give the right of suffrage to the colored people, have reported to the House of Representatives. The report is in favor of the amendment, and is one of the most able and comprehensive reports ever made by the committee. It contains a full and complete history of the subject, and is a most valuable contribution to the public mind. The committee also report that they have received from the various States a large number of resolutions in favor of the amendment, and that the public mind is becoming more and more enlightened on the subject.

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