

THE DEMOCRAT

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D. E. Van Valkenburgh.
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Mr. O. P. Morton's Opinion.

Mr. O. P. Morton's opinion on the law of quorums is a paper that will not add anything to the not very large reputation of that senator for statesmanship. It is a labored attempt to prove that the settled and uniform interpretation of the term quorum, found in all the American constitutions, is wrong, and that the new interpretation which Mr. Morton has invented is right; that the common judgment of mankind, since the institution of representative government, has been false, and that the judgment of the individual Morton is true; that even the convention which framed the Indiana constitution, while supposing and intending that the term meant one thing, in reality made it mean something else.

The Indiana constitution differs from the federal constitution and from most of the other state constitutions, in providing that "two-thirds of each house shall constitute a quorum." Most of the constitutions require only a majority of each house. The object of requiring two-thirds, as appears from the debates in the Indiana convention, was to more effectually and surely protect the rights of the minority. Mr. Schuyler Coffey, who was a member of that convention, thought that the requirement of two-thirds to make a quorum would be giving too much protection to minority rights, because, Mr. Coffey said it would be "holding out an inducement for gentlemen who may feel disposed to resist the passage of a law to break the quorum"—precisely what was recently done in Indiana; but precisely what Mr. O. P. Morton argues cannot be done. The convention seems to have perfectly understood what it was they intended by the requirement of two-thirds to make a quorum in each house.

To protect the rights of minorities is in reality the principle object and use of written constitutions. No one denies that "The will of the majority is the essence of republican government," but, concede to the majority absolute power and sovereign right in all matters of government, and constitutions are not only useless, but, in the nature of things, inoperative and void. If the majority be not bound, as well as the minority, by constitutional limitations, the constitution is not "the supreme law of the land," but the will of the majority, unrestrained, unlimited, and uncontrolled by anything on earth, is that supreme law.

According to Mr. Morton's argument, the constitution of Indiana thus provides for its own destruction. For if, as he assumes, the quorum is intended only "to maintain a proportion of members present to the actual membership, and not to the number of members authorized by law to be elected," then two-thirds of a majority, or, for that matter, of less than a majority, may come together, and resolve, like the three tailors in Dooly street, that "We, the legislature of Indiana, being the judges of the election and qualification of our own members, do decide that we are the only members duly elected and qualified, and therefore we do constitute the actual membership of that body, and two-thirds of us are a quorum for business."

Mr. O. P. Morton uses the phrase "actual membership" to designate the number of members in commission; whereas, in contemplation of law, the actual membership is the whole number of members the constitution authorizes. The constitution supposes that all the people are represented in the legislature, and never, in any republican form of government that exists, or ever existed, supposes or intends anything else. Whenever the constitution employs the term "house," it means that body in which all the people of the state are represented in such manner and by such proportionate number of members as the constitution itself prescribes. It will happen that the houses are not full; some members may die, others may resign; the people in some districts may have failed to elect their members, or the house may have found them not qualified. It is to protect the rights of the minorities who may thus be absent from the house that the constitution declares what proportion of the house shall be necessary to constitute a quorum. In attempting to prove that the constitution of Indiana does not attain that object, Mr. O. P. Morton attempts to prove that it is not the supreme law that the people intended it should be, and that it provides for its own destruction by any number of factious demagogues who may resolve that "We are the house!"—Chicago Times.

Alleged Inhuman Treatment of Workmen on the Union Pacific.

A dispatch from Omaha to the New York Herald says: "The arrest or detention of Vice-president Durant by his working men on the Union Pacific Railroad, excites no surprise here, where nearly all the operations of that overgrown monopoly are known. All accounts I can gather agree that the company have treated their workmen in the most shameful manner. Greater numbers than were needed were induced to go out to the end of the track for work. When arrived they had a choice either to work for the company for inadequate compensation or starve. The fare back to Omaha was about forty dollars; going back by the cars was, therefore, out of the question. To attempt to walk back was certain death by the Indians. The poor creatures were therefore completely at the mercy of the railroad officials."

The condition of these workmen has been deplorable for some months past. I will give one example to show how they are treated. Two workmen, entirely without means, got on the cars at the end of the track with the intention of returning to Omaha if possible. The conductor finding they had no money, put them off at the first watering place. They got on again, and the conductor permitted them to ride to a point on the open prairie, half-way between two stations, when, calling the brakemen to his assistance, he seized his victims and thrust them from the train while going at full speed, as he stated.

Bill of Indictment.

Some one has drawn up a very correct bill of indictment against the radical party—it is one that can be sustained by a whole list of facts and figures. In this bill of indictment the radical leaders stand charged with:

- 1. Calling themselves Unionists. They have consummated and maintained disunion.
- 2. Affecting economy, they have given us the costliest government on earth.
- 3. Praising of virtue they have made it the most corrupt.
- 4. Claiming for equal rights, they have proscribed more people than any monarchy in Christendom.
- 5. Invoking freedom, they established and maintain the darkest despotism in eleven states.
- 6. Professing toleration, they proclaim the acceptance of their creed the alternative of ostracism and disfranchisement.
- 7. Howling about purifying the government they made dishonesty and office holding identical.
- 8. Preaching principle, they subsist by passion and prejudice.
- 9. Deploring caste, they elevate blacks above the whites in two-thirds of the country.
- 10. Magnifying loyalty, they trample out every worthy principle of our system.
- 11. Claiming statesmanship, their officials are either conspirators or thieves.
- 12. Lamenting independence, they are the servile slaves of a party caucus.
- 13. Pretending to invite criticism, they stifle freedom of debate in congress by partisan rule, and drown elsewhere in blood.
- 14. Insisting upon peace, they prolong the old strife to stir a new one.
- 15. They have made anarchy, and call it peace. Pretensions, without sincerity, is their programme, to be carried out with tyranny. Their creed is hypocrisy, their peace is cant, their practice is theft, and their end is despotism.

Wheat Growing.

The Herald, of San Francisco, in an article on the benefits of grain growing in California, says that the exhausting system of farming in California has already begun to be apparent in the decrease of crops. Where formerly sixty bushels of wheat to the acre were produced, the maximum yield of last summer was only fifteen bushels. This decrease of something like seventy per cent. in the growth of wheat on Feather river, in California, is so extraordinary, considering the youth of the state, that one can scarcely attribute it to the exhaustion of the soil. It would seem, but reasonable to conclude, that some temporary cause had interfered to produce so marked a decrease. Nevertheless there is no doubt that, in the main, the falling off in the product per acre is owing largely to a vicious system of farming, and which, unfortunately, is not limited to the wheat growing regions of California. The same evil is prevalent in the Mississippi valley states, and more particularly in those which are largely engaged in wheat culture. We have no statistics at hand whereby the precise figures can be given, but the general fact can be asserted that the yield of the grain growing districts of this state and of Iowa, Missouri, and Minnesota, is perceptibly less than it was a few years ago. This result occurs wholly from the wholesale exhaustion to which the lands have been submitted. It is time for wheat growers to begin to understand that they are threatened by a very serious evil; and that, unless

stringent measures are taken to guard against its approach, the wheat growing regions of the northwest will lose their supremacy, and be reduced to the rank now occupied by the effete soils of New England. No lands, without the aid to be derived from artificial recuperation, can stand year after year the drain of unvarying crops. The wonderful richness of the original soil has prevented as rapid a depreciation as would occur in that of a lighter character; but the total exhaustion is none the less a question of time.

Outrageous Insult to our Colored Soldiers.

We are informed by the press that "The Indians of the plains will not take scalps from the heads of negro soldiers killed in battle." Is not this a flagrant violation of the spirit of the civil rights bill, of the new amendments to the constitution, and of the reconstruction policy of congress? This is the crowning insult to our colored citizens. Shall the red skins be allowed thus to make distinction on account of race or color. When the colored troops fight bravely, may those untaxed Indians scorn their scalps as being no trophy worth the taking off. This contemptuous treatment of the black man by the red man is not to be borne. Senator Sumner must attend to this. He must prepare resolutions. He must denounce the Indians against the noble red man of the forest, who, when on the war path, dares to show savage disrespect to wool! He has abolished the word "white" in the District of Columbia, let him abolish the word "black" on the plains. Let him cause it to be enacted that when the untaxed red skin says—"Ugh, big Indian no scalp nigger!" somebody should shoot him on the spot. It is not because of the difficulty of taking of the colored man's scalp. No such thing. Indians scalp very shorthaired white soldiers. It is their contempt for the negro as an inferior race. They must be taught better. Here is missionary work to do. And a new stipulation should be made in all Indian treaties that no distinction of race or color shall be made with the scalping knife. The insult is to cutting.

Who wishes for the arrival of the day when the demagogues of the country will use the last resting-places of the patriotic fallen as stepping-stones to the heights of prominence or of office which they are seeking with unscrupulous impulses?—Radical Newspaper. It would require a good deal of space to give the names of all those who wish for it. It will, therefore, be economy, both of printer's ink and the reader's time, to mention some of the classes of persons that wish for it. Jacobin office seekers wish for it. Blatant demagogues, like Mr. John A. Logan, wish for it. Radical seagoers that are too lazy to work, and have not wit enough to earn a living without the help of the party, wish for it. Men who hang about whisky-saloons treating loafers to "drinks," in the hope of getting their votes, wish for it. Individuals who boast that they are "engaged in the interests of God and humanity," wish for it. Persons who talk flippantly about "copperheads" and "rebels" wish for it. Shallow-pated creatures that talk of "the party of loyalty," wish for it. Fellows that pretend to gush with uncommon mournfulness over the memory of "our dead heroes," wish for it. Pulpit-pounders that never miss an opportunity to lug politics into their sermons, wish for it. The baroque family who infest the Chicago court-house, wish for it. The vast horde of needless office holders who are eating up the substance of the people, wish for it. Men who have risen to official honors without merit, who assume public functions with ut capacity, who regard office-getting as a trade, and officials as the legitimate reward of faithfulness to the party, wish for it. And, finally, five men in every six who act and vote with the Jacobin party, wish for it.

It is a strange question for a Jacobin newspaper concern to ask, considering who were the active leaders in the grave-decorating business last Sunday.—Chicago Times.

Personal.

An unsuccessful attempt was recently made, in Madrid, to kidnap General Prim. There is a report that Mr. A. T. Stewart has become a Roman Catholic. Among the incomes returned in the district embracing the Twelfth, Nineteenth and Twenty-second Wards of New York city, are the following: John B. Cornell, 141,065; David Groesbeck, 101,295; Jay Gould, the Erie man, 150,000; Henry Keep, of the Northwestern Road, 143,459; Jonathan Thorne, 129,664; Azariah Boddy, 24,234; Charles O'Connor, the lawyer, 56,941; George Opydyke, 54,000.

The St. Louis Democrat says that

Mr. A. R. Corbin, who recently married General Grant's sister, "was editor at one time of the Argus; published in this city, but never had any other newspaper connection in St. Louis. Mr. Chapin, the late turfite, and the new Tory star in the House of Commons, is one of the richest men in England, and an intimate friend of Tennyson. The woman who jilted him in order to become the wife of the Marquis of Hastings is at present a widow in somewhat reduced circumstances."

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