

TO THE PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA.

Address and Resolutions adopted at the Republican State Convention, held in Wheeling, May 2d, 1860.

Fellow-Citizens:—

THE Republican Party of the State of Virginia, called together to send delegates to the National Convention which meets in Chicago on the 16th of this month, having assembled to-day, in the City of Wheeling and appointed their representatives to that Convention, deem it proper and respectful towards their fellow-citizens, that before adjourning, they should declare to them the principles and purposes which have actuated them in so doing:—

In common with the Republican Party in other States, we believe that our country, extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadas, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, contains a variety of soil and climate better adapted to the growth and development of all articles necessary for the use of man, than any other land upon which the sun shines. The laws of our climate and soil forbid us from becoming wholly a nation of either cotton, sugar, or tobacco planters, or of wheat, corn or wool growers, or of cattle, mule, and horse raisers. Benificent nature has clearly intended that we should be all these, and more. She has diversified the industry of almost every State of our great confederacy, and seems to have designed, as Mr. Jefferson wrote, in renunciation of some of his earlier theories, that "the great capabilities of the country should be placed side by side," and that "as a people we should be lifted to an in-

dependence of all foreign nations." These suggestions of nature have not been realized in our political economy.

The cotton and sugar planters possessing almost complete control of a great and peculiar branch of the industry of the country, finding a market for their productions in foreign countries, have thought it most to their interest to make war upon the manufacturing interest of the non-cotton and sugar States, so as to break them down and drive their thousands of employees into the producing of breadstuffs and other farm products, and thus by increasing the growth of wheat, corn, oats and cattle, to enable the cotton and sugar planters to lay in their supplies of breadstuffs at the lowest rates on a Northern and Western market, in which themselves would be the only purchasers. In other words the theory of the cotton and sugar planter has been, that the less diversified the industry of the non-cotton and sugar States, the more the people of these States would be thrown back upon agricultural pursuits, and the greater the number of people thus employed, the cheaper could supplies of breadstuffs be had for the sustenance of a slave population, whose labor could be more profitably employed in raising cotton and sugar, than in raising breadstuffs. To such a course—so inimical to the best interests of our own and so many other States, the Republican party is opposed. Its policy here, as elsewhere, is to encourage the white labor of the country by building up manufactures and to favor the development of the mechanic arts by a proper and judicious tariff of duties on foreign goods. Such a policy would develop the sleeping resources of this, our own State, as well as of other States; would give white labor a just and remunerative reward, and would supply

to our growers of wheat, corn and oats, and our raisers of stock, a demand for their products at their own doors.

Out of this aggression of the cotton and sugar growing interests upon the rights of white labor, has grown the present antagonism between the two great parties of the country. The capital of the cotton and sugar planter consists of a peculiar kind of property—viz: the right to the labor of Slaves. This property he claims should be protected and fostered at the expense of all other kinds of property, and that the rights, the interests, and the very labor of the white man should be made subservient to it. Now, the Republican party is an organization established for the protection of the personal rights of our citizens, as well as the rights of property, and we hold that one of the chief objects of our Laws and Constitution is to prevent the one from encroaching upon the rights of the other. Nevertheless, here in Virginia, as in other parts of the United States, we have suffered under the steady, yearly increasing encroachments of the Slave capital upon the personal rights of the laboring white man. The non-slaveholding farmers, mechanics and workmen of Western Virginia are oppressed and weighed down with taxations for the benefit of Eastern Virginia slave capitalists, merely because they have the political power and choose to exercise its tyrannies without mercy. Capital in the shape of Slaves, under our Virginia (mis-called) Democratic legislation, is made to pay but about \$300,000 toward the expenses of the State, whereas, if it was taxed as other capital is, it would be made to contribute at least \$1,300,000. The products of the Slave labor of Virginia, consisting altogether of tobacco, corn, wheat and oats, are exempt, too, from taxation, whilst, the product of the white labor of the non-slaveholding part of the State, consisting of cattle, hogs, sheep, &c., are made to contribute largely to the State treasury. With this and other resources so unjustly derived from the white laboring men of Western Virginia, our Eastern Virginia slave capitalists have constructed canals and interlaced their part of the State with railroads, and are thus enabled at our expense, to carry off their productions of tobacco, corn, wheat, &c., to a seaboard market; whilst the West, having no seaboard coast, and no railroad fa-

cilities supplied to her by the State, is compelled to feed her products to heavily taxed Stock, in order to get them carried to a purchaser. So that, although corn and oats, for the benefit of Eastern Virginia slave capitalists, are exempt from taxation, yet so soon as they are made here in the West to assume the form of Stock, they are heavily taxed. The farmer in Eastern Virginia raises little or no Stock, because he finds it more profitable by the railroads and canals built before his door, to send his grain to market, instead of, like the Western farmer, being compelled to feed his grain in order to drive it to a point where it will find a purchaser. Whilst, also, the slave under 12 years of age, by these same mis-called Democratic rulers of Virginia, is held as privileged property, and as such is free from all taxation, though he may be worth a thousand or more dollars; the young colts, calves, lambs and pigs of our Western Virginia farmers are regularly listed by our Commissioners of the Revenue and made contribute to the State treasury. And whilst the owner of a slave over 12 years of age, and worth upon a fair average \$1200, is taxed for him only the small pittance of \$1.20; the small merchant, even with a capital as meagre as \$600, is made to pay the first year the onerous tax of \$60, and after that an enormous per centage on his sales. And even the white laboring man, though he may own no capital at all, be he a mechanic, a day laborer, or only a casual hand in a harvest field, is made, by this falsely called Democratic legislation, to pay a per centage upon his hard earned wages, in order that the privileged property of our Eastern taskmasters may not be compelled to contribute its just share to the public expense.

And, wherever we turn our eyes up and down the course of legislation at Richmond, we see this unequal and unjust exemption following the line of slave property. Why, if a bull or steer of one of our Western Virginia farmers becomes vicious, so as to be a public nuisance, he is ordered by the law to be killed, and his loss falls upon his owner, and upon him alone; but if it happen that a slave of one of our Eastern Virginia capitalists becomes vicious and commits crime, he is hanged or transported, and it is provided by the law that his owner shall be

paid his assessed value out of the State treasury. And still again, fellow-citizens, look at the fact, and ask yourselves how it comes that we have a clause in our State Constitution by which ten thousand white men in Eastern Virginia, *simply by reason of their slave capital*, are enabled to have as great a representation in one branch of our Legislature, as forty thousand freemen in Western Virginia.—These, and other aggressions of the slave capitalists upon the capital and labor of the non-slaveholding white men of our State, committed under the banner of Democracy, require that another party organization, more powerful than any that has heretofore existed within our borders, should be inaugurated, in order that the personal rights of the laboring white citizens of Western Virginia may be protected against the unjust and oppressive encroachments, and tyrannies of black capital. Such an organization, we believe to be the now great and National Republican party, conservative in its principles, submissive to the laws, attached to the Constitution of our country, construing it as did the early founders of the government, and as more especially did George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other illustrious Virginia statesmen, and loving the Union and clinging to it as the anchor of safety for political liberty in the world. In common with the Republican party everywhere, we hold that slavery is local and not national:—that each State of this confederacy is sovereign, and can, as a State, either establish or abolish slavery within its own limits; that all the territories are and should be free as long as they remain territories; that it is the duty of Congress to admit a territory as a State whenever she has the requisite population, be her institutions free or slave, provided only that her form of government is republican. In regard to slavery in our own State, we acknowledge the right of every owner to hold his slave as property—a right which he acquires under the local law of the State; and while, as citizens of Virginia, and as Republicans, we believe that the public morals and general prosperity of our State, which it is the province of government, to a great extent, to protect and cherish, are deplorably injured by slavery, from the fact, as so graphically stated

by the Augusta County Memorialists to the Convention of 1829, "that the possession and management of slaves form a source of endless vexation and misery within the house, and waste and ruin on the farm, and that the youth of many parts of the State are growing up with a contempt of steady industry, as a low, servile thing, which contempt induces idleness, and all its attendant effeminacy, vice and worthlessness"—and while we further believe that Virginia, in consequence of the institution of slavery, has steadily lapsed at each decade, behind some of her free State rivals, not possessing her natural capabilities, and that until we make some provision for the gradual riddance of this consuming evil, we never will regain our natural position as a State in the confederacy; yet, nevertheless, we affirm that as good citizens we will always feel ourselves bound to uphold and vindicate every law and every constitutional enactment, so long as it shall remain upon our statute books. But we contend that, under our laws, all white men are equal—that they are entitled to the rights of free opinion and free discussion, and that all discriminations in favor of privileged property, by which it is exempted from its just share of taxes, are unjust and degrading, and as such we make war against them.

And, finally, believing as we do, that this aggressive slave capital party, which seeks everywhere, in the General Government and in the States, to load down the white industry of the country with burdens grievous to be borne, is in alliance with, and has sectionalized completely what was, years ago, the National Democratic party; and that the tendency of things wherever it has sway, is more and more to the disunion and nullification doctrines of the South Carolina and Calhoun school of politics, we deprecate its success as subversive of the rights of the white men of our country, as indubitably tending to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, and to build up a government whose exclusive protection and whose honors and emoluments shall be awarded to a slave owning oligarchy. And on the other hand, believing, as we do, that the principles set forth in the call for the National Republican Convention at Chicago, are national in their character, and aggressive upon neither the rights of

labor or capital, but in their spirit and practice conducive to the best interests of the whole country. Therefore,

Resolved 1st. That the Republican party of the State of Virginia, cordially approve of the doctrines contained in the said call, and hereby pledge themselves to a hearty support of the nominations made in pursuance thereof.

Resolved 2d. That we are in favor of such a tariff as will afford adequate protection and encouragement to the products of the white laboring men of our own country, against those of foreign countries.

Resolved 3d. That we are in favor of equality of rights among all citizens and opposed to proscribing any one on account of his opinions or his place of birth.

Resolved 4th. That in view of the recent events on the continent of Europe, and condemning the positions taken by the present Democratic Administration, we hold it to be the duty of the American government to maintain the principles, that its naturalized citizens who visit the countries of their birth, are equally entitled to immunity from impressment into foreign armies, as if they were American born.

Resolved 5th. That we are cordially attached to the provisions of the Homestead Bill, as originated and passed by the Republican party in the House of Represent-

tatives, holding, as we do, that our unsettled domain should be reserved for free homes to freemen, who will redeem it from the wilderness.

Resolved 6th. That if, from any unforeseen cause, any of the delegates appointed by this Convention, to the National Convention at Chicago, shall be prevented from attending, the delegates who may be present shall have power to fill such vacancies from citizens of the State in attendance at the Convention.

Resolved 7th. That we favor a plan for the colonization of the free negroes of the United States, and those that may hereafter be enfranchised by States or individuals into the American tropics, where they may, in the language of Mr. Jefferson, become an independent people, under the patronage and protection of this government, and relieve the free white laborer from the competition of this class, and thus benefiting both races, extending and increasing our commerce by a reciprocal interchange of the products and manufactures of the Temperate Zone, for the tropical productions of a great and strong colony of free blacks in that region.

Resolved 8th. That our next National State Convention, be held in the City of Richmond, upon such day of the year 1861, as the State Executive Committee appointed by this Convention shall determine.

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LETTER FROM FRANK PEIRPOINT.

A Raking Expose of the Iniquities of the Tax Bill.

Editors of the Wheeling Intelligencer:

GENTLEMEN:—The Democratic party in the South have, for the last thirty years, nearly ever since its present organization, been steadily opposing the manufacturing interest of this country. During much of that time the Democracy of the North have lent the South a helping hand. I have known for many years that the slave holders were jealous of the free laboring population of Western Virginia. They have fancied that there was danger to their slaves, if free laboring white men had an equal share in making the laws of the State, hence the slaveholders of the East have always, arbitrarily held the balance of the law making power in their hands. In the last twenty years the Democracy have become the peculiar advocates of the slaveholders' interests. In 1850, in the State Convention to revise the Constitution, Henry A. Wise, of the East, backed by William G. Brown, of the West, brought forward his great measure in that Democratic Convention, to exempt all slaves under 12 years of age from taxation. Those over 12 years are valued at only \$300 for the purpose of taxation. The result is that upwards of \$230,000,000 of the slaveholders' capital in slaves is exempted from taxation. Heretofore they have been fearful of making too rapid aggression on the white laborer's rights, but step by step they have been aggressing, flattering the laboring white men all the time on their constancy to Democracy and Democratic principles, until the last Legislature, where the slaveholders interest reveled in triumph over the free laboring classes of the State. R. M. T. Hunter, on the floor of the Senate of the United States, exultingly exclaimed, "That the master at the South, who owned labor, wielded the power of the government—and did justice to all." Did you know, fellow citizens, that at that very moment when your

United States Senator made this declaration, the Democracy of Virginia were plotting and concocting at Richmond a scheme at the bidding of the slaveholder, which, if persisted in, must break up every manufacturing establishment in the State, and drive the operatives from the home of their adoption. They don't propose to do it by the sword or bayonet. Oh, no; that's a game two can play at. But the "MASTER," (of the slaves,) according to Mr. Hunter, "wields the power of the government"—and he will do it by oppressing you, by taxing your labor in a way that will as certainly starve your families or drive you from the State, as that the oppressions of England depopulated and drove hundreds of thousands of Irishmen from Ireland to America.

Gentlemen, I am not speaking of anything that is conjectured or threatened. I am speaking of an act that is done, of a law that is passed, and now the supreme law of the State. Here is that part of the tax bill which is new in Virginia—levied at the free labor of the State, and of which I speak. It is under the head of income, and is in these words:

"INCOME."

"On the income or fees received during the year ending on the 1st day of February of each year, in consideration of the discharge of any office or employment, in the service of the State, or in consideration of the *service* of any corporation, or in the *service* of any company, firm or person, except where the service is that of a minister of the gospel, one half of one per centum if the same be not more than \$250; one per centum if more than \$250 and not more than \$500; one and one half per centum if the sum be over \$500 and not more than \$1000, and two per centum if the sum be more than \$1,000."

That there may be no mistaking the persons to whom this law refers, we have

only to refer to the old law, which was in substance as above, with this exception, which is in the following words:

"Except where the *service* is one of *labor* in some mechanic art, trade, handicraft or manufacture or minister of the gospel."

Looking at the old law with the exception, there can be no doubt about whom the new law embraces, as it has no exception; save ministers of the gospel. The new law embraces *laborers* of every description in the *service* of any "*corporation, company, firm or person.*"

The law applies to laborers of every description, whether in the rolling mill, nail factory, foundry, glassworks, tannery, wagon factory, shoe shop, cabinet, or carpenter shop, the jour tailor or jour hatter, the man who works on the farm, or who drives the omnibus, or the miner, the man who guides the engine on the railroad and the one who fires it, the man who repairs the track or the man who superintends the repairs, greases the wheels or works in the machine shop. The language of the law is plain and broad in its scope, it is on the "income received during the year," that is the *wages*, and it makes no difference whether it is wages by the day, week, month or year. It is all nonsense to say that men who work by the day do not come under the provisions of the law. Were that the construction, every employe would fix his wages by the day, which would be a quibbling evasion of the law. But the law is incapable of that construction, it is on the "income" wages from any "*corporation, company firm or person,*" received in the year ending 1st of February each year. There is no evading it unless the Commissioner of the Revenue perjures himself by failing to assess the laborer, or the laborer perjures himself by failing to give in some amount, for if he only receives \$10 he is liable to a tax of 5 cents, if \$400 he is taxed on that sum \$4.

This tax is applicable to the orphan boy who attends the nail factory, or the one who bears off the tumbler from the glass-blower. If he acts as an adult, his income is taxed, whether it is \$1,50 or \$4 per week, he is no more excepted than the infant, who applies for license to sell goods as a merchant. The infant clerk is taxed on his income.

A gentleman of high intelligence, whose heart sympathises with the poor, a manu-

facturer in the city of Wheeling, asked me the other day, if this law applied to the poor orphan who was working in the factories at two dollars per week to support his widowed mother. I think not. I think the "Masters, who wield the power of the government," did not intend that. The child belongs to the mother, its income, if the labor is performed for the mother, belongs to the mother. They could not have intended this, if they did, God have mercy on their souls!

Let us now look at the result of the acts of these "*Masters* who wield the power of the government, and, owning the labor, do justice to all." Intelligent gentlemen, connected with the iron business in the city of Wheeling, informed me last week, that when all the rolling mills and nail factories in that city were in operation, they employed about 1,500 hands, at an average salary of \$400 a year. One per cent. on this sum is \$4 to the man, or \$6,000 per annum, to which add 80 cents on the head, and it makes \$1,200 more, which is a tax of \$7,200 on the operatives of the rolling and nail mills alone. It is a fair estimate that all the other industrial classes of the city of Wheeling will swell this sum to \$15,000. This is a tax upon the voluntary labor of the hands and head of the laboring men of Wheeling. It is a tax that they cannot stand many years.

I will contrast this tax with the tax on slaves:—the tax paid by 1,500 working men in Wheeling, whose average wages is only \$400 per annum, is equal to the tax on 6,000 slaves—whose net wages, after paying for food, clothing and tax, is at least 150 dollars each, making an aggregate income of \$900,000 dollars to the master, yet his income from the labor of the slave is not taxed one cent.

Take another illustration. The merchant's clerk, or book-keeper, or any other clerk, or head machinist, or foreman in any other capacity, no difference how much wear and tear his employment may be to his constitution, if he receives \$1,100 of a salary, he pays \$22,80 to the State as tax. A slaveholder may own 19 slaves, all mechanics, who will bring him in a net income of \$300 each, amounting to \$5,700, he pays \$22,80 on his slaves, and not one cent on his income of \$5,700. When the poor clerk is sick or dies, his wages stop. But when the master dies, his slaves are an inheritance to his chil-

dren. The clerk needs no protection of the law—he is one of the sovereign body guards to protect and keep in subordination the master's slaves. Yet, the income—the labor of his weary hand and aching head, is taxed two per cent. to buy arms, erect armories in which to manufacture the munitions of war, with which to equip himself to defend the master in the right of his slaves, while the income of the master, from the earnings of the slave, is not taxed one dollar. This is the "MASTER'S" idea of justice to all, "He owns the labor and wields the power of the government," says Hon. R. M. T. Hunter.

I might go through the whole catalogue of this injustice, and inequality, and oppressive taxation. There are many poor men in this country getting 75, 80, 90 and 100 cents per day, with families to support, and this tax comes hard on them. They all have to pay in addition for everything they own on the face of the earth, 40 cents in \$100, while the slaveholder only pays 10 cents in the \$100 worth of slaves.

Can the laboring white men in Virginia pay these taxes assessed on the income for their toil, and support and educate their children like freemen ought to do. I submit \$15,000, in addition to the tax on the laboring class of the city of Wheeling now pays, is more than they are able to pay. I am informed this new tax on labor will increase the tax of the laboring class heretofore exempt in the city of Richmond, to near \$25,000, and in Alexandria, Petersburg and Lynchburg \$12,000 each. The laboring class cannot pay this additional tax. It will eat out the very vitals of all the manufacturing energy in the State. The profits of the manufacturers will not bear the tax. Do you suppose that this last stroke of the policy of the Democratic slave-ocracy of the State was done without design on the part of those who did it, or their seeing the effect of it on the manufacturing interest of the State? Not at all. It is part and parcel of the system. Mark the exemption of slaves by the Democratic Constitutional Convention in 1850. Immediately the State debt is run up from \$16,000,000 to \$46,000,000 of State indebtedness and liability—first, the land tax is raised, then incomes of Attorneys, Doctors, clerks and license of every kind. Then it came on the laborer. It is all folly to say our

other property tax is not increased. The farmer in Western Virginia who 12 years ago, paid his tax with \$15, now pays \$60, with little increase in actual value.

I have not time or inclination to go through the whole catalogue of oppressions committed by the Democratic slave-ocracy of the State. I have spent my whole life in the State of Virginia, with my head and hands trying to cherish all the industrial interests of the State. But now, when I see a deliberate act, made by those who call themselves Democrats, which must result, if persisted in, in the destruction of all the free white industry—that is, of all the intelligent labor of the State—my heart sickens; I am disgusted with the acts. I would rather conceal it from the people than expose it, did I consult my private preference.

But, gentlemen, "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." It is as true to-day as it was in the days of the Revolution. The question is, shall the laboring class of Virginia be driven from the State by this oppressive taxation, or will you vindicate your rights. I assure you there is but one way to defend your wives and children in the use of your hard earnings, peacefully, and that I would counsel. Let all who are opposed to this oppressive taxation on labor, without distinction of party, join in one fraternal covenant, that *they will go to the polls, this Spring, with a ticket headed "Free Labor," under which shall be written the names of Opposition men for every office in your gift, from the highest to the lowest, and vote your ticket.* Turn out every Democrat west of the Alleghenies. By this course you will utter a voice, though quiet and peaceable, that will carry terror to your oppressors. Stand by your family altars in the State of your adoption, and vindicate your labor. The ballot-box is the only weapon freemen ought to know.

Never were the Democratic party leaders harder at work in Western Virginia than at present, to elect all the officers, from Judge down to Constable, in order to show to the Eastern Democracy the loyalty of the free Western laborers. If they can succeed, it rivets the chain, endorses their action. If you rebuke it now, and rebuke it again next Spring, the next Legislature will respect your rights. It is the Democratic party that is responsible; they have had all the

officers and nearly all the Legislatures in the State for the last twenty years. They have increased the debt, exempted the slave property, improved the slave districts, taxed free labor. They are now trying to apologise, to shift the responsi-

bility. Freemen ought never to apologise nor receive the apologies of those who have deliberately outraged them. Teach them at the polls, the only place to make Democratic leaders feel.

Yours, &c., F. H. PEIRPOINT.

GRADUAL EMANCIPATION.

[Extract from a Memorial of the citizens of Augusta County, to the Richmond Convention of 1823, imploring them to take some steps looking to Gradual Emancipation.]

"It is conceded, on all hands, that Virginia is in a state of moral and political retrocession among the States of the confederacy. Nor is this to be wondered at, when to the foregoing considerations, it be added that half of our population is estimated, in the political scale, at but three-fifths of its actual weight. We are often upbraided by a comparison of our condition with that of N. York and Ohio, to which all the other States which are exempted from the curse of slavery, might well be added. And with shame we feel ourselves constrained to bow to the humiliating comparison. We view our beloved State, blessed by the God of nature with a variety of useful and lovely capabilities unsurpassed by those of any other country on the globe; we view it not merely as stationary, while her sister States are advancing, but as positively declining. It is peculiarly the province of such statesmen as compose your honorable body, to detect the causes of the national calamity and degradation, and to provide and apply the remedy. That the causes heretofore frequently assigned are the true ones, we do not believe. If they have any effect, as possibly they may, it must be extremely small and partial. We humbly suggest our belief that the slavery which exists, and which, with gigantic strides, is gaining ground amongst us, is in truth, the great, efficient cause of the multiplied evils which we all deplore.— We cannot conceive that there is any other cause sufficiently operative to paralyze the energies of a people so magnanimous, to neutralize the blessings of Providence included in the gift of a land so happy in its soil, its climate, its minerals and its waters; and to annul the manifold advantages of our republican freedom and geographical position. If Virginia has already 'fallen from her high estate,' and

if we have assigned the true cause of her fall, it is with the utmost anxiety that we look to the future, to the fatal termination of the scene. As we value our domestic happiness, as our hearts yearn for the prosperity of our offspring, as we pray for the guardian care of the Almighty over our country, we earnestly inquire what shall be done to avert the impending ruin? The efficient cause of our calamities is vigorously increasing in magnitude and potency, while we wake and while we sleep. The outlets for draining off a portion of this pestiferous population of slaves are fast closing against us. In the meantime, our white people are removing in multitudes, to distant regions; and those who remain seem destined to become martyrs to their love of Virginia, exposed to foreign enemies, to civil feuds, and to domestic insurrections, without the physical ability indispensable to their own preservation. And shall we, alas! reduce ourselves to the necessity of invoking aid from the north and the west? We will not press this appalling topic any further; but with intense solicitude recommend it to the serious consideration of your honorable body. We feel assured that in addressing men of such enlarged and liberal views, as we confidently ascribe to the members of your body, it must be unnecessary to dilate farther upon this mournful and most interesting subject.— We deem it prudent, too, not to push this memorial into greater detail; and therefore we desist, only adding our importunate prayer that you may devise some constitutional provision, the fruit of which shall be the extermination, in due time, of the slavery which threatens with destruction all that we hold dear and valuable as a people. All which is respectfully submitted."