

WILL THE SOUTH BE SOLID AGAIN?

BY MARION L. DAWSON.

IN the recent presidential campaign the issues which were dominant in the past were relegated to a place of minor importance, or were altogether disregarded. The influences which have been heretofore successfully exerted on the rank and file of both the Republican and Democratic parties to hold them in line were found to have lost their power. They were no longer potential factors; all issues were made subservient to the money question.

The Republican party which had before rallied its followers around the standard of protection and had proclaimed for a strong central government, and had not hesitated to defend the doctrine of federal interference in state affairs, now hoisted an ensign upon the folds of which were emblazoned the magic words "sound money" and "national honor." With this new ensign for its battle flag and these words for its war cry, it threw down the gauge to the Democrats.

The Democratic party, though it had, in the past, in all of its platforms declared, *first*, for tariff reform, States' rights, equal privileges to all and special favors to none, readily accepted the challenge and hurriedly prepared to reorganize its demoralized followers to meet the enemy. The issue was thus made. It was well defined, clear cut and radically different from the issues which had been before fought out on national political battle fields.

The victorious party not only held in line those States which are usually relied upon to give Republican majorities, but it carried also the so-called doubtful States of the Middle West, California, North Dakota, and Oregon of the Far West,

together with the doubtful States of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. More significant still, it invaded the Solid South, and bore off West Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky; caused North Carolina to tremble in the balance and reduced Democratic majorities in the following States: Alabama, 39,000; Arkansas, 29,000; Florida, 6,000; Georgia, 49,000; Louisiana, 33,000; South Carolina, 6,000, and Texas, 29,000. These facts, taken together with the great land-slide of 1894 and 1895, which swept Missouri and Tennessee, Maryland and Kentucky over into the country of the enemy, have caused Southern statesmen to seriously consider whether the so-called Solid South is not now a thing of past history; whether "new issues have not made new conditions," and whether that fraternal union which has heretofore solidly cemented all of the Southern States has not been effectually dissolved. The recent election certainly severed the tie. The debatable question, therefore, is not whether the Solid South has been dissolved—that is a demonstrated fact—but whether in future elections these States will re-unite and again cast a solid vote for the nominee of the Democratic party.

To determine this question satisfactorily it is important to consider briefly the nature, past and present, of the Republican party, the chief political opponent of Democracy; the causes which have heretofore influenced the Southern States, since the war, to cast a solid electoral vote in all national elections in opposition to that party; and the questions which will continue to be live and dominant issues in the future.

The principles which were declared for in the first Republican Convention which assembled at Philadelphia, June 17, 1856, when Jno. C. Fremont, of California, and William L. Dayton, of New Jersey, were nominated, were directly opposed to the welfare and the prosperity of the South from a Southern point of view. She, the South, believed in slavery and had defended the system for a hundred years, and the threat was then openly made by the leaders in the slave States that if Fremont was elected these States would secede. The same threat was still more openly and loudly proclaimed when Lincoln was nominated at Chicago, May 16, 1860, on practically the same platform. It may be safely asserted, however, that neither Mr. Lincoln, nor any of the other leaders of the Republican party, ever seriously considered allowing the Union to be thus dismembered, even if it required

the arbitrament of war to decide the right of secession and to prevent the South from taking a step so suicidal to herself and so fatal to the existence of the Union. Lincoln was elected ; the slave States left the Union ; the war came. The South was laid waste with fire and sword in many regions so effectually "that a crow flying over those regions had to carry his rations." How gallantly she bore herself in that terrific struggle in the defence of rights which she believed, and which many still believe, were originally guaranteed to each sovereign State by the Constitution, is well known to history. It was predestined by a power superior to that of man, however, that the Union should stand. It did stand. The cause of the South went down in defeat, but its end was a glorious one. It accepted the result in good faith, and when Lee delivered up his sword at Appomattox the war was ended.

Then came the mighty upheaval of Southern society and the dark days of reconstruction. The methods resorted to by a Republican Congress during this trying period, when the South was still smarting under defeat, outraged her sensitive pride. State after State gradually came back into the Union. They brought with them only patriotism and loyalty ; none would sooner preserve the old flag from the stain of dishonor or defend the Union against her enemies.

The effort which was made by the Republicans to change, in a day, a densely ignorant, illiterate, and inferior race of slaves into electors and law-makers, and to elevate them to offices of trust and responsibility, and to place in their hands the sceptre of political and civil power over those who had but yesterday been their masters, naturally aroused a united and determined resistance in the South.

But notwithstanding the establishment of a bayonet government, the well-known act of 1870, and the much harsher force bill measure of 1871, which empowered the President to surround the ballot box with Federal troops, the South, influenced by the same ruling spirit, which has characterized the Anglo-Saxon from the beginning of his history to the present day, and which has made him, with no exception, the ruler over every inferior race with which he has come in contact, boldly declared her fixed intention to dethrone the negro and his so-called "carpet-bag" and "scalawag" allies. For this purpose, in her desperation,

she organized that mysterious and dreaded political society known as the Ku-Klux Klan, with its "dens," "ghouls," "giants," "goblins," "titans," "furies," and "dragons." The powerful arm of this masked army reached everywhere; none escaped it. The proudest aristocrat, the most dignified professional man, and staid college professors attended its secret conclaves and joined in midnight raids. They successfully defied the power of the national government and laughed at the troops sent to suppress them. Their spies were in every household; nothing escaped their vigilance, and the reign of terror which they established is yet fresh in the minds of many. With the re-establishment of social order, this society, having performed the task for which it was questionably created, passed away, leaving many to condemn and few to defend it. The order of President Grant to send troops to New Orleans in 1874, a necessary order, considering the then existing conditions, the excitement attending the seating of Kellogg, the Republican nominee for Governor of Louisiana, over his Democratic opponent in 1875, the unseating of Samuel J. Tilden in 1876, the continued waving of the bloody shirt, and the reopening of old wounds with each recurring election, all resulted in strengthening the tie with which the South was solidly united by the enfranchisement of the negro. No mere differences of opinion touching the merits of economic questions could weaken this bond while the South was menaced by federal bayonets, force bill legislation, and the withering curse of negro domination. While these conditions, or any of them, or any relic of them, existed, it was a foregone conclusion that every Southern State would cast its electoral vote for the nominee of the Democratic party in every national election. But now that the last vestige of force bill legislation has been eliminated from the statute books and the Republican leaders show a marked tendency to temper the policy of their party toward the South, it might be thought safe to predict that in future diversified interests would influence Southern States, as they have always influenced other States, to support that party which champions measures most friendly to themselves and best calculated to promote their material prosperity. This would undoubtedly be a safe prediction but for one fact which seems to have been overlooked, or purposely ignored, by those who have publicly discussed this question. It is conceded by all

that the force bill is a dead issue, but many Southern people still believe that by a repeal of this measure the danger of negro domination was only temporarily removed, not permanently destroyed.

To a casual, or superficial observer, this apprehension is not unfounded, because if the white vote of the South divides and the negro vote remains solidly united, the latter race holds the balance of political power. This danger the South has always had to face. The real bond which united her was not of a political nature in the truest acceptation of that term; it was rather a race question. It was whether the negro or the white man should occupy the seat of power; whether the inferior should dominate the superior, and whether ignorance should rule intelligence. When the negro was enfranchised, sympathy and self-protection, two of the strongest motives which influence human conduct, bound the Southern States together for the sole purpose of maintaining, at any cost, Anglo-Saxon ascendancy.

No attempt should be made to disguise this fact; no excuse should be offered for it, and no deception should be practised on the public. Deception and evasion are the resorts of the crafty or the cowardly. Honesty in politics, as well as in any other matters, is the best policy; not because it is politic, but because it is right. The world should have been given clearly to understand that the white people of the South, as well as their brothers of the North or the East or the West, always intended to rule, and if there were just cause *now* to believe that the negro would still vote unitedly, and thus menace the South with negro domination, it is safe to assert that these States would remain a "Solid South" to the end of time. History clearly demonstrates this truth, that so long as Anglo-Saxon blood feeds Anglo-Saxon hearts, so long will Anglo-Saxon intellect and Anglo-Saxon will dominate inferior races. We believe, however, that the danger of negro rule now really exists only in the distempered imaginations of political demagogues. No one can produce any array of facts to convince the unbiased observer that the negro vote will be any more united in future elections than the white vote. This race has made wonderful strides in recent years, and they have seized upon every opportunity to better their condition. They have been given the best schools, colleges, and universities, and have not neglected their advantages. Their moral and intellectual improvement has been little less than marvellous. It

is unprecedented in the history of any people. They are fast becoming qualified to act, to think, and to vote for themselves. The time has passed for them to ever again consent to become the mere tools of unscrupulous and designing office seekers. They carefully and conscientiously study the issues which are involved in every political canvass, and in many instances thoroughly understand them. Their leaders read political economy, and neither the tariff nor the currency question is a stranger to them.

The property interests which are possessed by this race in the South already exceed twelve millions of dollars. They have mastered many trades, become proficient in the industrial arts, and sometimes prominent in the professions. They need not now be told that their welfare is inseparable from the welfare of the South, and the time will soon come, if it has not already arrived, when they will support with their suffrage only those measures which their matured judgment convinces them will most certainly promote the prosperity of the section in which an all-wise Providence has cast their lot. They have come to realize that the people who give them employment, who annually pay twenty millions of dollars taxes that their children may be educated, who make it possible for them to live in comfort and ease, and often in luxury and refinement, who labor side by side with them in the field or in the factory, are their best friends. With returning confidence and affection, they will be influenced as the weak are always influenced by the strong, and they will be found supporting the party which their employers support, because they will learn that the interests of the employer and the employee are one.

These facts are now practically conceded by all who profess to be familiar with the existing conditions in the South. As they become more generally understood the fear of negro domination will be gradually dispelled from the Southern mind, and this bond of common interest and self-defense, which has so long united the "solid South," will become less and less a factor in Southern elections. The color line in politics will disappear, normal political conditions will be re-established, and the people will vote as they did before the war, in accordance with the dictates of conscience or self-interest.

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THE SPECULATION IN DAMAGE CLAIMS FOR PERSONAL INJURIES.

BY E. PARMALEE PRENTICE.

ONE of the most remarkable developments of recent years, a development to which public attention is rarely drawn and which those most interested have naturally endeavored to keep from public view, is the rapid growth of the speculation in damage claims for personal injuries.

This speculation is peculiar to no part of the country, but it thrives most where juries are most liberal and where the courts place least restraint upon them. It is impossible to make any definite comparison in this respect between different portions of the country. For the sake, however, of procuring figures to illustrate the existing situation, and what it promises to become, I have examined the records of the Chicago courts having jurisdiction of these cases and of the courts of appeal throughout the State of Illinois.

The first fact shown from the records of the Chicago courts is that there has been a great increase in the number and size of these suits within the past few years. In 1875 there were altogether about two hundred personal injury suits pending in Cook County. I have not learned the amount of damages claimed in these suits. During the first six months of 1890 the number of these suits brought in Cook County was 346, the total amount of damages claimed being \$2,814,860. During the corresponding six months in 1896 the number of such suits begun in Cook County was 893, and the total amount of damages claimed was \$13,510,000. It would be reasonable to assume from these figures that there are now pending in Cook County 3,600 of these cases and that the damages claimed are between fifty and sixty millions of dollars.