THE DAILY PHŒNIX.

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BY J. A. SELBY. COLUMBIA, S. C., WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 9, 1865. VOL. I.—NO. 112.

THE PHŒNIX

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BY JULIAN A. SELBY.

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Glimpses of South Carolina Unionism.

WASHINGTON, July 21.—I have just been holding a long conversation with a leading member of the South Carolina delegation about Gov. Perry's late extraordinary speech, and on the general subject of South Carolina Unionism. When I explain that this gentleman is an intimate friend and former business associate of Governor Perry's, and that, by recommendation of that officer, he has recently been appointed to an important position under the "Provisional Government," it will not be doubted that he places matters in the most favorable light for the Governor, and that his own loyalty and Unionism are of the best type President Johnson can find in South Carolina.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LATITUDE IN OUR "ESTIMATES" OF UNIONISM.

Not unnaturally, I began the conversation with Gov. Perry's friend, the delegate, by asking if his July speech was really genuine.

"Oh, yes! I was on the platform, beside the Governor, when he made it. But you see the latitude in which a speech is made makes a good deal of difference. Down there, everybody thought—I among them—that it was an extreme radical Union speech!"

"What—where he said, for example, that no man in the State could feel more bitter humiliation and degradation than himself in being forced back into the Union? Is that what you call in South Carolina radical Unionism?"

My impetuosity surprised my sallow-faced friend. Turning his eyes in wild astonishment upon me, he said philosophically:

"To understand Perry's speech, you must place yourself in the stand-point from which he spoke, and remember the object he had in view. Because they fail to do this, I have observed that some Northern newspapers fail to see the force of the speech. He was endeavoring to win these people back, and to coax them into sending Representatives to Congress again. To do this, of course he had to conciliate the prejudices of all. There is no better Unionist in South Carolina or the whole South than Perry!"

"WE WERE ALL REBELS."

"Do you mean that he never was a rebel?"

"No, not exactly. To be frank with you, we were all rebels. The North has never understood, and I doubt if it ever will understand, the absolute unanimity with which, after the war was begun, we all supported it; while there was any use in it, we resisted secession; but after the State seceded, our District, which was always strongly Union, sent more and better volunteers to the war than any other."

"You mean then, that, after secession was accomplished, the former Unionists became more violent rebels than the rest; and that, practically, not a soul in the State remained true to the Union, except the negroes?"

"Well, I suspect you're a little mistaken about the negro. They're very ignorant, and most of them were and are governed by the master's notions."

RE-ORGANIZATION.

Recurring to his statement, that Governor Perry had been trying to coax the South Carolinians to come out to the elections at vote for Congressmen, I asked if there was likely to be any difficulty on that score.

"Well, I guess there'll be a very small vote; but," he added, with the skill of a thorough-bred politician, "those who do vote will very fairly represent the wishes of the rest. We are a very proud and sensitive people, and a good many have a natural disposition to shrink from the oath of allegiance to a Government they cast off forever nearly five years ago. In a year or two they'll come in all right; and, meantime, they'll be very glad of the results which the votes of their neighbors will secure. South Carolina is and will be one of the very best Union States we have."

"But what security have we, in restoring political power to a community disposed towards us as yours was, and still feeling as you now represent?"

"Oh, our people are impulsive, and they are always decided, one way or the other."

"Suppose the representatives you elect should be admitted to Congress, and South Carolina should thus be clothed with all her old power—you who before secession were the Union men, will be the only voters now, as you state it, but in two or three years, of course, everybody will vote again. Will not you original Union men be again out-numbered by the original secessionists?"

"I don't believe we ever were out-numbered. I don't believe there ever was a majority for secession in South Carolina."

"The poll books tell a different story."

"Yes, but remember we have been fighting secession for thirty years and had got tired of it. Men said these restless spirits will never be quiet until they have tried secession. If we don't let them try it now, they'll keep us in a constant turmoil until we do. It is bound to come some time, and we may as well spare ourselves further trouble and let it come now."

"In other words, then, men said let the Union be destroyed, with whatever attendant horrors, rather than one should be bothered to keep up this perpetual struggle."

"Well, not exactly that. You must remember there was a tremendous pressure. I myself had my house surrounded by a hundred and fifty armed men, one night before the election, because they thought I was a Union man. There was no making head against the current."

The South Carolinian was a gentleman, at once by birth, culture and bearing, (which is more than can be said of much of the driftwood now thrown uppermost in Southern society in the process of re-organization,) and so I did not add aloud the mental comment which no man can help making on these explanations—that if the Union men were, as he said, in a majority, they acted then like cowards; and if they were not, they are acting now like hypocrites. But I could not help saying:

"By your showing, then, the rebel element was resistless before the passage of the secession ordinance, and universal after it. As you frankly say, you were all rebels. We have incurred an enormous debt in subduing you, and we know that there is a small party at the North, openly, and a larger one, secretly, desirous of repudiating that debt, in order to shake off the burden of heavy taxation. Now, if South Carolina, and other States occupying her position, are restored to power in the nation, what security have we that all you rebels would continue voting for heavy taxation to pay the debt incurred in whipping you? Would there not be very great danger of your uniting with this minority at the North, and thus securing a national majority in favor of repudiation?"

QUESTIONS "NOT YET DISCUSSED" IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

"Well, our attention has never been called to that subject, and we were not aware that there was likely to be any portion whatever of your people favorable to repudiation. I can't say, however, what our more violent people would do. There has been very little comparison of views; and all our efforts have been given to getting our civil authority and power restored, without considering what questions might come up back of that."

"With what political party at the North, then, would your people be more likely to affiliate?"

"Of course, with the Democratic. We have understood all along that it sympathized more with us than any other, that it was more opposed to the war, more disposed to leave us alone with our slaves, more ready for favorable terms of peace."

"And if any considerable portion of that party were to propose lightening the taxes by repudiating a reduction of interest or otherwise a part of the debt incurred in subduing you, you would be very apt to unite with them?"

"I don't know but we would, but I can't say; for as yet we are giving no attention to anything excepting reorganization."

Recurring to his admissions concerning the bitterness of the original secessionists, I asked: "What security will we have, after political power has been fully restored to South Carolina, that the secessionists may not regain control of the State Government, and prove as pestilent as ever, if not in the field, then in Congress, and in the old expedients of obnoxious State legislation?"

"Oh, a barrel of cider never ferments twice."

"What material changes will the party which you and Gov. Perry represent make in the State Constitution?"

"We'll make it what it never was before—Republican. We'll take away the election of Presidential electors from the Legislature and give it to the people. So, also, with the election of Governor, which has heretofore been lodged with the Legislature. We may strike out the property qualifications, and will equalize the representation in the State Senate."

"But what about the negroes?"

"Well, we want to have them industrious and orderly, and will do all we can to bring it about."

"Will you let any of them vote?"

"That question, too, has not been discussed. The people have not taken up with getting their civil rights restored, and have given very little thought to other questions. Nobody could stand up in the State who should advocate pronunciamento negro suffrage. It is possible that a few might be willing to let the better class of negroes vote—after some years, at any rate, if not now."

"I believe you let the rebel-leaders vote. Don't you know that the disenfranchised negroes of Charleston are infinitely their superiors, in education, industry, wealth and good conduct?"

"We really can't know enough about the Charleston negroes in our part of the State to say. But, of course, the home servants are intelligent. They are always very much indulged."

AFFECTION FOR JEFF. DAVIS.

"It has been common here to say, that the severest punishment that could be given to Jeff. Davis would be to put him back at large among the Southern people he has ruined," was said, with a view of turning the conversation away from a subject evidently not very agreeable.

"Indeed, you are very much mistaken," exclaimed the South Carolinian, with more warmth, than he had yet manifested. "I'm almost afraid to tell you what the real feeling is. It will so strongly contradict your idea. Jeff. Davis would be received with open arms in the South. There is a very general feeling of great kindness to him, and great sympathy for his present misfortune. One party in the South assailed his Administration very bitterly; but the feeling was not to any extent a personal one. He is greatly admired and loved by our people."

The honest Carolinian expressed the feeling which I have reason to believe general through the Atlantic and Gulf rebel States. Davis and Lee are still held the great exemplars of Southern manhood.

The conversation I have above detailed, occurred this morning, in the presence of an important officer of the Government, and is now faithfully recorded from notes jotted down at the time. I have no comments on it to make. It gives us a view of South Carolina Unionism that needs no comment.

Gov. Perry and Ex-Speaker Orr are both in town, also, and their conversation does not differ in material points from the above; but they are naturally more guarded, and I have preferred to give the frank, out-spoken statements of their friend and colleague.

I judge that Gov. Perry will not be disturbed in his "provisional" operations by reason of his speech. On asking a prominent cabinet officer about it this evening, I was told, "Oh, Perry didn't know he was appointed Governor when he made that speech. What he said can't be justified; but he has had a hint about it, and I guess he'll do well enough now."

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Aug 7

Notice—Charitable Appeal.

THE ladies of the URSULINE CONVENT and ACADEMY are anxious to rebuild, as speedily as possible, another suitable for their Monastery and Institute, their having been burned in the general conflagration of Columbia by the United States Army, under Gen. Sherman, on the night of February 17th. And while they are far from ignoring the necessities on their fellow-sufferers of the South, will gratefully receive any contributions which the friends of education and religion may donate them for this excellent work. Remittances may be made through the Express Company. Please address

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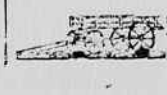

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Aug 8

Charleston Advertisements.

Farmers' and Exchange Bank of Charleston.

CHARLESTON, July 29, 1865.

A MEETING of the Stockholders will be held in this city, on TUESDAY, 15th of August next, at the Law Office of William Whaley, Esq., 66 Broad street, at 11 o'clock A. M. Matters of importance will be laid before the meeting. By order of the Board.

Aug 8 3 M. D. STROBEL, Cashier.

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Aug 8 26

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