

# The Abbeville Messenger.

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## The Women's Convention.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26.—[Staff Correspondence.]—I went to the woman's Rights Convention on Thursday night and had much entertainment. The ladies in the audience boisterously enjoyed the wholesale denunciation of the monster man, while the men vigorously and chivalrously applauded the many hard hits at their sex. Miss Susan B. Anthony, a small, grim, energetic old maid, presided, and dearly relished the multiform compliments paid her by her vociferous sisterhood. Miss Anthony is sometimes called "Colonel Susan," but this is the designation of some masculine wretch. In the audience, Frederick Douglass stood up, like a great bronze giant, with a forest of coarse gray hair. In old days, Douglass used to preside at these meetings, but seems to have fallen into disrepute since he turned his back on the negro and married a white woman. All of the speakers were quite old or mature, except the last, a German-American lady, who had a comely face, a splendid voice and the true fire of eloquence.

Miss Anthony, in a prim, starch way, like a veteran campaigner, told her oft-repeated story of the wrongs of persons who happened to be born of the female gender. The old lady punched and cuffed her misguided brethren and warned them that her spirit would haunt them until justice was done.

A buxom Boston lady, rising 50 years, sententiously pursued the same theme, and severely rated statesmen who tried to make woman a nonentity. She said: "When Sara Bernhardt came to this country, people were curious to see her. She was exceedingly thin and was joked about her attenuation. One day, a man was told to look in a carriage window if he desired to behold the famous actress. He did so, but declared that he saw nothing. Then you saw Bernhardt," was the instant reply." The Boston lady proclaimed that denial of suffrage made women nothing.

The fun commenced in earnest when Mrs. Meriwether, who announced herself as a Southern woman from the crown of her head to the tips of her toes, took the stand. She was considerably advanced in middle age, but full of fight. She went from Memphis to St. Louis. A novel of hers, "The Master of Roseleaf," was a lurid attack upon the Yankees and their reconstruction of the South, but the last chapter was so horrible and revolting that it sunk the book out of sight, I understand. As Mrs. Meriwether expressed sorrow that her husband was a Democrat, I presume she has modified her opinions, but she and her son created something of a disturbance by calling forth and prodding out the traditional "negro in the wood pile." The idea of a black brute having the franchise to the exclusion of the most exalted white woman roused the indignation and wrath of Mrs. Meriwether and her "baby boy," a chipper and cheeky lad of 19 or 20 years of age. This lady made a rattling harangue, full of wit, sarcasm and bitterness. Argument was lacking somewhat, but illustration abounded. She read a letter from Senator Vest, who uncompromisingly opposes the woman movement, and then, bit by bit, and line by line, held him up to ridicule as no man has ever yet dared to do. She had not read the minority report of the Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage, signed by Senators Brown and Cockrell, but heard about it; and yet she assailed it all the same, with a little spice of blasphemy, in the beginning, and a concluding offer to teach a better Bible doctrine to the two Senators, whom she invited to go to Sunday school. She discussed the Utah bills of Senator Edmunds and gave a patent recipe for exterminating polygamy, which is worth attention. "I would," she exclaimed, "allow the Mormon women to keep their suffrage and disfranchise the men. Then I would send strong-minded members of our association out there as missionaries to teach Utah sisters to be strong-minded, too. Then a Mormon man would not want more than one wife, as one strong-minded woman would be all he could endure!" I am quite prepared to credit this assertion and to go beyond it. Indeed, an irreverent scamp says, instead of one such woman, he prefers twelve wives of the other kind. Mrs. Meriwether claimed Sam Jones as a Tennessean, and quoted him to show

the superiority of woman. He had heard a lady make a prayer so fervent that she seemed to bring heaven down to earth. "Now," ejaculated Mrs. Meriwether, "I never knew any man, preacher or otherwise, who ever brought heaven and earth within 10,000 miles of each other." And yet there are some saintly men in this world, and the Redeemer of it was not a woman.

"Colonel" Susan reluctantly called time upon this fiery Southhead the significantly, jerked out: "I told you there would be extra snap in this movement when Southern women joined it."

Then, after a mild protest from Miss Anthony, the son of Mrs. Meriwether, was introduced by his fond parent. He had just come from Europe, and, after handsomely complimenting his mother, proceeded to make mouths at the women of Spain and Italy, who, not being strong-minded, have caused, in his opinion, the decay of those nations. And yet Spain and Italy compare rather favorably with Missouri and Tennessee, in the quality of men and women, to say nothing of art and science. Then the young hopeful got in his dynamite on the "nigger." The explosion came later on. Col. Susan cut him down when he began to quote Tacitus, and brought forward Mrs. Clara Neyman, of New York, the German lady mentioned in the beginning of this article.

Her address was so noble, so grand, so pure, so full of thought and spirit, that it dwarfed the flippant, boisterous beings around her, and lifted the whole convention into dignity and sublimity. She compared the American and German governments as well as the American and German women, pointing out skillfully their respective virtues and defects. She anathematized the rich American women who shirk from maternity and cared for nothing but display. The picture she drew of an ideal Republic, refined by women in all particulars, was so beautiful and exalted that the men present more than the women paid her the homage of an applause that was sincere, although reason bawled that such an Arcadia did not and could not exist this side of Paradise. I declare, under the inspiration and magnetism of this gifted and devoted woman, my senses were taken captive for the moment, and even Susan B. Anthony and her sardonic sisterhood melted into something lovely and serene.

But there was a rude awakening. Instead of dismissing the audience under such a powerful and pleasing spell, old Susan had to lug out a tall, venerable, white haired and bearded man, who was said to be colored, but could hardly be so discovered. This man was presented "as the noblest woman of them all," and some of the audience seemed to hail him as much by clapping their hands. In a deep, solemn, sonorous voice he proceeded to rebuke young Meriwether for baiting the "negro in the wood-pile," and, in a ton of resentful thunder, shouted: "Southern people can never find eternity long enough to make atonement for wrongs done the negro!" The audience, in part, echoed that sentiment, and the colored orator was about to amplify his wrathful indignation when Colonel Susan nipped him in the bud. The "noblest Roman" succumbed to the resolute little white woman, and retired with dramatic resignation. As she strode back, like Forest as Spartacus, Mrs. Meriwether her bangs all awry and her frame heaving with excitement, rushed to the footlights, and, in defiance of Miss Anthony's quick remonstrance, shouted: "Ladies and gentlemen, what that boy said was from his head not his heart. It was inadvertent. He was brought up to believe in freedom, for the black as well as the white man." The "noble Roman" bowed his head in proud prostration. Miss Anthony shook her cork-screw curls benignantly, and the strong-minded were uproarious. But the effect of Mrs. Neyman's radiant proremon was dissipated in a smell of sulphur and the purgatory of discordant clamor.

Representative Perry left the hall with me and we walked together toward the hotel. "What did you think of that convention?" I asked. "It was," said Perry, "the most remarkable and in some respects, most amusing and melancholy exhibition I ever witnessed. If all women were like Madame Neyman they might vote for what I cared; but the Lord deliver me from some of the others. While these strident women, rich or

comfortable, are making fierce demand for suffrage, hundreds of their sisterhood ask only for honorable employment and the right to earn a humble living. Possibly they would be more fortunate if the ballot were given them, but probably not. I am for giving these sisters of ours the most enlarged opportunities of making their way in the world, but the suffrage may not be best for them, and I am inclined to think that the vast majority do not desire it, especially at the South, where the evil, because of a peculiar race environment, would be something infernal and intolerable. J. R. R.

## The Agricultural Moses.

To the Editor of the News and Courier:

I am a farmer but am decidedly opposed to Mr. Tillman's movement towards organizing farmers, as a class, to carry any public measure, and I know that so far as my section of South Carolina is concerned it is not looking for an agricultural Moses to lead us into the Promise Land. We know very well that the State is eminently an agricultural community, and we know equally well that the Legislature of the State is composed very largely of farmers, and we are not aware that we have any just reason to complain either of the laws or their administration.

There is some difference of opinion on the question of free tuition in the University, but I know of no one who sympathizes with the condemnation of the whole concern. The institution is popular with us and has just about as much agriculture attached to it as we think is necessary for a college class to take in. We want our sons educated in all that goes to enlarge and strengthen the mind without any regard to what special business they are to follow. I have asked several intelligent farmers if they want to send their sons to an agricultural college, and they all say: "No, we think if you will educate a boy as it is generally done in the schools and colleges that we can very easily teach him the business of growing crops if he is disposed to learn."

The fact that a majority of the educated young men incline to other professions than agriculture, we think, is due to the fact that they suppose fame is more easily attained in other professions and not to the fact that they lack capacity for agricultural pursuits. We know first-class farmers who have been educated in the different colleges of the State, and they like their business. What farmers want most is more general information such as men acquire by reading and study. If an agricultural college would inspire us to read and think more it would certainly be a good thing but we fail to see how it would do so any more than a general education in all the sciences.

What we want in my country is an agricultural experiment station where important problems shall be solved for the information of the whole community. We want all the money raised by the privilege tax on guano for the support of the agricultural bureau to be expended by the bureau in conducting such experiments as cannot be safely engaged in by farmers themselves. For instance, if the State had an experimental farm, the question of tobacco growing could be settled once for all, and save perhaps large loss to farmers who are tempted to try the experiment for themselves. I regard with more interest the reports of agricultural experiments than all other agricultural writings combined, and I regard reports of agricultural experiment stations, such as Ohio and New York have, as more important than reports of private experiments, because individual experiments are more liable to jump at conclusions.

If the State will pay the expense of collecting the phosphate royalty out of the royalty itself, and allow the agricultural bureau to spend all the special fund raised by the privilege tax on guano entirely in the interest of the class which pays the tax, we can have one of the finest and most useful experiment stations in the United States.

We will be satisfied when this arrangement is made. We think it can be made though our representatives already in the Legislature without any organization on our part and without a general remodeling of the whole governmental machinery. J. W. BRASLEY.

Lydia, Darlington County, S. C., February 15.

## The Southern Methodist Senate.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, meets quadrennially, and, according to the Book of Discipline of that Church, "in the month of April or May." It meets this year, and at Richmond, Virginia. The one hundredth anniversary of the Methodist Episcopal Church's formal organization was celebrated in December, 1884, at the city of Baltimore, where the Church was organized at the celebrated "Christmas Conference" of 1784.

The original Methodist Episcopal Church was separated into two distinct branches, of co-ordinate authority and jurisdiction, by the action of the General Conference which met in New York city in May, 1844. This was practically the division of the Church into a Northern and Southern Church. The occasion of the division was the agitation of the slavery question. The Northern Church kept the old name, and is still called the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Southern Church took the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and was formally organized into a separate body in 1845, at Louisville, Kentucky. Its first General Conference was held at Petersburg, Virginia, in 1846.

The General Conference has met regularly every four years since, except at the appointed time in 1862, when the civil war interfered. The session this year will be the tenth. It will be composed of nearly 275 members—one-half of whom will be laymen. The delegates are elected by the annual Conferences, each Conference being entitled to one clerical delegate to every thirty-six members, and to an equal number of lay delegates. The South Carolina Conference at its recent session in Columbia elected the following delegates:

Clerical.—W. W. Duncan, S. B. Jones, S. A. Weber, A. M. Chreitberg, W. D. Kirkland and A. M. Shipp. Alternates—J. M. Boyd and A. Coke Smith.

Lay.—James H. Carlisle, J. Fuller Lyon, W. T. D. Cousar, H. Baer, R. H. Lennings and J. G. Clinkscals. Alternates—G. E. Prince and W. L. Gray.

The Bishops preside at the sessions of the General Conference, and in case no Bishop is present the Conference chooses a president pro tem. The business of the General Conference is to make rules and regulations for the Church, under wise constitutional limitations, and to provide by necessary legislation for running the machinery of this extensive and aggressive Church. It will legislate for about one million members, who are organized into forty Conferences, distributed along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, from Maryland to Mexico. There are three Conferences on the Pacific coast, several in the far West, one in the Indian Territory and one in Illinois; besides the original territory, in the Southern States, to which the Church was at first confined.

Besides its mission work in this country among the Mexicans, Indians, Germans and in the Territories and on the Pacific coast, the Church has missions in China and Brazil. All these will engage the attention of the General Conference. Several additional Bishops will be elected.

## American English.

A very erroneous impression generally exists in this country as to the manner in which the English language is spoken in the United States. This has arisen in some degree from the circumstance that travellers have dwelt upon and exaggerated such peculiarities of language as have come under their observation in various parts of the Union; but also in greater measure from the fact that in English novels and dramas in which an American figures—no matter whether the character depicted be represented as a man of good social position and, presumably, fair education, or not—he is made to express himself in a dialect happily combining the peculiarities of speech of every section of the country from Maine to Texas. With the exception of the late Mr. Anthony Trollope's "American Senator," I cannot recall to mind a single work of fiction in which this is not the case. Take, for instance, those portions of "Martin Chuzzlewit," the scenes of which are laid in the United States; Richard Fairfield in Bulwer's "My Novel"; the Colonel in Lever's "One of Them"; Fullalove, in Charles Reade's "Very Hard Cash"; the

younger Fenton in Yates's "Black Sheep"; or the American traveller in "Mugby Junction"—in each and every instance the result is to convey a most erroneous idea as to the manner in which our common tongue is ordinarily spoken in the United States.

It is the same on the stage. The dialect on which Americans are usually made to express themselves in English dramas is as incorrect and absurd as was the language put into the mouths of their Irish characters by the playwright of the early part of the eighteenth century.

As a matter of fact, the speech of educated Americans differs but little from that of the same class in Great Britain; while, as regards the great bulk of the people of the United States, there can be no question but that they speak purer and more idiomatic English than do the masses here. In every State of the Union the language of the inhabitants can be understood without the slightest difficulty. This is more than can be said of the dialects of the peasantry in various parts of England, these being in many instances perfectly unintelligible to a stranger. Again, the fluency of expression and command of language possessed by Americans even in the humbler ranks of life forms a marked contrast to the poverty of speech of the same class in this country, where, as an eminent philologist has declared, a very considerable proportion of the agricultural population habitually make use of vocabulary not exceeding 300 words.—*Chamber's Journal.*

## Politics of the War.

WASHINGTON, February 21.—The re-discussion of the political features of the terms first offered to Gen. Johnston's army and overruled at Washington is likely to lean to the development of some facts which are new. An ex-officer of the volunteer forces, who was at Raleigh with Gen. Sherman's army, tells an interesting story of some private discussions among prominent officers, which were mainly confined to those who commanded armies or corps. He says that when the troops of Gen. Sherman formed a junction with Gen. Schofield's army at Goldsboro', a plan for a National Conservative party, which was said to have originated in Washington, was laid before most of the leading officers. Montgomery Blair was represented as the leading spirit at the National Capital.

According to the views which were presented for him through his brother, Gen. Frank Blair, and other, there was a very general dissatisfaction at the North with the radical views held by Secretary Stanton. Secretary Chase Ben Wade Zachariah Chandler, Charles Sumner and others. As to Mr. Lincoln, it was still a question whether he would finally side with the Radicals or favor a conservative reconstruction. It was therefore proposed that the prominent officers of the army should unite in an effort to influence the soldiers to favor, so soon as the war ended and the question of reconstruction came up, the organization of a National Conservative party which should ignore all the Radical leaders named and others of their class: which should also exclude the Northern Copperheads as a necessary condition to soldiers' support; which should be made up of war Democrats and Southern politicians and officers, and provide prominent places for all Northern officers who would join the movement. The proposition was receiving much attention at the various headquarters about Goldsboro' when the news came of the surrender of Lee. A number of leading officers favored it, and several were found, upon sounding them, to be much opposed. It is believed to have prompted the liberal spirit with which Gen. Sherman acted when making his terms with Gen. Johnston. The excitement at the North attending the assassination of President Lincoln, and the interpretation put upon the Sherman terms by Secretary Stanton made it impossible to pursue the plan further at that time.

According to the same authority, later in the same year Montgomery Blair and those working with him in the matter revived his scheme, and agents were dispatched to various military headquarters to unfold it. The break of President Johnson with his party was the result, and at the Arm-in-Arm Convention in Philadelphia in August, 1866, the new party was organized upon the identical propositions originally sent

down to North Carolina for army discussion. It will be remembered that that Convention Fernando Wood at Vandaligham were both compelled to withdraw.

## About Dancing.

Mr. Editor: I think Rev. J. A. Bell's communication in last week's issue (to establish a reading room in McCormick) a good one, but his allusion to the dancing element of the town (or, as he terms it, "agility of the heels") rather cutting. Now, Mr. Editor, there are a lot of us who claim there is nothing wrong in the dance. I believe it to be beneficial, when properly indulged in and also that the benefits are not confined to the "heels" only. Locke says "the effects of dancing are not confined to the body. It gives childrens, as well as grown people, not a mere outward gracefulness of motion, but many thoughts and a becoming confidence."

Experience has taught us that for a graceful and easy carriage dancing is necessary and imperative, and although in times past it was decried, it has again grown into popular favor, and boasts now of a greater number of devotees than any other recreation. Every person who can wield a pen has felt the subject to be one of grave importance. The dance, like religion, is the natural offspring of the heart. It is a spontaneous action of the body, under strong mental or moral pressure, and as a man's heart wafts upward towards the sky its sweet incense of prayer when over whelmed by some great good or sorrow, so the body gives vent to its joy or grief in the poetry of the dance. In the Scriptures we find many passages which speak of dancing. Miriam, at the spectacle of the Egyptians struggling and buffeting with the waves of the Dead Sea, burst forth into song and dance at the destruction of her enemies. David, the gentle shepherd lad, danced on the hill round about Jerusalem to the sound of his rustic pipe, and subsequently, when King of the Israelites, at the recovery of the golden ark, performed a dance before it in his triumph over the re-possession of the holy treasure.

Solomon, the wise law-giver of the Jews, to whom came people of intellect and genius from all surrounding countries to worship at the shrine of his wisdom, has told us "there is a time for all things; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance!" Some of the fathers of the church picture the angels with harps of gold, singing and dancing around the throne of the Lamb.

To the dancers the sculptors and painters of old were wont to have recourse, as studies of those passions and sentiments which sway mankind, so vividly did their motions strike the mind. Many people to-day regard dancing as immoral in its tendencies, and the relation of dancing to christianity and morality has been agitated to a greater extent than the political welfare of nations. Poets, statesmen, essayists and novelists have wielded their pens for its support or condemnation. Preachers have hurled the bomb-shell of the gospel against it, while others have upheld it with Scriptural text. Byron, the English bard of bards, has not felt the subject too insignificant for his eagle quill, and has given us the poem, "The Waltz."

It has its partisans and likewise its opponents. Physicians have given their opinions that it is the most healthful of all exercises, exhilarating the mind and brain by the cheerful, inspiring music, and agreeable accompaniment of angels, beauty and flowers.

It is not my purpose to answer or attempt to set aright these conflicting expressions. In my opinion all dancing is not compatible with virtue and purity; like all pleasures it is abused. But enjoyed in moderation and according to the dictates and rules of good taste, it is a pleasant and beneficial pastime. There are some dances which are immodest and injurious to indulge in. Just as there are some books that should not be read, pictures that were better not seen, and songs which offend the ear; but for those objections should we condemn literature, art and music? To the pure all things are pure.

I hope the time is not far distant when the dance, hallowed as it is by antiquity and poetry, will not be deemed a "revolution of the heel," but a sensible pastime, beneficial alike to the body and mind.