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LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

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A remarkable and enlightening speech was made on the 6th of last month by Richard McIlwaine, delegate from Prince Edward county to the Virginia constitutional convention. The speech related to Negro suffrage and was delivered at a conference or caucus of the Democratic members of the convention. It is remarkable because, being the speech of a Southern Democrat to a caucus of Democratic delegates to the constitutional convention of a Southern state, it nevertheless frankly discloses the disingenuousness of the pretense that political corruption at the South is due to Negro suffrage; and it is enlightening because it presents impressive proof that this pretense is false. Mr. McIlwaine asserted that he is "no theorist," an assertion which he made perfectly clear. He regards the suffrage not as a right but as a privilege, and demonstrates himself to be altogether as irreligious as the distinguished editor of the Outlook with reference to the matter of inherent civil rights. It is as "a man of practical affairs, who has had large dealings with his fellow men, and who looks with a keen eye at conditions as they actually exist," that he advises his Democratic colleagues in the Virginia constitutional convention. This should give peculiar force to his utterances; for your practical man, unclogged with moral theories, is the man whose advice the spirit of the times seems to demand.

Mr. McIlwaine's speech declares that in Virginia there is "a large purchasable element, especially in the white sections," and that "the black belt has no monopoly of wickedness—political, social or civic—but it prevails more or less throughout" the borders of Virginia. "It is not the Negro vote which works the harm," he says, "for the Negroes are generally Republicans"—that is, they vote not corruptly but for what, however mistakenly, they regard as a political principle—"but it is the depraved and incompetent men of our own race." Going into details to prove his point, Mr. McIlwaine compares the Ninth congressional district of Virginia, a white district, with the Fourth, which he describes as "a typical Negro district." In the course of this comparison he shows, among other things all pointing to the same conclusion, that in the Ninth or white district there are—

more than nine times as many white as Negro voters; 4.6 white voters who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 2.1 Negro voters who can read and write for one who cannot; 4.2 voters of both races who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 1 felony for the year 1900 for every 105 voters; and an average of 74 cents criminal expenses for every voter;

whereas in the Fourth, or black district, there are—

about 1.6 fewer white than Negro voters; 10.8 white voters who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 1.6 Negro voters who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 2.7 voters of both races who can read and write for 1 who cannot; 1 felony case in 1900 for every 268 voters; and an average of 42 cents criminal expenses for every voter.

From this comparison Mr. McIlwaine draws these conclusions:

The Ninth district has greatly the advantage of the Fourth in the number of white voters; the proportion of white voters who cannot read and write in the Ninth district is more than twice as great as in the Fourth; the proportion of Negro voters who can read and write in the Ninth district is 33 per cent. larger than in the Fourth; the number of both races who can read and write is 50 per cent. greater in the Ninth than in the Fourth, in proportion to voting population; there were 2½ times more felonies in proportion to voting population in 1900 in the Ninth district than in the Fourth; criminal expenses were nearly twice as large per voter in the Ninth than in the Fourth.

The specific object of Mr. McIlwaine in making this disclosure was to turn his party from its purpose in the convention, that purpose, as he candidly expressed it, being "to disfranchise every Negro, and, at all hazards, to enfranchise every white man in the Commonwealth." He denounced this purpose as something which "cannot be done without fraud;" and which, even if the inhibition of the Federal constitution did not prevail, "ought not, under existing conditions, to be attempted." The proposition which he himself advanced was that the convention should abandon its fraudulent purpose and "consider what are the qualifications for suffrage which ought to be laid down for all classes" of Virginians—"in the east and the west, in the mountains and by the sea, for whites and blacks alike." His voting test, a financial one, does indeed recall Franklin's skit about the voter and his mule; but the pecuniary qualification that he proposes is small, and his test, as compared with the race test, would be a gratifying sign of civic progress in the South.

New Madrid, Mo., is the scene of the latest exhibition of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon to the Negro. A party of young white men threw snow balls at a Negro, a member of a traveling minstrel troupe playing in New Madrid, and the Negro retorted with epithets. What the epithets were is not reported, but any epithets

within the confines of decency were richly deserved by the young men who so far forgot their boasted "superiority." Something more forcible than epithets would have been appropriate. Yet these very superior young men, though they could descend to horseplay with a person from whom they would not take horseplay, could not brook even a verbal retort. A "nigger" had called the superior Saxon ugly names, and the nigger had to be whipped. So ten of them—ten brave Anglo-Saxons to one "nigger"—followed the "impudent" etc., "beast" etc., to the minstrel hall, and after the performance made their way to the stage, shouting: "Whip the nigger!" But this particular "nigger" hailed from Kansas, and he did what any other man similarly outraged would have done. Despite the odds of ten to one, he defended himself. As he made his defense with a revolver, and the valiant Anglo-Saxon ten responded with revolvers, several people came near getting killed. No one was killed, however, but the "nigger" had committed the unpardonable crime of shooting at a white man—even at ten white men, who were bravely bent on assaulting him. Accordingly the sheriff arrested the "nigger" troupe and put them all in jail. That made it easier to lynch the particular offender. And as the original oppressors, the real criminals, were not arrested, the possibilities of a successful lynching were to that extent enhanced. And it came off strictly according to programme. At midnight an unmasked, "determined" —determination on the part of 100 against 1 is a cheap quality—and highly respectable Anglo-Saxon mob, "forced" the jail, seized the "bad nigger," dragged him to a tree and hanged him. The object of this one-sided arrest having been thus accomplished, the rest of the troupe were released. If one or more superior Anglo-Saxons are not hanged for this wicked and cowardly murder, the state of Missouri will deserve the infamy which attaches in the minds of all fair men to communities that openly tolerate such despicable crimes.

The efforts of the speculative real estate interests of Colorado to secure the repeal by the legislature, now in special session, of the Bucklin tax amendment to the state constitution (p. 678), has come to sudden grief. In an able opinion, the attorney general of the state advises the legislature that it has no power to repeal amendment resolutions when once constitutionally proposed to the people. His position seems to be invincible. He argues that while legislation, strictly such, is at all times repealable, these resolutions are—

> not strictly speaking an exercise of ordinary legislative power. The method of proposing is laid down in the constitution, and is radically different from the method prescribed for ordinary legislation. The mere proposal to submit an amendment to the people is not a law. The proposal is a proposition merely, until approved and ratified by the votes of a majority of the electors of the state, cast at an election for representatives; and when so approved and ratified it constitutes—not a law, but a part of the constitution. The authorities that we have been able to find all hold that the proposal of constitutional amendments is not legislation in the sense of making law.

Elsewhere in his opinion, the attorney general explains:

> The legislature in proposing amendments acts in behalf of the people of the state under an expressed and independent power. The mode of its exercise is prescribed and must be observed, but the legislature is not required to look outside its power of attorney to ascertain its duty. That power having been exercised, it shall be the duty of the legislature to submit the proposed amendments to the people to be voted on. . . . . Since the constitution has given to the legislature merely the power to propose, and to the people the power to reject or ratify when the proposal has been made, further authority over the proposal has passed out of the hands of the legislature into the hands of the people.

Whether influenced by this opinion, or acting in accordance with its own wishes, the state senate has put an effectual quietus upon the movement for repeal. The bill to repeal the Bucklin amendment came up in that body on the 19th and was defeated by a vote of 24 to 9.

Since the agitation for the repeal of this measure has brought its merits to the attention of the entire state, the danger of defeating it by a conspiracy of silence, followed on the eve of election by a flood of misrepresentation, has been averted by the folly of the very plutocratic interests that fear the effects of the measure. It is therefore reasonably to be expected that after the election next fall Colorado will become the pioneer state in introducing into this country the system of home rule in local taxation which has produced such satisfactory results in New Zealand.

In a recent address, Judge Dunne, of Chicago, throws a brilliant white light upon the cause of insufficient municipal revenues. Having shown that the county, officered by Republicans, is financially as badly off as the city, officered by Democrats, from which he inferred that deficiency of funds is not due to mismanagement of finances, he described the escape of public service corporations from their just taxes, as disclosed by the teachers, and then exposed an enormous amount of real estate tax-dodging in the business center of the city. Dwelling on this class of tax dodging he said:

> I ascertained that the total real estate valuation placed upon the real estate in the First ward of the city of Chicago, being only one ward out of the 34, was $268,000,000 for the year 1900, while the Swift commission, which had appraised the same property in 1896, a year which was at the very climax of the dull times in this community, closely following the panic of 1893, and which was therefore a time of conservative estimates, placed it at $422,000,000, approximately.

Not content with that bare comparison, Judge Dunne went on to prove that even the Swift appraisement was below the true figure, as indicated by a recent purchase by Montgomery Ward & Co., the corner of Michigan avenue and Washington street, which had been appraised by the