CHAPTER II.

INTERNAL ELEMENTS OF DISRUPTION.

A HALF CENTURY OF HEARTBURNINGS.

The discontent in the Virginia household which resulted in the separation in 1863 was not of recent origin nor due to ephemeral causes. It was a case of natural incompatibility, and of other incompatibility increasing with time and growth. Dissensions, growing with the development of the West, and unwise and oppressive policies on the part of the dominant East, had long been preparing the soil and sowing the seed for the crop which was finally reaped.

THE PROTEST OF NATURE.

Mountain barriers had been reared by nature between the two sections. On one side of them the waters flowed toward the old world of vested privilege; on the other toward the new, the free, the possibilities of the future and the unknown. Commerce divides with the water-sheds and flows with the streams. The interests and purposes of men follow commercial lines. Political abstractions may at times seem the most influential spring of action; but business advantage has the strong and steady pull which in the end shapes the destinies of States.
Policies supposed to be suited to the east side of these mountains were ill adapted to the other. Under the measures enforced by the East, at the instance of an institution repugnant to the people in the West, the latter could only grow more and more discontented and alienated as time and material growth made the Eastern rule the more oppressive. The connection was an unnatural one from the first. It grew to be a union of force which only awaited its opportunity to be broken.

THE PRIMITIVE WEST.

The earliest settlements west of the mountains were made by the more adventurous east of them, who had little of property or anything else to attach them to the soil they grew on and sought the freer life of what were then the Western wilds. Later, as the country became cleared, a more substantial class followed with their slaves in pursuit of agriculture. This inflow across the mountains was met by currents of a different kind of people flowing in from the northern and western borders. In the decades between 1840 and 1860, under the demand for slave labor in the Gulf States, the bulk of the slave population in the West went to the market.

NO UNITY OF INTEREST.

As commercial and industrial interests developed there, they found their outlets west and south, through channels prepared by nature. There was little intercourse of any kind—and even less commerce—with Eastern Virginia. A single railroad reaching only the northern section carried traffic to tidewater beyond the State. None
of it went to Eastern Virginia. Attempts were made to connect the southern section of the West with the East by railroad, but had not been successful down to the opening of the war. Less than half a million had been expended in grading the western section of the Covington and Ohio Railroad, though between four and five millions had been spent in trying to tunnel the mountain in Tazewell County; and some meager improvements had been made in navigation on Coal, Kanawha and Guyandotte Rivers—fragments of that costly but fruitless system of Virginia public works described by Governor Wise in 1857 as “beginning everywhere and ending nowhere.” If Eastern Virginia and Western had been separate commonwealths, there could hardly have been less of business and social intercourse than there was. The political bond which united them was always galling to the West; and for more than fifty years there were bickerings and strifes so bitter that they sometimes threatened violence. The differences were of a kind that might be borne but could never be reconciled. The matter of separation was only one of time and opportunity. The mills of God grind slow, but patience brings the last grist to its turn.

WALPOLE’S WESTERN VIRGINIA COLONY.

A curious chapter on the status in early colonial times of the territory now embraced in West Virginia was related by Hon. George W. Summers in an address in the old court-house at Wheeling, in August, 1863. West Virginia was then less than two months old. Mr. Summers had come out of his retirement to make some explanations
in palliation of his course following his return from the first session of the Richmond convention to the Kanawha Valley. The new State having achieved success without his help, he had become its ardent friend; and he closed this speech with some gratulatory remarks about the erection of West Virginia. The following passage is now deciphered from the short-hand notes taken at the time:

I suppose we have all been thinking we have done some new thing in making a State here between the Alleghenies and the Ohio River. I tell you, my friends, it was in contemplation, and was within an ace of accomplishment, within four years of a hundred years ago.

After the treaty of Paris, in 1763, by which England acquired the Canadas from France—all the claims of France to this Western country—Walpole and others applied for a charter for a colony "back of Virginia," to begin opposite the mouth of the Scioto River, running back to the Allegheny ridge, thence up to somewhere about Pittsburgh, including all the lands between the ridges of the Allegheny and the Ohio River. At that time, the bounds of Virginia were not conceded to go beyond the head springs of the rivers flowing into the Atlantic. All beyond was claimed at one time by France, who placed her monuments at the mouths of many of our rivers—one at the mouth of the Kanawha and one at the mouth of the Muskingum, I remember, in 1749.

This conception of Walpole and others proceeded so far that in 1769 a charter was made out for this colony by Hillsborough, then foreign secretary; who wrote a letter on the subject, which I have had access to and read, to the Governor and Council of Virginia, proposing this new colony and asking their views on the subject. There is a letter extant written by Mr. Nelson, President of the Council, in which he tells his Lordship he had received his letter and laid it before the Council; that it did not become the Council to advise His Majesty on such a subject, but that when the country should become sufficiently populated for a colony "back of Virginia"—not claiming it as Virginia at all—they could well concede it would be proper to do so.
The charter was prepared and was ready for signature of the Crown officer; when the events of the Revolution thickening upon them, it was suspended and cut off. It only escaped becoming a separate and independent colony from the Allegheny to the Ohio River by that chance.

I do not mention it as showing that it was not a part and parcel of Virginia, because by subsequent events and the recognition of the boundaries of the State, it might be regarded as a settled question. Although for one who has a mind to look into antique discussions it is a very curious fact that when Virginia was bargaining with Congress about the cession of her North-western domain—the lands northwest of the Ohio—she made it a uniform condition of her grant of these lands that Congress should guarantee to her the lands east of the Ohio River—that is, the lands between the Ohio and the Allegheny Mountains; which Congress uniformly refused to do. During that discussion, Madison, then member of Congress, wrote to Jefferson to furnish him the proofs of the right of Virginia to the lands west of the Allegheny: and they never were furnished by Mr. Jefferson; and finally the cession was made without this guaranty.

In this speech Mr. Summers claimed that twenty-five years before he had advocated the division of Virginia and had "perhaps done more to familiarize the public mind with the idea of such division than any man in the State." All the more pity that he did not keep to that faith when time and event had ripened the fruit!

WEBSTER PREDICTS DIVISION.

The character of the tie that bound Western Virginia to Eastern was recognized by intelligent men outside the State as well as within. Daniel Webster took notice of it in his speech on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone of the addition to the National Capitol, in 1851, when he warned the people of Virginia against the dis-union issue which had been raised by Calhoun:
Ye men of Western Virginia, who occupy the slope from the Alleghenies to the Ohio and Kentucky, what benefit do you propose to yourselves by disunion? Do you look for the current of the Ohio to change and bring you and your commerce to the tide-waters of Eastern rivers? What man in his senses would suppose that you would remain a part and parcel of Virginia a month after Virginia ceased to be a part and parcel of the United States?

Henry Winter Davis, of Maryland, in the course of an address to his constituents, declared that "West Virginia belongs to the Mississippi Valley. Virginia can never withdraw from the existing confederacy undivided."

THE TORTOISE IN ITS SHELL.

Eastern Virginia always possessed a full endowment of the selfishness and blindness to its own true interests inherent in aristocratic communities. The aristocrat takes in only the little circle of which he deems himself the center, regarding all outside of it alien or hostile. Virginia was controlled by the belief that its narrow, peculiar society and civil system, based on slave labor and English tradition, was the flower of political and social wisdom. The commoner people in the West, growing in harmony with the genius of the great free Republic, were regarded as inimical to Eastern interests; and accordingly the East sought to keep this "peasant" population under due control by repressive provisions, constitutional and statutory, denying them their due share in representation and imposing on them more than their due share of the taxes.

The settlement of Virginia beginning at the tide-water and spreading westward, the older section naturally and
always made the newer their tributary. In the Revolu­
tionary period, Mr. Jefferson found occasion to complain
that the Tide-water district possessed great advantages in
representation over the interior where he had his home.
This inequality was always maintained at the expense of
the outlying West.

The limitation of suffrage to landholders was an aris­
tocratic feature imposed on the colony under the second
Charles in 1677; and it was maintained till the conven­
tion of 1850-1, when the West had grown so strong the
East was compelled to make some concessions. In the
matter of an aristocratic land-suffrage, Rhode Island re­
ceived a like heritage from the "merry" and dissolute
Charles II.; and the people there endured the restriction
nearly as long as in Virginia. The Dorr rebellion in
1842 was a revolt against it. A portion of the people of
Rhode Island despairing of other means of relief organ­
ized a convention, framed a liberal constitution and
formed a State government under it. It was put down by
the legitimate State authority with the aid of the military
power of the United States, and Dorr was imprisoned.
But he was vindicated soon by the action of a convention
assembled by the regular authorities which framed a con­
stitution conceding the reforms for which he had organ­
ized revolt. There was a time when it seemed not im­
possible some such insurrection might arise in Virginia.

THE NORTHWEST FILES COMPLAINT.

As early as 1829 the grievances of the West were felt
to be so intolerable as to demand redress. In the House
of Representatives, in 1862, when the bill for the admi­
sion of West Virginia was under discussion, Hon. William
G. Brown, from the Preston district, said that when the Virginia convention of 1829-30 met, Western Virginia was on the point of revolution. In that convention a sharp protest was filed by the Northwest through two of the ablest men the West had ever sent to Richmond: Alexander Campbell and Phillip Doddridge. Old Virginia had in that body some of her historic figures—James Madison, James Monroe, Chief Justice Marshall and John Randolph of Roanoke. Benjamin Watkins Leigh was there. It was he who had described the white people west of the mountains as “peasantry.” “What real share, so far as mind is concerned,” asked Mr. Leigh, “could the peasantry of the West be supposed to take in the affairs of the State?” Before the adjournment of this convention Mr. Leigh probably found the answer to his question; for at least the two peasant members from the Panhandle were able to measure intellectual swords with the ablest men the East had in that body.

The Convention of 1829-30.

This convention holds a place in the history of Virginia dissension which calls for something more than passing mention. No body of equal gravity, nor of equal influence on the affairs of the State, assembled in Virginia between the convention of 1788, which ratified the Constitution of the United States, and the equally historic one which in 1861 tried to repeal that ratification. Certainly none equalling this as typical of Virginia greatness. Washington and Jefferson had departed, but a number belonging to the same era remained and took part.
While the local interests of every part of the broad Commonwealth were represented and discussed, the main issue in the convention seemed to be very distinctly felt from the first; and from the beginning it was a drawn battle between East and West over the burning question of suffrage. At this distance of time it seems startling to recognize the irrepressible conflict between the two sections as it showed itself in openly expressed fear of division and the free handling of the question of disruption so long ago. The wonder arises that with such discordant elements, such outspoken discontent and hostility to an existing order of things within its borders, it was possible for the Old Dominion to hold the West under its domination so long, before the crisis arrived which settled the question of division at once and forever. Alarm and excitement were not only shown in debate but appeared also in the "instructions" and "memorials" sent up to the convention by the people. Chief Justice Marshall was charged with "a memorial from the non-freeholders of the city of Richmond," and another from "a highly respectable body of citizens in Fairfax County;" the burden of one and all being "an extension of the right of suffrage." An exceptional memorial was one regarding slavery which will be quoted further along.

These were from the East. From the West came no written memorials, for there were those from that section who were there to present in person the demands of their people—to fight rather than to pray.
It is apparent, in looking over the chronicles of this convention, that the question underlying all these surface differences was the issue of slavery in Virginia. All the able men in the convention, East and West, knew this. They foresaw from afar the coming conflict, and recognized, however reluctantly, that nothing could be permanently amended between the two sections until that which was the beginning and end of the whole conflict had been settled. Like the watch which in spite of everybody persisted in keeping wrong time till the magnet secreted near the mainspring had been discovered, nothing could go right in Virginia till the concealed but evil influence of slavery had been removed. Other questions might come and go, other causes be lost or won; but while this wrong remained as a basis of injustice and irritation, it would rankle and breed fresh dissension from year to year, until East and West should be rent asunder in fact as they had long been in feeling.

TWO PANHANDLE INNOVATORS.

West Virginia, now in the day of her accomplished freedom, has no need to be ashamed of the men who stood up for her rights and pleaded her cause in the convention of 1829-30. If they did not directly demand separation, they laid the foundation on which it was afterwards built. Campbell and Doddridge stood side by side on all questions of importance affecting Western interests and rights; and by their fearlessness and force in advocating reform and demanding redress, more than once challenged the
attention of some of the great names on the other side, notably John Randolph, whose crabbed astuteness perceived the full force of their position but refused to recognize it as persistently and contumuously as he refused to look beyond the limits of "Old" Virginia for his political or social creed.

At the time this convention was held, the Virginia "Panhandle," represented by Campbell and Doddridge, was divided into but two counties—Ohio, embracing what is now Ohio and Marshall; and Brooke, now divided into Brooke and Hancock. The Monongalia district, then embracing that county, Preston and Taylor, was represented by Charles S. Morgan and Eugenius Wilson; Kanawha district by Lewis Summers, Edwin S. Duncan of Harrison, John Laidly of Cabell and Adam See of Randolph. Altogether it was a notable representation of the ideas and aspirations then liberalizing the Northwest; but it proved powerless before the aristocratic dogmatism of the old regime. Alexander Campbell seems to have naturally taken the leadership of the Western members and the championship of their cause. It was the only occasion in his long public career when he took part in what might be called politics; and more for this reason than any other, perhaps, his conspicuous part in this convention has in the long interval since been in a great measure lost sight of. Mr. Campbell was a man of very unusual energy and power; not only a thinker but a man of action; not only a master of theological knowledge and polemics—the founder and propagandist of a new faith—but a man of affairs also, who could build a great college, farm in a
large and successful way, edit religious journals, and dis­
cuss religious dogma with the ablest theologians of his time. If he had chosen to give his energies to political
life, he must have been heard from in other bodies in Vir­
ginia than the one whose chronicle we are dealing with.
As a man of affairs in that body, Mr. Campbell knew the
interests of his section and people and could adequately
represent them among the law-makers at Richmond. As a
thinker and student of political and economic questions,
he thoroughly comprehended the issue between the East
and West; and on the declaration of the bill of rights,
and on the question of the suffrage, he took high and firm
ground. His oratory, like his personal appearance, was
commanding and impressive and his utterance marked by
earnestness and fearlessness. It was not the oratory of
the politician or man of expediency. It was of the kind
that remains on record as the truth which is forever true;
the truth which was in its day far-seeing, prophetic, and
which has since that day come to pass. John Randolph
had no liking for the big Western preacher, whose view
of things was so broadly different from his own. One day,
possibly for lack of a better reply to some of Mr. Camp­
bell’s remarks, Randolph asked him: “With whom have
you left those few sheep in the wilderness?” in rude allu­
sion to Mr. Campbell’s calling as a clergyman. Mr. Ran­
dolph did not and could not realize that that “wilderness”
was one day to blossom as the rose, and that Mr. Camp­
bell’s own county of Brooke would become famous for its
sheep, shearing the finest merino wool in the world, while
Mr. Randolph’s section, though engaged in wool-growing
of another kind and grade, was destined never to win
either wealth or enviable renown by reason of its product.
PHIL. DODDRIDGE DEMANDS WHITE BASIS.

BASIS OF REPRESENTATION.

Phillip Doddridge, an eminent lawyer, a representative in the State Legislature and in Congress; a man of distinguished literary achievement best known to the world of letters by his "Notes on the Early Settlement of Northwestern Virginia," and his "Indian Wars," published at Wellsburg, Va., in 1824, offered a resolution declaring that in the apportionment of representation in the House of Delegates, regard should be had to the white population exclusively. This would have been but half a loaf, the Senate remaining on the aristocratic land-and-slave basis. But even this half-loaf was not to be conceded for another twenty years. During the discussion following Mr. Doddridge's proposition, Mr. Campbell supported it; and we note one paragraph as illustrating the great preacher's breadth of thought and manner of speech:

The policy of those gentlemen who advocate the money basis appears to me not only unrepulican but short-sighted. That policy which augments the power of wealth, which tends to make the rich man richer and the poor man poorer, is the worst policy for such a community as this, and must be at least for some time to come. My views of men and of the revolutions in human affairs make me a republican. My love for my own posterity would prevent me from voting for this amendment, if I had no other consideration to govern me. If I had the wealth of Stephen Girard, I could not, feeling as I do—viewing human affairs as I do; looking back into history or forward into futurity—consent to build up an aristocracy, because I should be erecting embankments and bulwarks against those dearer to me than myself. I do most sincerely wish that gentlemen would look a little before them and remember the lot of man, lest they should, in attempting to secure themselves from imaginary evils lay the foundation of real and lasting ones.
The fact that the West was growing away from the influence and control of slavery and its code of ideas, as sharply evinced in the audacious demand for a more liberal constitution, was held by the Egyptian taskmasters to show the need of a more restrictive plan of representation, not a more liberal one. Randolph adduced figures which showed that the progress in the West was becoming dangerous to Eastern control. As exhibiting the relative growth of the two sections, he brought forward statistics showing that in 1790 the white population east of the Blue Ridge was 314,523, west of it 127,594; and that in 1829 this had increased in the East to only 362,745, and in the West to 319,516. In these thirty-nine years the rate of growth in the East had been something over fifteen per cent; in the West one hundred and fifty per cent. In the district lying between the Ohio and the Alleghenies the increase had been from 38,834 in 1790 to 181,384 in 1829—nearly 370 per cent. In Virginia, as elsewhere, it thus clearly appeared the star of empire was taking its way Westward.

Randolph could point out these evidences of decadence in the East, where slavery sat like a nightmare on the breast of popular energy, and of growth in the wilder and ruder West, where the people were comparatively free from the incubus; but neither he nor his eminent compeers, despite their great names, were capable of making the application of the facts. They could not see that the remedy needed to be applied to the East, not to the West. They
saw nothing to do but to continue their antediluvian system framed wholly in the interest of a slave-holding rule. When Alexander Campbell sought to have incorporated in the constitution provisions which would modify—not abolish—the antiquated county-court, in which in every county a small number of men ignorant of the law were invested with judicial functions in addition to fiscal—in violation of a fundamental principle of the American system, under which the three departments of government are sacredly separate—Randolph attacked the proposition so vehemently, with so much sarcasm, and had so sympathetic an old-fogyism to appeal to, that the proposition was defeated.

THE EAST “STANDS PAT.”

As to citizen suffrage, the East would not have it. They stood together, apparently thinking their only security against the growing mob of white people west of the mountains was to disfranchise them. These gentlemen were even then sitting on the safety-valve but could not realize it. They thought to offset the growth of population in the West by keeping unlimited control of legislation, effecting that by basing representation on property and limiting the franchise to land-holders. “Do you know how much a white man was worth under that old constitution?” asked Mr. Van Winkle in the first West Virginia constitutional convention. The unit of representation in 1850 was $532 of property. That is, as Mr. Van Winkle put it, “a white man was worth $532;” which was considerably below the market value of a “likely”
negro. That much property—negro or other—had the same weight in the government as the white citizen. Besides, the white citizen was liable to be disfranchised for omission to pay twelve and one-half cents taxes—and the property was not.

DIVISION IN SHADOW.

The question of dividing Virginia was not brought tangibly before this convention. It was not advocated or threatened by anybody. But it was in the thoughts of members, who saw whither all this conflict of interest and opinion tended; and it was spoken of with bated breath by gentlemen of such conservatism and dignity as Monroe and Marshall. It was execrated by Randolph. By all, such a contingency was deplored. The talk of the Western men was without doubt, suggestive of revolt and was denounced as such by Randolph and others. Revolutions often result from such discussions as went on in that convention—and such conditions as provoked them. The revolution some of these fathers of the Commonwealth seem to have foreseen came and did its work midway between that day and this. The truth they spoke was the seed of the event, and the fruit remains with us. They uttered prophecies which time has interpreted. They were wise in their day; they were faithful to the gospel of equal rights, and the event has vindicated them.

ELOQUENT PROTEST AGAINST SLAVERY.

There were men in Virginia at that day who understood the cause of her paralysis and had the courage to declare it. Slavery had not yet throttled free opinion or
free speech, as it did later. A memorial presented to the convention in October, 1829, said that Virginia was in a "state of moral and political retrogression," and proceeded to specify:

That the causes heretofore frequently assigned are the true ones we do not believe. . . . We humbly suggest our belief that the slavery which exists and which with gigantic strides is gaining ground among us, is, in truth, the great efficient cause of the multiplied evils we 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 system and geographical position. If Virginia has already fallen from her high estate, and if we have assigned the true cause for 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.

Thirty years brought the beginning of the "fatal termination of the scene" thus graphically forecast in this memorial. It was no small faction whose opinions thus found expression. At that time in Virginia such views were still widely entertained. The teachings of Jefferson and George Mason had not yet been discredited. Washington in 1796 wrote to Sir John Sinclair, in England, accounting for the greater value of land in Pennsylvania than in Maryland and Virginia, that it was "because there were laws in Pennsylvania for gradual emancipation of slavery which neither of the two States above-mentioned
have at present but which nothing is more certain than that they must have and at a period not remote.” George Mason said in the Federal Congress, of the African slave-trade, that “this infernal traffic originated in the avarice of the British merchants.” He might have added “and British monarchs,” for Queen Anne and two of the Georges put the profits of this “infernal traffic” into their private purses as stockholders in companies chartered by them to carry it on. Even this was not the worst exhibition of English monarchy—if anything could be worse; for Queen Elizabeth, as Macaulay relates, when 841 white convicts were condemned to servitude in the West Indies, asked that 100 of them might be given to her; and she cleared a profit of a thousand guineas on the cargo!

The best people of Virginia had not yet been converted to the new gospel of slavery which had found its inspiration in the cotton gin. The new shibboleth was put into words by the committee of the convention which sat in Richmond thirty years later. “African slavery” they said, “is a vital part of the social system of the State wherein it exists.”

TESTIMONY OF THE WISE.

“What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man!” wrote Jefferson from France when he learned his proposed amendment for gradual emancipation had not been embodied in the revised code of Virginia—“Who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his liberty, and the next moment be deaf to all those motives whose power
supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow­
men a bondage one hour of which is fraught with more
misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to
oppose.” As late as 1821, when 77 years old, Jefferson
wrote:

It was found the public mind would not bear the proposi­
tion. Nor will it bear it even to this day. Yet the day is not
distant when it must bear it and adopt it, or worse will follow.
Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that
these people are to be free. . . . It is still in our power to
direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably.
. . . If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human­
nature must shudder at the prospect.

George Mason had put his convictions on record in
these words:

Slavery discourages arts and manufactures. The poor
despise labor when performed by slaves. They prevent the im­
migration of whites, who really enrich and strengthen a country.
They produce the most pernicious effect on manners. Every
master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judg­
ment of heaven on a country. By an inevitable chain of causes
and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calam­ities.

Prophetic words, soon realized after Virginia and
South Carolina undertook to propagate the new gospel
with the edge of the sword!

Henry Clay, born and reared in Virginia, agreed with
her older statesmen. “Slavery,” he said, “is a curse to
the master and a grievous wrong to the slave.”

Dr. Henry Ruffner, of Kanawha, who died at Charles­
ton about the close of 1861, had more than once ap­
pealed to the anti-slavery traditions of Virginia against
the later propagandism. "Our own Western Virginia," he said, "furnishes conclusive evidence that slavery in all quantities and degrees has a pernicious influence on the public welfare."

In the United States Senate, in July, 1862, Charles Sumner, in opposing the admission of West Virginia with a constitution recognizing slavery, said "there might not be many slaves, but it takes very little slavery to make a slave State with all the virus of slavery;" and he refused to vote to increase the representation from slave States in the Senate. Thus Mr. Sumner reinforced Dr. Ruffner's idea regarding the potency of a small leaven of the evil institution. The history of Western Virginia well illustrates the thought, as will more strongly appear when we come to the struggle over the question in framing the first constitution for the new State.

It illustrates the changed attitude of Virginia to note that John Tyler when in the Senate, in 1832, in a bill for the government of the District of Columbia incorporated a provision for the abolition of slavery therein. In 1861 he was hand in glove with the secession conspiracy and was one of the "Peace Commissioners" who protested against possible abolition in the District.

**INSPIRATION OF THE COTTON GIN.**

It appears that even when these memorialists were praying that old convention to arrest the evil of slavery, the institution was rousing itself like a giant refreshed with new wine under stimulation due to the cotton-gin. The growing demand for slave labor in the culture of
cotton and sugar offered Virginia a new industry at a
time when her other industries had broken down, and the
profit of breeding them for the market soon reconciled
her people to the wrong and silenced all dissentients.
There is a wide difference between a wrong which yields
a profit and one that does not. As Pope remarks of
another monster of frightful mien, they learned to

—"first endure, then pity, then embrace."

The breeding of negroes was more lucrative than breeding
cattle, or raising tobacco, and not so exhaustive of the
soil. There was a good deal of cross-breeding, and a
large percentage of the human stock shipped to the Gulf
States bore the best blood of the F. F. V. In the con­
vention of 1829-30 it was stated by a member that the
value of slave exports from Virginia had then reached
$1,500,000 per annum. Four years later it had risen to
$10,000,000! Values rose with the increased demand.
Hon. James H. Hammond, U. S. Senator of South Caro­
lina, in a speech delivered at Barnwell Court House, S. C.,
in October, 1858, showing the prosperity of the slave
institution, said: "In this very quarter of a century our
slaves have doubled in numbers and each slave has more
than doubled in value. The very negro who, as a prime
laborer, would have brought $400 in 1828, would now,
with thirty years more upon him, sell for $800."

DOMESTIC SLAVE-TRADE.

This domestic slave-trade was active in Western Vir­
ginia, though far less important there than in the East.
When the writer of these pages was a boy, there was,
about three miles east from Clarksburg, near the home of a distinguished ex-Governor of Virginia then living, a negro "ranch" where young negroes, from mere children upward, were corralled, ranged and fed for the Southern market, almost as if they had been sheep or swine. In summer, the younger ones ran about in puris naturalibus, clothing for them being deemed a needless expense. There are people yet living in Harrison who will remember this establishment, though the proprietor, like the Legrees and all of his kind, has long ago gone "the primrose way." This human stock-yards was the consummate flower of the patriarchal institution which Northwestern Virginia was fighting to get away from; which some of her able politicians found it so heartbreaking to give up when the crisis was on us in 1861!

The author's mother distinctly remembers when she was a child of nine or ten seeing a great drove of negroes pass her home, on the "State Road," about where Cherry Camp station now is on the Northwestern Virginia line of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, on their way to the Ohio River, it is to be presumed, for transport down the river by flat-boat. There were women and children, as well as men, and a few teams probably carrying provisions. The men were chained together. She recalls that the drove seemed a long time passing and thinks there were several hundred. This was about 1826 or 1827.

In Les Miserables, Victor Hugo describes the passage of a gang of galley-slaves leaving Paris one chill morning from the Bicêtre—a spectacle so lamentable as to express every conceivable human degradation and wretchedness. After they have passed, little Cosette with trembling asks:
"Father, are they still men?" "Sometimes," Jean Valjean replies. He is thinking of himself and remembering that thirty-five years before he had passed the barrier in a like gang, with the gyves on his wrists and the collar on his neck.

Here there was at least the presumption of crime to mitigate the horror of the scene; but with that long caravan of black people, chained together like cattle, destined to a servitude as cruel and more irrevocable and hopeless than the galleys, there was not even the element of alleged crime to temper the awful tragedy.

"Put yourself in his place."

In one of the popular magazines, in the summer of 1897, was told a story which illustrates some features and possibilities of this domestic slave-trade. It was related that, in 1845, at Yorktown, Virginia, by the death of a young man whose name is given, the last in the male line of an old family, the family was broken and their slaves sent to the block. One of these had been the body-servant of his young master, and very likely of kindred blood, for one was as white as the other; had been reared with him from infancy; "had enjoyed the same advantages, and through association with the best society of many countries had acquired an ease of manner and fluency of speech, which, combined with his handsome person, would have made him an ornament in any circle. There was so little negro blood in his veins he would have passed as a white man anywhere, and was held in high esteem by his master and all his friends." A burly slave-dealer, whose name is given as James Húbbard, and who
is described as a man of "powerful physique, coarse manners, hair and eyes intensely black, and complexion so swarthy he would have suffered by comparison with many of his human chattels," had long had his eye on "Mack," and when it came to the auction, he ran the price so high that Mack became his property. Hubbard took his chattel to New Orleans; but, actuated apparently by vanity, instead of selling him, he kept Mack as his body servant, dressing him like a gentleman and allowing him the greatest freedom. Mack had some money, and, keeping out of his master's way, he frequented saloons and gambling places where he passed for a Virginia planter and made some acquaintances among the fast set. The story relates that walking on the street one evening with one of these, his master passed by on the other side of the street.

"You see that boy over there?" said Mack carelessly, indicating Hubbard. "I brought him down here with me and he has got so independent I have got to sell him."

"What will you take for him?"

"Why, he ought to bring me $1,500 quick, but I will take $1,000 if it can be arranged quietly."

In less than twenty-four hours they had agreed on terms and Hubbard had been sold by his slave. The papers were passed and the money paid over, Mack only stipulating that the buyer should take his property without needless disturbance. When Hubbard was seized, he fought like a wildcat; but he was finally overpowered and taken from the fashionable hotel to the jail. Nor could
he get release until three well-known citizens of Williamsburg, fortified with papers of identification from the Virginia authorities, made the long trip to New Orleans. The trial cost Hubbard a large sum of money and consumed a great deal of time, not to speak of the wear and tear of temper; but for once in his brutal life he realized what it was to be a human chattel. Meantime Mack had disappeared and was never traced beyond the wharf whence he took passage for the North. It was supposed he went to France, where he had lived during his former master's student days.

VAIN WARNING.

By the failure of the insurrectionary enterprise, undertaken in 1861, all this profitable industry and traffic was wholly lost to the Old Dominion, and even her stock in trade. The cotton States were then looking to the reopening of the African slave-trade. Sherrard Clemens, in the United States House of Representatives, January 2, 1861, warned Virginia of the risk she would take of losing her domestic trade in negroes by an alliance with the Southern Confederacy. "One of the first measures of this Confederacy," he said, "would be to reopen the African slave-trade so as to reduce the price of negroes. They would not then purchase the negroes as they do now, paying $1,600 for a good hand here; they would bring them at a low price from Africa and then mould them into shape by the blessings of Christianity and civilization."
The greed of Virginia to breed negroes for the cotton fields was akin to that fiercer greed under spur of which Spain, in her fury for gold, committed such unspeakable atrocities upon the simple and innocent peoples in the central parts of the American continent. It is another illustration, like that unequalled infamy, of the devilish capabilities of even enlightened human nature when under control of a base motive. "The crime of Spain," says Draper, "became her punishment." From the greatest of nations she has come down to the weakest. So, too, did the crime of Virginia avenge itself on her. For that this traffic of hers in human flesh and blood—too often their own—should produce degeneracy among Virginians is no surprise. As against the Washingtons, the George Masons, the Henrys, Madisons and Marshalls of the olden time, 1861 had evolved the Wises, the Pryors, the Tylers, Letchers, the "Jim" Masons and Floyds, and others akin. Nature and justice will be avenged. The French Revolution was scarcely less the offspring of sexual profligacy in official circles than of oppression by the privileged classes. The governing class had become debased and were no longer fit to rule. So 1861 in Virginia was legitimate heir to the forty or fifty years of growing degeneracy and brutalism leading down to that bloody culmination. That year found the old "Mother of Presidents" with moral sense blunted, humane sentiments replaced by the truculent impulses of the slave-driver and human-stock-breeder. We see the savagery of Legree crop out in the violence around the Richmond Convention—in the rank conspiracy which
summoned its ruffians to the Capital to inaugurate a reign of terror; in the intimidation by Wise when he rises in the secret session of the Convention, and, drawing a large Virginia horse-pistol from his bosom, lays it before him and glares around him at the Union members like some homicidal maniacs; in his later cruelty to the poor Jew merchants at Charleston, whose sole offence was loyalty to their government; in the devilish cruelty of Pate's and Jenkins' troopers to Congressman Whaley and his fellow prisoners captured at Guyandotte—all detailed in these pages. Wise once said with reference to the Virginia schemes for colonizing in Liberia: "Africa gave Virginia a savage as a slave; Virginia gives back Africa a citizen and a Christian." This appears to be only a part of the truth. Emerson says, "you cannot do wrong without suffering wrong. If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own. * * * For everything that is given something is taken." While Mr. Wise was making a citizen and Christian of the African savage, the African citizen and Christian was making a savage of Mr. Wise. It was simply an exchange of characteristics in strict accord with Emerson's (or rather God's) law of compensation. If slavery had lifted the black as claimed, it had at the same time barbarized the white—of which truth where shall we find a fitter illustration than Wise himself?

The destruction of the Roman empire Dr. Draper attributes to the extinguishment of the ethnical element of Rome in the flood of barbarism invasion, producing "blood degeneration." There was blood degeneration in Virginia—but there was worse. The blood degenerates
were sold to the rice, cane and cotton fields. Those who sold them were sometimes their brothers, sometimes their fathers. The catastrophe there was moral, not ethnical. The noble ideals of older Virginia, always recognizing the wrong of slavery and looking to its removal, were overwhelmed in the demoralization arising from a new greed for wealth and power which deemed crime against human nature no bar to its objects. Never nor anywhere did any people coin human flesh and blood into money in a baser way.

It is an inexorable law of the moral world that the wages of sin is death; the cost of crime expiation. Virginia in 1861 was but coming to judgment; only preparing to reap what she had sown. The Richmond malefactors could not realize this, for whom the gods are about to destroy they first make mad. "Judgment for an evil thing," remarks Carlyle, "is many times delayed some day or two, some century or two; but it is as sure as life, it is as sure as death."

REJECTED BY THE WEST.

The testimony in that old convention against slavery, and against the inequality of white rights it demanded, fell upon dull ears. "No man would listen," as Carlyle says of another case of like fatuity; "each went his thoughtless way, and time and destiny also traveled on." None of the reforms demanded by the West were conceded. The Eastern aristocrats went on in their own predestined course and made a constitution so ill-suited to Western needs and ideas that on the final vote in the
Convention every vote from territory now in West Virginia was cast against it, except that of Phillip Doddridge, who was ill and absent; and when it was submitted to the people, it was condemned in the West with corresponding unanimity. In Brooke County, 371 votes were cast against it, not one for it; in Ohio 3 for and 643 against; in Harrison 8 for and 1,112 against; in Tyler 5 for and 299 against; in Preston 121 for and 357 against. Two-fifths of the vote in the entire State was against this constitution; and two-thirds of that adverse vote was in the West.

"TWENTY YEARS AFTER."

Twenty years later came another convention and another revision. In this twenty years the world had not stood still, despite the contrary belief on the part of the Richmond political "Jaspers." In this Convention of 1850-51, the West was again ably represented, with George W. Summers, a Whig, in the leadership. He was seconded by such men as "Tom" Gally, of Wheeling, Carlile, Van Winkle and James H. Ferguson. Joseph Johnson and Gideon D. Camden, of Harrison, and Zachariah Jacob, of Wheeling, were in this Convention.

A MAN OF MYSTERY.

Mr. Ferguson, a man of remarkable mental power, was in the post-bellum period the sphynx of West Virginia. He was a native of Montgomery County, Virginia, but removed to Cabell County when a youth. He studied law on the shoemaker's bench, went to the Legislature, and, despite the lack of all artificial advantages, at once took
foremost rank. While a member of the Legislature, he was elected to this Convention. After its adjournment, he disappeared for a dozen years, but came back into West Virginia about the close of the war, bearing about him an unpleasant odor of mystery and suspicion. Gossip said he had been with the Mormons, the lieutenant of Brigham Young, and that he had been present at the Mountain Meadow massacre; other gossip, that he had been in the Rebellion; other again, that he had been living in New York incognito. But he seems to have left little trace of himself in that interval of darkness. When he came into Cabell County, in 1864, he entered quickly into public life; and so commanding were his abilities that there was none to dispute his primacy in the Legislature into which he soon found his way, nor at the bar, nor on the bench, to which he ascended later. There was a time when he could apparently have had the United States Senatorship for the asking, but modestly held back. There were those who explained his modesty by the theory that he shunned the blaze of a too great conspicuity. It was he who, in the West Virginia House of Delegates, in February, 1865, introduced the bill by which slavery was abolished in the State. The Fifteenth Amendment had just been ratified and there was no longer any contest over the question. The Richmond Convention of 1850-51 had agreed, after a three-months’ debate on suffrage, that the white basis should be conceded for the House and the mixed retained for the Senate. There was an informal understanding—a part of the settlement not put into the constitution—that in 1865 the people of Virginia might vote on an amendment constituting the Senate also on
the white basis. It happened to Mr. Ferguson that in that year by his hand should be plucked out the last root of the pestilent plant of slavery from trans-Allegheny Virginia.

A HALF LOAF.

The demands of the West in this Convention were too forceful to be longer resisted, and some concessions had to be made towards reform and liberalization. Besides the white basis for the House, vainly demanded by Doddridge twenty years before, the people were permitted to elect the Governor—theretofore appointed by the Assembly. It is worth noting that for the first time under the new constitution then made the West furnished the candidates for Governor. Summers of Kanawha and Johnson of Harrison were the champions of the Whig and Democratic parties respectively; and Johnson, the "runt," was chosen over the intellectual Whig giant. For the explanation of such a result, we do not have far to go. Mr. Summers had in this Convention made the greatest and most creditable speech of his life, showing that slavery was not only the foe to progress in the West, but the cause of multiplied ills from which all Virginia was suffering. The Democratic party in Virginia was the defender of slavery, and nowhere more zealous in its service than in Western Virginia.

The mixed basis in the Senate under the new constitution gave for slaves a representation equal to three-fifths of the white unit. Thus five slaves conferred as much political power as three white men.
In 1860 there were in all Virginia 498,887 slaves, of whom 12,771 were in the 48 counties first formed into West Virginia. The 486,116 slaves in the east were equal in the Senate to 291,669 white people, of whom there were then in those 48 western counties 334,921, whose political power was thus nearly neutralized by this slave representation.

UNFRIENDLY LEGISLATION.

Eastern jealousy of the West did not confine itself to discrimination in matters of suffrage and representation. A well-informed citizen of West Virginia, writing thirty-odd years ago, says the expediency of dividing the State was discussed as early as 1822. The result of that discussion, he says, was that the East took alarm and "the seaboard and tide-water districts, in order to make sure of the Valley, extended internal improvements of all descriptions into that section, uniting the people commercially and socially with Richmond; and after the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had extended a branch to Winchester, our Legislature denied further charters; and when Baltimore proposed to extend branches of its road throughout our territory at its own expense, the Legislature refused to grant charters for the purpose, being willing neither to improve our country nor to permit any one else to do it."

It is well-known that the granting of a charter for the extension of the Baltimore & Ohio road through to the Ohio River was long resisted at Richmond as in line with the policy of discrimination against the western section, to protect the slave-holding East against an undue
increase of western power and influence—Richmond fearing also the commercial rivalry of Baltimore. The same selfish policy forced the building of the Cleveland & Pittsburgh River line on the western bank to a terminus a mile away from its objective point and beyond two rivers; and never till we had cut loose from Richmond was a road permitted to go from Pittsburgh to Wheeling by the short route on the Virginia side.

This hostility to railroad facilities for the Northwest persisted down to the opening of the Rebellion; and the manifestation of it vindicated the wisdom of extending the borders of the new State eastward so as to take in the line of the Baltimore & Ohio. In the boundary discussion in the Constitutional Convention, in December, 1861, Mr. Van Winkle remarked that since 1850-51, when the Northwestern Virginia Railroad was chartered, he had spent a part of every winter at Richmond. He said:

My principal business, besides endeavoring to get some legislation for our company, was to fight off, in the best way I could, the attempts that were made in every session of the Legislature, without an exception, to place restrictions on this Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. The whole course of legislation towards it has been characterized by a spirit—I hardly know how to describe it; for it would dignify it to call it by the name of rivalry, competition or jealousy—of something that could not bear to see prosperity of any rival city in another State to which that road was contributing.

Referring to these remarks of Mr. Van Winkle, Mr. Hall, of Marion, said:

I believe my friend (VanWinkle) has not been down at Richmond as recently as some of the rest of us. My friend from Doddridge (Stuart) and my friend from Monongalia (Willey)
could bear testimony with myself to other matters carrying out and evincing that same principle. Yes, sir, with clenched teeth they cursed themselves there for having been so stupid as to allow the Baltimore & Ohio road to be built. "Why," they said, "we have gone and given them a charter, and the thing has abolitionized the whole country!" Henry A. Wise and others were debating the thing; and if they had not had other matters that engaged them more directly, they would have urged upon that convention the repeal of the charter of that road, would have cut it plumb in two.

MR. WILLEY: Mr. Wise and his friends declared that the act of secession did repeal that charter.

MR. HALL of Marion: Yes, that is a fact.

MR. VAN WINKLE: That they had a right to take possession of it.

MR. HALL of Marion: Yes; that by the very act of secession the charter rights ceased to be of validity; and since that they have hauled away the cars and piled up the rails. That is "unfriendly legislation," and more too.

UNEQUAL TAXATION.

While, as we have seen, the slave was made an enormous political factor and his owner allowed to shape the entire statutory system of the State, the value of the chattel evaporated when it came to taxing it. A slave worth on the block $1,600 to $1,800 was taxed the same as $300 value of land. Those under twelve years old were exempt. In the West where chattel property was chiefly in live-stock or other farm products, or in manufactured goods, these were taxed on their full value.

Haymond, of Marion, in his two-days' speech in the Richmond Convention of 1861, contending for ad valorem taxation, showed up this iniquity. Taking the latest figures available, he said that in 1859 there were in Virginia 239,000 slaves under twelve years old, 272,000 over
INEQUALITY OF TAXATION.

twelve. The slaves twelve years old or over were taxed the same as $300 worth of land, the others were totally exempt. He said slave property had trebled in value during his recollection. The Auditor of Virginia estimated the Virginia slaves as being worth over $600 in Georgia. The 272,000 slaves over twelve being taxed at $300 each less than their value, here was an exemption of $81,600,000, which should have yielded a revenue of $326,000. The 239,000 slaves under twelve, totally exempt, Mr. Haymond valued at $300 each. Here was another exemption equal to $71,700,000, which, taxed as other property, should have yielded a revenue of $286,000. The trans-Allegheny section of the State, he said, paid $693,000 annual revenue—very little of it on slave property. The entire slave property of the State was worth $234,000,000, but paid into the treasury only about $326,000. Of that property, $153,300,000 did not pay one cent. At the rate paid by real estate west of the mountains, four mills, this slave property should have paid $937,600.

As if these inequalities were not enough to fill the cup of the white working-people of the West, there was laid a tax on wages. Mercantile business was taxed by a system of licenses, on the theory that the prosecution of trade was a privilege and not an immunity of citizenship. The earning of the daily bread by the sweat of honest brows was another privilege to be taxed, and if possible degraded, because it was at war with the system controlling State legislation based on the theory that labor is disreputable and should be performed only by slaves. The man whose only income was his day’s wages must give up part of it to the State before his family had been fed
and clothed, whether there might be a surplus or deficit. The State took its exaction first; the wife and children had what might be left. A tax of this kind has in enlightened lands always been deemed little less than infamous. It is the naked knife of Shylock demanding its pound of flesh, for it defies the maxim of finance, everywhere recognized, that all taxes shall come out of surplus.

UNFAIR EXPENDITURE.

To make these tax discriminations the keener, the revenues required in such undue proportion from the West were lavished in even greater disproportion in the East, in the construction of public buildings, railroads, canals and other highways. In the Virginia House of Delegates at Wheeling, December 21, 1861, in a discussion on the Kanawha Improvement, it was stated by a member from Kanawha that the tolls amounting to $20,000 a year had formerly “all been devoted to James River Improvement.” The fact is curious and instructive as a sample of the spirit and policy of the Richmond régime towards the West. There was an internal improvement fund in Virginia yielding $90,000 annual revenue which went chiefly to James River and wholly to Eastern objects.

WESTERN LOG-ROLLERS.

It must be admitted the West was not always blameless. Many of her politicians were pusillanimous representatives of the western constituency. They were mere toadies and time-servers, purchasable with very small favors. It was largely their fault that the West was thus
robbéd year after year and despised by the eastern lords and masters for submitting to it. If a turnpike was secured west of the mountains, it was at the cost of twenty times its value voted to some grander improvement in the East.

EDUCATIONAL BARRENNESS.

There was a State educational fund which as far back as 1831 amounted to over a million and a half and yielded $75,000 a year revenue; but this revenue was devoted entirely to eastern institutions of learning, which were available even there only to the wealthy. Provision for general education for the common people never found a place in old Virginia statesmanship, though strongly urged by Jefferson about 1776. It could not; for all light and knowledge, except for the limited class of proprietors, was incompatible with if not dangerous to slavery. The children of the common people were left to browse in the “old-field” school and find there what scanty education they could. From the earliest colonial times educational conditions in Virginia had been peculiar. The structure of society there took the exclusive rather than the democratic social form. In New England the first impulse was to group into neighborhood communities so as to have school and church centers. Small land-holdings and social intercourse was the tendency and became the rule. The movement there was centripetal. In Virginia it was centrifugal. The men who came into that wilderness were not Puritans. They were of a different class in England, were Episcopalians in religion and considered themselves aristocrats—many of them mere adventurers, others worthless
offshoots of good families. They encountered little hostility from the Indians; and as soon as they dared venture into the wilderness, reached out for vast areas of the teeming soil around them and sought to imitate the solitude and magnificence of the great English estates, each putting miles between himself and his nearest neighbor, with no community around him but his slaves and white retainers. This created a semi-feudal society in which social or educational centers were impossible.

Such institutions of learning as existed in earlier colonial Virginia were not the creation of the colony. William and Mary College was endowed only after thirty years' effort by a few who wanted an institution to educate young men for the ministry of the established church, the Episcopalian—especially through the zeal of one man, Rev. James Blair, who devoted his life to the work. He at last secured a royal grant for two thousand pounds, to be paid out of the "quit rents" of Virginia. To this was added private subscriptions, Governor Berkeley being one of the subscribers. But it was evidently the religious, not the educational, side of the institution which appealed to the Governor, for on one occasion when the commissioners for foreign plantations asked him for information regarding education, he replied: "I thank God there are no free schools or printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years, for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world; and printing has divulged them and libels against the best government. God keep us from both!"

The lack of educational advantages in this early Virginia was no more a matter of regret with her rulers in
England than with her rulers at home. It is related that when Mr. Blair went to Attorney General Seymour with the royal mandate to issue the charter to William and Mary, Seymour demurred. The country was then engaged in war and could ill afford to plant a college in Virginia. Mr. Blair urged that it was to prepare young men for the ministry. Virginia, he said, had souls to save as well as their English countrymen. "Souls!" replied Seymour. "Damn your souls! Make tobacco!"

There is no account of a printing press in Virginia earlier than 1681; and when Lord Effingham came out to be Governor he was instructed by the ministry "to allow no person to use a printing press on any occasion whatever." From that time till 1729 no printing was done in Virginia; and from that year until ten years before the Declaration of Independence there was but one press in Virginia, and that one "was thought to be too much under the control of the Governor."

Religious expression was no freer than intellectual. It seems remarkable that under such conditions men in Virginia should have made the progress they did in the direction of liberal government. When Jefferson came upon the stage of action he gave his whole energies to the amendment of these conditions. In some of his private correspondence he said: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." The situation in Virginia before the time of Jefferson is thus described by Moses Coit Tyler:

The units of the community isolated; no schools; no literary institutions, high or low; no public libraries; no printing press; no intellectual freedom; no religious freedom; the force of
society tending to create two great classes—the class of vast land owners, haughty, hospitable, indolent, passionate, given to field sports and politics, and a class of impoverished white plebeians and black serfs.

Such was the Virginia from which even Jefferson could not wrest a system of free common schools. What institutions of learning did at length grow up did not meet the crying need of the common people. The wealthy could send their sons and daughters abroad to be educated. The poor could neither do this nor use the few endowed institutions at home. From these conditions the West was in later times the greatest sufferer; for its society was assuming the more social and concentrative form characteristic of the free States and felt keenly the lack of schools. It had not even colleges for the wealthy; while the sturdy boys and girls of the common people had to struggle for a meager knowledge of the “three Rs” in the primitive emergency schools as best they could.

DEBT PILED UP FOR BENEFIT OF THE EAST.

If the one-sided expenditure by the Commonwealth had been limited to its revenues, while grievous it would still have been less outrageous than it was. But all this while the State was borrowing millions which were being expended along the same lines of discrimination; until, when Virginia by her plunge into the Insurrection closed the account between the two sections, there existed a bonded debt currently reported in 1861 at about forty-five millions, but really of about thirty-two millions, of which West Virginia is accountable to the old for less than a million for expenditures west of the Alleghenies.
One thing that operated to retard settlement and growth in Western Virginia was the vexatious land system. For two cents an acre the State treasury sold land warrants which could be laid on any unappropriated lands. In a country where surveys were so difficult and the record of them so obscure as in the greater part of the southwest, it is not surprising that in time millions of acres became shingled with these warrants two or three deep. The courts were filled with controversies over titles. Besides, there were large tracts for which patents had been issued in colonial days by the sovereigns of Great Britain to their favorites over which conflicting claims arose with people who had laid warrants on these lands or with squatters who had taken possession without warrant. In later years the courts have had to deal with some cases where the squatters were so numerous and determined as to require the employment of force to carry out the decrees of the court and put the legitimate owners in possession. The original design of this system was to create a sinking fund to relieve taxes, rather than to encourage the settlement of the region west of the mountains. Most of the warrants went to men who took up the lands and held them for speculation, thus rather retarding than promoting settlement. These holdings were so slightly valued down to the time of the Rebellion that holders used every shift to evade the petty taxes on them, which on a thousand acre tract seem to have amounted to scarcely twenty dollars in twenty years. To-day these lands are among the most valuable in America, covered with valuable hardwood timber, and underlaid with the finest bituminous
coal and deeper down with caverns of petroleum—made thus valuable by the development which had its beginning in the separation from old Virginia and her paralyzing policies. While these pages are being written the newspapers bring reports of a sale of less than 250,000 acres in the Pocahontas coal region to a trust for $10,000,000.

THE OPEN VOTE.

One of the agencies—and no unimportant one—for maintaining the domination of the slave aristocracy was the system of viva voce voting at popular elections. Under its operation all dependent men went to the polls under duress. Only those in independent circumstances could vote with entire freedom. Nor even they, however placed beyond business injury; for the social code was exacting, and an attitude that was deemed unfriendly in politics to the dominant slave regime was sufficient ground for social ostracism. This open vote was one of the shackles cast off in the first constitution of West Virginia. When the ballot method was adopted in the convention that framed that constitution, the Wheeling Intelligencer made this comment:

Had this been done years ago, we never would have been in revolution to-day. A large part of the voters of this State by virtue of the viva voce system have been its veriest slaves. Thousands of men have voted every year contrary to their convictions in order to make their peace or secure the good will of those who had them in some way and in some degree in their power. It was called by its adopters a system that preserved “the healthful influence of the landlord over the tenant,” or in other words made the tenant a slave to vote as he was told. Such a system was a disgrace to our statute-book. It was one
of those old aristocratic thumb-screws of Eastern Virginia engrafted by her and preserved by her in our early and later constitutions to prop up her despotic influence.

THE WESTERN SERFDOM.

Under the conditions described, the West never was or could be anything but a political cipher and a tributary from which large revenues were exacted without corresponding benefit. Her abject position is shown in the fact that in three-quarters of a century the territory west of the Blue Ridge had but one United States Senator and only one Governor. While the larger part of the Western people were of Virginia stock, they had nevertheless at last grown to realize that they had some rights entitled to respect—that hitherto too much had been required and too little given. They were Virginian in their traditions and did not give up their pride in the historic fame of the Commonwealth; but they saw the Old Dominion had become degenerate; and they had at times been made to know that she was intolerant in the matter of personal liberty, to which by her bill of rights she was so generously pledged. A considerable population along the northern and western borders had leaked in from Pennsylvania and Ohio who had little reverence for Virginia traditions and no liking for the peculiar institution, which they found antagonistic to their interests and self-respect.

INTOLERANCE OF THE SLAVE REGIME.

It had become the deliberate policy of those who managed the politics of slavery to trammel men’s speech, lest it be unfriendly. How after the tide turned with the institution early in the century this intolerance grew with the
growth and power of the slave cabal—how liberty of the press, of speech, even of private reading, suffered prohibition and outrage—is too large a part of the country’s history to need more than passing allusion. Western Virginia had become so nearly free soil that her people were not often subjected to the intolerance which was so intolerable in some other parts of his “Sable Majesty’s” dominions. Yet even there men were sometimes made to feel the muzzle through public opinion and social pressure—sometimes by application of the inquisitorial statute which made the printing of any opinions deemed unfriendly or disrespectful to H. S. M. lese majeste. In 1856, when the Republican party had put its first ticket into the field, there was a general purpose in the border States to stamp out all sympathy with it by application of the Southern inquisition. In Wood County, William E. Stevenson, afterwards Governor of West Virginia, was indicted for giving circulation to Hinton Rowand Helpers’ book, “The Impending Crisis,” a valuable work of statistical and political information, written by a citizen of North Carolina with a political foresight amounting almost to prophecy. But the prosecutors lacked courage to bring the case to trial. In Harrison, William P. Hall and Ira Hart were indicted (though never brought to trial) under instructions of Judge Gideon Draper Camden, of the Clarksburg Circuit, assisted by Benjamin Wilson, prosecuting attorney, for giving circulation to the New York Tribune. Horace Greeley was included in the indictment for publishing the paper. Under the tyrannical statute of Virginia that newspaper was held by this honorable court to be “incendiary.” It illustrates the
whirligig of time and its revenges to mention that in 1870 Mr. Greeley lectured at Clarksburg by invitation of the Harrison County Agricultural Society, and it happened to me to report and publish his address.

It is not easy, even for those who lived through it, to realize now how abject in States like Virginia was the deference to the exactions, social and political, of the régime which ruled the South. All men who aspired to public station, who already held such places, or who were in any wise conspicuous in the public eye, trimmed and cringed before the all-pervasive sentiment of loyalty to slavery. It was as obnoxious and as dangerous to disparage it as it is in Russia to express any lack of respect for the Czar. Politicians accepted the attitude of veiled hostility to the Federal government required by this fealty to "Southern Institutions." They paraded on all occasions their attachment to their State; there was everywhere the narrowest and rankest provincialism.

SOUTHWEST TRUE TO RICHMOND.

At the opening of 1861, the southern section of what is now West Virginia was more in sympathy with the old régime in the East than with the new ideas fermenting in the Northwest. It is true, as claimed by Carlile in the August convention at Wheeling when that body was considering the question of division, that in a political sense there was no West except the Northwest. "When gentlemen speak of the West," said Mr. Carlile, "they think of it as defined by a natural line. In a political sense there is no West, and never has been, save the Northwest. That is the fact as the records and journals for the last half
century will justify." In the region drained by the Great Kanawha, slaves were numerous and the sympathy with the system stronger than their number warranted. In the Wheeling May convention, there was not a delegate from any county south of Mason; in the June convention, none at the opening from Kanawha or Putnam. A delegate presented himself from Cabell, but could not—or would not—take the oath of loyalty and went away. He had been elected to the Legislature, but preferred Richmond to Wheeling and soon joined the rebellious body on the James. In the convention that framed the constitution for the new State, a Kanawha delegate made persistent efforts to rip up the boundary prescribed by the August ordinance in a way which if it had been successful must have defeated the division entirely. The feeling among the dominant class in that region at that time is indicated by a statement made by Robert Hagar in the constitutional convention, that he was personally acquainted with all the owners of slaves in Boone, Logan and Wyoming, and that of the whole number only one (John McCook) was a Union man. What was true in those counties was true in others—indeed, throughout the State. Napoleon said scratch a Russian and you would find a Tartar underneath. At that period scratch a slaveholder anywhere in Virginia and you would find a secessionist—so unerring is the instinct of self-interest.

THE LAST POUND.

Motley speaks of the Netherlands as a country "dis-inherited by nature of its rights," where "a race engaged for generations in stubborn conflict with the angry ele-
ments unconsciously educating itself for its greater struggle with the still more savage despotism of man.” Western Virginia was “disinherited,” though not by nature; but her “peasantry” had all this while been growing up to the stature when they should be prepared to demand their deserts, and that divinity that shapes the ends of the world was providing them a recompense.

Old Virginia by a well-matured, consistent and long-continued course of discrimination and wrong, had created the conditions for revolt west of the mountains. It needed only some final turn of the screw—some special provocation and outrage—to give the signal. This came in 1861 in such measure as to sweep away the last feeling of hesitation. The people who had been resisting aggression and oppression for half a century were not now to be turned over without their consent, without notice even, by a league made without authority and in secret, to the Cotton State Confederacy. There was neither time nor opportunity for protest, if this had availed. The crisis came like a thunder-clap; and with it the opportunity which had waited decades for the hour to strike.

Dodge in the opening of his “West Virginia” indulges this remark:

When statesmen degenerate into politicians and the principle of states’-rights is prostituted to the uses of treason, it is eminently fit and in accordance with the law of compensation that the madness of the present hour should open to patriotism a door of escape from inequality and organized oppression to future industrial advancement, political independence and superior civilization.