CHAPTER VII.

THE NORTHWEST CONFRONTS THE CRISIS.

HER DELEGATES WITHDRAW.

The night following the passage of the ordinance of secession, Messrs. Hubbard, Clemens, Carlile, Tarr, Dent and Burdett, of the Northwestern members, seeing that further resistance in the Convention was impossible, that the sooner they got home and warned their people the better, and that their personal liberty was no longer secure in Richmond, quietly took a train for the North and were in Washington next morning. They had been watched for some time, it was said, and were aware of it, but managed to give the spies the slip. Had they remained another day they were liable to be detained by force as the most effective means of crippling the loyal resistance in the Northwest. Orders were telegraphed by Mr. Letcher to intercept them at Fredericksburg; but either the order was received too late or for some other reason was not executed. Anyhow, Richmond saw them no more; and the cat being out of the bag, it was probably deemed useless to detain those who remained behind; and they who wished were
allowed to leave, first obtaining permits from the Governor. Here is a copy of the one given to the member from Marshall:

"Pass James Burley,
"Marshall County, Va.,
"Via Orange & Alexandria R. R.,
"(Signed) John Letcher."

Mr. Burley had been a very resolute Unionist in the Convention and had offered some resolutions not exceeded in the firmness of their declarations by anything said or offered during the session. Mr. McGrew, in a later chapter of this volume, gives an entertaining account of his own escape, as far as Alexandria with others and thence to Washington by himself; and he relates that when he got over to the Baltimore & Ohio Station in Washington, the first person he saw was "old man Burley" (as he was generally called by his familiars), sitting on the platform contentedly smoking his pipe. The others who had accompanied Mr. McGrew to Alexandria, not being allowed to proceed farther, went across northern Virginia via Winchester and found their way home. In a later chapter appears a statement from Mr. Burdett that Governor Letcher did not want the departing members brought back and took care that his orders for the arrest of the first party of fugitives should be so timed that they should be safely past Fredericksburg before the telegram reached there. At Washington this party scattered. Burdett was the only one who went west by the Baltimore & Ohio, and in the chapter contributed by him he relates some of his experiences on the way. Mr. Tarr was accompanied to his home by
Mr. Carlile; and the two gave an account of matters at Richmond to an assemblage in Wellsburg the evening after their arrival there.

A BUZ AT WHEELING.

Mr. Hubbard reached Wheeling the evening of April 19th; and that same evening information was lodged at the post-office that orders had been wired by Governor Letcher.
to the State military organization there to seize and occupy the Federal building. The information was promptly put in possession of Mayor Andrew Sweeney and communicated to a few other reliable persons. It was not the intention that it should become public; but it did, and the news flew like wildfire through the city. In a short time hundreds of angry and excited men had collected in the streets about the building, armed with guns, pistols and other weapons of offence, to prevent the execution of such an order. Mayor Sweeney addressed the crowd and assured them that no attempt to seize the building would be permitted, and the people were requested to return to their homes. Some did so, but others lingered in the vicinity for some hours. Gibson L. Cranmer also spoke to the crowd, from the roof of Busby & Little’s wagon-shed, adjoining the Custom House grounds on Market Street. There is no reason to doubt that any attempt to carry out Letcher’s orders would have been resisted by the people to the bloody end; but a knowledge of the state of popular feeling was sufficient to deter the Governor’s friends from making the mad attempt. If Letcher & Co. at Richmond had been well-informed, they never would have given the order. Andrew J. Pannell was collector of customs at the time, and his well-known secession proclivities gave color to the report. The (Secession) Wheeling Union the next day sneered at the precautions taken. The Intelligencer replied that the information received “was of such a kind that it would have been criminal in the person to whom it was communicated not to have acted upon it.”

The Richmond Examiner not long afterward took occasion to make this fling at the Northwest:
Carlile, the friend of Botts, whom the "ladies of Richmond" were announced in newspapers to have presented with a gold watch for his labors in the Convention, together with Brown, the censor of Hunter and Mason, and Cavalier Clemens, are not hanged. They live and work their devil's work in Northwestern Virginia, and are the heads of a large party there. They are the candidates for the Congress of Lincoln and publicly advocate the separation of the Northwest from the rest of the State. They inspired that set of ruffians who resisted those orders of the State to take possession of the Custom House at Wheeling. These orders were obeyed and the colors hoisted over the building, only to be pulled down and replaced by the Abolitionist stripes which dishonor it still.

The orders were not obeyed, and the Confederate colors were not hoisted over the building. Mr. Letcher's officers may have sent back a report of this kind to make them appear more valorous than they were. But it is clear such orders were actually issued from Richmond. At that time those persons in Wheeling who adhered to Mr. Letcher and the Confederacy were keeping quiet; and not long after, such of the "Shriver Grays" as felt impelled to fight for their "rights" slipped away quietly and made their way beyond the Confederate lines.

ORGANIZING THE MILITARY.

The next evening after Mr. Hubbard's return, a public meeting was held at American Hall, in the Fifth Ward, where he had his home; and he was present and gave his neighbors some account of his Richmond experiences, but respecting the injunction of secrecy and not disclosing the fact that an ordinance of secession had been passed. He indicated to them what they had to expect and advised
the young men to go ahead and organize military companies. He said a call would soon be issued from the mountain counties for a convention to form a provisional government. He assured them that the Mayor of the city was a good Union man and would do his duty in the crisis. A day or so later, Mayor Sweeney meeting Mr. Hubbard on the street, asked him what they were going to do with the military companies they were forming? "Keep the peace of the city," was the reply.

From this time on, Wheeling was the center of an intense though suppressed activity. Conferences between Wheeling and other Panhandle delegates, with Carlile and
leading Union citizens of Ohio and other counties, were in progress day and night. Ten companies organized as the result of Mr. Hubbard's suggestion. They got together to organize a regiment and on the 27th of April elected Chester D. Hubbard, Colonel; Dr. Thomas H. Logan, Lieut. Colonel; Andrew Wilson and S. H. Woodward, Majors; James W. Paxton, Adjutant. The organization, however, did not get into the United States service in this shape. Within the next fortnight were organized the Iron Guards, the Rough and Ready Guards, the Henry Clay Guards, who were enlisted by Major Oakes, United States recruiting officer, on Wheeling Island. A company of Senior Home Guards, with Robert Hamilton, Captain, was also organized and enlisted about this time.

BURDETT PREFERS JOHN BROWN.

At Grafton on the 27th, in a public meeting, Mr. Burdett gave an account of his experiences at Richmond. He said the scene in the Convention during the passage of the ordinance of secession was more like a funeral than a re-assertion of the right of sovereignty. He paid his respects to Henry A. Wise, who he said was an "infinitely worse man than old John Brown." It was in allusion to this remark that the roughs who interrupted his speech at Fairmont May 6th called him "John Brown," when he told them he "would rather be John Brown than Benedict Arnold." This appears to have been the first public disclosure of the fact that an ordinance had been passed; but Mr. Burdett says he made up his mind on the way home that he should keep "no rebel secrets" from his constituents.
Not long after the 1st of May, Woods of Barbour came home, the Convention having taken a vacation. News of his coming preceded him; and when he descended from the train at Grafton he encountered an angry crowd, who made a rush for him. He scrambled back on the car and begged the conductor to lock the door and pull out from the station. Those who accorded him this reception must have been some of Peirpoint’s “b’hoys,” who paid their respects to Colonel Porterfield when he went to Grafton to establish a camp for Letcher, and was permitted to stay until the next train left!

AND LEONARD S. HALL ANOTHER.

Hall of Wetzel, it was reported, had a kindred experience at Parkersburg. He was recognized in the street and a crowd got after him and were about to lay violent hands on him, when he was rescued by General Jackson, who sheltered him in his own house. When Leonard later went aboard the steamer Albemarle, to take passage up the river to Wetzel, the officers of the boat refused to carry him. He had to take a train back on the Northwestern Virginia road to a way station and strike out across the country. This was rather ignominious; but he had that gold-headed cane to assist his limbs and must have been sustained also by the reflection that he had “vindicated the honor of Virginia.”
The Richmond conspirators were reported indignant because Carlile and Dent, when passing through Washington had called on President Lincoln and revealed to him the action taken by the Convention in secret session. The conspirators had all been very free to violate their voluntary oaths to support the Constitution of the United States, but were shocked that these gentlemen should disregard an injunction forced on them when they were powerless to resist and report what their first duty as citizens and honest men required them to disclose to the United States authorities. It seems to have been a mistake in the Western delegates not to have made the same public disclosure immediately on their return home; though we must remember that in that hour of gloom and uncertainty, when all government and authority were rocking beneath men's feet, the path of duty and safety was not so clear as it seems now. But except for Mr. Burdett's statement at Grafton—which did not get wide publicity—it was not publicly known in Western Virginia that an ordinance of secession had been passed until the fact was announced and the ordinance printed in the Baltimore American of April 28th, Saturday. It was printed at Wheeling Monday morning, and Editor Campbell, of the Intelligencer, accompanied the publication with this ringing denunciation and appeal for resistance:

A STIRRING APPEAL.

Fellow-citizens, language fails us in our desire to put the whole height and depth of this stupendous infamy before you. Read it, and re-read it, and see what a mockery and scorn has
been made of your decree solemnly recorded by a majority of
60,000 on the 4th of February last that no ordinance of secession
should be binding until passed upon and ratified by the people.
Instead of this, all the power you reserved to yourselves has
been usurped. More than a week ago, before the ordinance itself
had leaked out from the dark recesses of that star chamber of
despotism at Richmond, you were told by the Richmond Enquirer
that the ordinance was to be submitted, "but simply as a matter
of form and not of contest." And sure enough it will be but a
matter of form—a form without substance, essence or life, a
meaningless, empty and cruel counterfeit, that like the Dead Sea
apples, will turn to ashes at your touch. Every traitor outside
the limits of Virginia wherever a camp can be pitched, be he a
conspirator from South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Florida,
Mississippi, Louisiana or Texas, will crowd in and vote. The
Oxford and McGee candle-box stuffings in Kansas, infamous and
execrable as they were, will be as child's play to the despotic
machinery that will be put in motion to pass this ordinance.
There is no possible chance for it to fail, and it would be of no
earthly account to the Union men of the State if even in despite
of all this high-handed treason and usurpation it were voted
down. The State is in revolution now. The ordinance is worded
to take effect from its passage. It is as much in effect now as it
ever will be. Under it our Congressional elections have all been
abolished.

By this ordinance every vestige of liberty and franchise—
every attribute of free citizenship—all that we have held dear as
freemen—all that we can hope or expect in the future—is blasted
and blotted out. Unless the strong arms of the government,
united with our own outstretched hands, can save us, we are
lost—hopelessly and irretrievably bound hand and foot, and de-
ivered over to the spoilers and traitors, who in their wild fury
are turning the eastern part of our State into a vast field of
anarchy.

Union men of the Northwest! We conjure you as you have
any manhood—as you have any hope for yourselves or your
children—in this hour of our deadliest peril—to throw aside and
trample under foot the last vestige of partyism. Let it be
blotted out from your remembrance that you have ever been
divided as partisans, but keep simply and only before your
minds the one great, momentous truth that if you falter or fail now your all is gone. Organize and enroll yourselves everywhere in Union organizations. Summon every energy of your mind and heart and strength, and let the traitors who desecrate our borders see, and let history in all after time record it, that there was one green spot—one Swiss canton—one Scottish highland—one county of Kent—one province of Vendee, where unyielding patriotism rallied, and gathered, and stood, and won a noble triumph.

It seems to me now, in reading this long after the peril of that crisis is past—so long many have almost forgotten it—that it is not easy to find anywhere in patriotic American literature, even in the words of the greatest Americans, a nobler, and under the circumstances a more courageous, utterance.

THE EXCITEMENT SPREADS.

The withdrawal and return of the Northwestern delegates and the story they had to tell of rank conspiracy and violence at Richmond—which, when the ordinance had been published, came out in all its details—excited profound indignation and alarm. The agitation quickly showed itself in public gatherings and in declarations of resistance even to the extremity of setting up an independent State government. With a few exceptions, the people did not even yet realize how sweeping yet minute were the plans of the revolutionists for forcing ratification, as they had forced secession. A few who understood the effect of the military league entered into with the Confederacy gave no more consideration to the question of ratification but turned their thoughts to measures of safety,
military and other, forced on the Union element by the usurpation. Yet even as late as the May Convention, some of the leaders who knew this inside history were found urging that the fight against ratification was the most important thing before them.

In counties where Union sentiment was strongly predominant, the Secessionists were prudently silent, so that the public expression in such counties appeared more unanimous than it really was.

At Morgantown a meeting had been held the night of April 17th on a report that the ordinance had been passed, and resolutions of the firmest loyalty to the United States, written by Ralph L. Berkshire, adopted, concluding with a declaration that now the cup of Eastern oppression was full, and the West, repudiating further connection with their ancient oppressors and refusing to follow them into the Confederacy, would remain under the stars and stripes.

At Pruntytown (the home of Burdett and Ellery R. Hall) resolutions had been passed on the 13th declaring that Western Virginia adhered to the United States; that she had no interest in a government established for the purpose of propagating slavery; and that if Virginia seceded they favored the erection of a separate State for the West.

COMING CONVENTION.

On the morning of April 22d, the Wheeling Intelligencer posted at the head of its editorial columns a "Notice to the Public," stating that a strong movement was
afloat among the counties west of the Alleghenies for a
general convention to be held in Wheeling early in May
to consider matters connected with the public safety. The
editor stated in another place that within two days he had
received letters from Marshall, Monongalia, Preston,
Marion, Tyler and Wetzel Counties asking as to the course
which Union men in Wheeling and throughout the North­
west generally were going to pursue.

A GOOD WORD FROM DOUGLAS.

On the morning of this same day, Senator Douglas of
Illinois crossed the Ohio at Benwood. He was detained
several hours at Bellaire, and it was not long until a
crowd assembled in and around the hotel La Belle to see
the distinguished Illinois Senator. At length in response
to persistent calls he went out upon the balcony and spoke
briefly on the National issue. In the course of his address
Mr. Douglas said:

We in the northwest of this great valley (the Mississippi)
can never recognize either the propriety or the right of States
bordering along the Gulf of Mexico, upon the Atlantic Ocean,
or upon the Pacific, to separate from the Union of our fathers
and establish and erect tax-gatherers and custom houses upon
our commerce in its passage to the gulf or to the ocean.*  *  *
The proposition now is to separate these United States into little
petty confederacies: first divide them into two; and when either
party gets beaten at the next election, subdivide again; then
whenever one gets beaten again, another subdivision. If this new
system of resistance by the sword and bayonet to the results
of the ballot-box shall prevail here in this country of ours, the
history of the United States is already written in the history of
Mexico.
A meeting was held at Clarksburg this same day to inaugurate the movement referred to in the notice in that morning's *Intelligencer*. A thousand to twelve hundred men assembled at the court-house there, on short notice, whose proceedings gave instant cohesion and direction to the thoughts and purposes of Union men throughout Northwestern Virginia. They adopted a declaration consisting of a preamble setting forth the crisis that was upon them, and a resolution recommending the people in all the counties composing Northwestern Virginia that they appoint delegates, not less than five in number, "of their wisest, best and discreetest men, to meet in convention at Wheeling on the 13th day of May next, to consult and determine upon such action as the people of Northwestern Virginia should take in the present fearful emergency." The resolutions were drawn by Mr. Carlile, who had been in consultation with returned delegates and other leading men in the Panhandle.

A reference to this meeting is made in a time-stained letter written to the author from a point a few miles north of Clarksburg April 26, 1861. The writer says:

The meeting was addressed by Hon. John S. Carlile and passed some resolutions declaring their adherence to the government and appointing delegates to a convention to be held in Wheeling either on the 11th or 13th of May—I cannot tell which; they were all so excited when they came back that it was difficult to get the exact tenor of the resolutions. However, every one agreed that it was the intention for the Wheeling convention to form a provisional government.
Express riders were immediately started to give notice of the movement to all the counties in this district. There was manifested the greatest enthusiasm ever seen in this county. When the call was made for express riders, a sufficient number volunteered instantly, and old farmers, who were never known to be excited before, came down with their money to pay expenses and with offers of horses; and in a very short time the expresses were on their way to their different destinations.

This reminds of Paul Revere and the crisis that sent him and other riders speeding out of Boston in the days of 1775:

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet.

* * *

A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forever more.

THE LOCAL FERMENT.

Going back to the conditions suddenly precipitated upon the people in the Northwest, it is not easy to realize now just what it means for intelligent and orderly communities to be all at once confronted with the appalling contingency of Civil War—to have all the ordinary and orderly course of their daily life rudely broken; to have the mails suspended and supplies from abroad cut off; to have next-door neighbors suddenly converted into deadly foes; to be without means of defense; to have rumor run its daily and disquieting riot; when no one can count today what may happen tomorrow; when vague fear and uncertainty take the place of confidence and security, and each day is looked forward to with anxiety and each night
with terror. These were the conditions which suddenly took the place of peace and security in all the neighborhoods in most of the counties in the Northwest. Even those who passed through these anxieties find it difficult now to recall the poignancy of them, for it is one of the blessed offices of time to sooth the sting of painful memories. The old-time letter from which quotation has just been made about the Clarksburg meeting adverted to other matters, interesting only as a photograph of the times from which it dates:

We want to organize Union clubs in this county so we may know our exact strength and be prepared to defend ourselves, if necessary, from mobs or anything else. This is the only thing we have to fear here. Already this town has been threatened with burning; and I presume you could guess the source—the cut-throats across the river; which we think the most dangerous threat, as they have been accused of that sort of thing for some time. Similar threats have been made from the Adamsville region, but we all know there is not a man in all that region who has the courage.

We are badly in want of arms here. None are to be had now for any consideration. Not one-half the Union men here have arms of any description. I have secured an old rifle, but it is not of much account. ——— has just got back and says arms cannot possibly be had anywhere. You cannot get an old brass pistol as long as your little finger here for any consideration. We want a good many here and have thought of sending to Pittsburg for them; but we are told they are not to be had there; and even if they were, Virginia money would not buy them. I don't know what we are to do. We don't want to enlist because we expect to have as much fighting as we want to do right at home, and should we enlist we might be ordered away and have to leave our families unprotected. They are trying to raise a company for Jeff. Davis at Clarksburg, and we are in hopes they will, as it would remove a large amount of the off-scourings of humanity from our midst.
Judge Camden has gone to Richmond, it is thought, to consult with the Governor on the propriety of making arrests. Camden is a rank Secessionist.

The residence of Caleb Boggess, Union delegate from Lewis County, was burned by Secessionists yesterday.

I understand some river county men were at Clarksburg to-day in consultation with Carlile. Campbell Tarr, I think, was one.

This same letter—which is long and double-lined—grinds a more interesting grist for Marion County:

Marion County is as yet very doubtful. The Unionists claim a majority. The excitement at Fairmont is intense. Old Tom Haymond has been appointed General of the militia in this country, so I hear, and has sent Bill Thompson down to Governor Letcher for permission to call out a regiment for the "protection" of Fairmont. But the impression is that a descent is to be made on Wheeling and that Old Tom wants the honor of initiating the movement. I think Wheeling should take means to get information on the subject, as such a thing is not deemed improbable here. Virginia has a great many troops at Harper's Ferry now; and on the representation of Haymond that the thing could be done easy and that all these counties would join in the movement, the Governor might order on a force to take possession of United States property there.

Jerry Simpson [Rev. Jeremiah Simpson of the M. P. Church] has just come from Fairmont this morning. He left there about 3:00 A. M. and says the excitement is intense, and he would not be surprised at a riot at any moment. All the east side of the river are Union men. There is but one Secessionist in Palatine, George Kerr. Simpson says it is thought there that Hall and Haymond are confined in Richmond. Willey has come home but is going back. Some, however, believe that he is not as sound as he ought to be, and that he stayed there voluntarily and will go back in the same way.

Simpson further says that Col. Dave Hewes, who is a strong Union man and brigade inspector for the militia in Marion, Harrison and I don't know what other counties, was at Fairmont training the officers this week. He addressed the officers of the
militia in Marion in a short Union speech, referring them to the oath they had taken to support the Constitution of the United States, explaining the nature of the oath; and he told them that oath must be maintained or they would be perjured. He made a similar address to the regiment at Mannington. While he was making his speech at Fairmont, Jim Neeson, who you know is a venomous Secessionist, stood near him; and when he had concluded, he turned to Neeson and remarked: "You, too, have taken that oath."

There is a movement going on in Fairmont which I think means that they expect a force there. Either this or they are trying to intimidate the Union men. Jim Neeson is in the lead. He goes to every Union man, and with all the sternness he can command demands of each what position he intends to take or now occupies in the present state of affairs—whether he intends to stand by the Commonwealth of Virginia or not. On receiving a negative reply, as he frequently does, he says: "Well, sir, you must arm yourself. You will want arms to defend yourself." Some think he expects a force here and is in his favorite occupation of spotting them; others that it is only an attempt to intimidate. Mr. Neeson frequently gets bluff. He approached Colonel Moran, of the regiment on the Palatine side, with his usual interrogation. The Colonel told him it was none of his business; that the less Neeson interested himself in his affairs the better for him. The Colonel is the best drilled officer in Marion County.

FOLLOWING THE CLARKSBURG LEAD.

Other counties quickly followed the lead of the Clarksburg meeting and appointed delegates to the proposed Wheeling Convention, declaring in most resolute terms their attachment to the United States, many adding that if driven to it the Northwest would cut loose from the East and set up for herself.

At Independence, Preston County, a meeting resolved to raise a company of volunteers for home guards.
At Hartford City, a meeting presided over by Daniel Polsley declared that "in the event Eastern Virginia persists in her secession movement, we will do all in our power for the separation of the Western from the Eastern portion of the State."

Owen D. Downey, of Piedmont, published over his initials an address declaring for the Union.

SOME VERY "INDEPENDENT" MILITIA.

In Monongalia on the occasion of the May muster, two regiments of militia refused to drill under either Col. J. M. Heck or Gen. Burton Fairfax because they were Secessionists. The men offered to drill under Col. David T. Hewes or Col. Leroy Kramer. The Uniontown (Pa.) Standard received the following account of the incident from a gentleman who was present:

The crowd was immense and a thousand troops in line. Gen. Burton Fairfax and Col. J. M. Heck are both Secessionists. The adjutant having formed the troops in the town, Colonel Heck advanced in front of the staff. As he gave the word "Attention" the whole regiment made a rush at him shouting like a thousand enraged lions. He put spurs to his horse. The frightened horse of General Fairfax fell with him; but springing up again, he rushed after the Colonel a hundred yards behind him. This was the end of the parade. Our informant adds that there were at least three hundred persons in Morgantown Saturday who at a word would have hung every Secessionist in the county.

Another account of the affair adds: "Home-guards are being formed and drilling in our neighborhood, many using their trusty squirrel rifles." The Morgantown Star
at this juncture remarks: "The people of Western Virginia are the freest and most independent people by nature under the sun." And by practice also, it might have added, if this May muster was a sample!

**NOT ANOTHER CENT FOR TRIBUTE.**

May 2d an enthusiastic meeting of Wheeling merchants resolved, without one dissenting voice, that they would pay no more revenue to "the conspirators and traitors who now hold sway at Richmond." Elijah Day, the assessor, resigned because he was not willing to assess taxes which, if collected, would be "appropriated by the traitors."

**CHESTER HUBBARD TAKES STRONG GROUND.**

In the Wheeling meeting May 5th which was addressed by Mr. Porter, strong resolutions drawn by Chester D. Hubbard were adopted. They declared that "the action of the Richmond Convention purporting to have dissolved the connection of Virginia with the Union was, in respect to both the act itself and the manner of doing, an unwarrantable and dangerous usurpation of power, illegal, unconstitutional and utterly null and void; that Virginia is now, as heretofore, constitutionally and rightfully one of the United States of America; that the Constitution creates a government, not a league; and that we will maintain an indefeasible allegiance to the United States."

**FRANK PEIRPOINT TO THE FRONT.**

Francis H. Peirpoint was the principal speaker at a mass-meeting held at Clarksburg May 3d. He spoke two hours and a half to an unwearied audience, so engrossing
was the interest in his theme. Resolutions were adopted declaring that nothing had occurred in the operations of the United States government to justify the revolution inaugurated by the Southern States; that the appointment of commissioners to represent Virginia in the Confederate Congress was "a flagrant wrong upon the rights of the people and the fundamental principles of our government;" that Western Virginia had "patiently submitted to and borne the heavy hand of the oppression of Eastern Virginia for half a century; that now the measure of oppression" was full, and "if secession is the only remedy offered by her for all our wrongs, the day is near when
Western Virginia will rise in the majesty of her strength and patriotism and repudiate her oppressors and remain permanently under the stars and stripes."

**PEIRPOINT ROASTS FAIRMONT "SECESH."**

Mr. Peirpoint in a speech from the McLure House balcony, in Wheeling, May 11th, related some incidents which had come under his observation as illustrating the temper of Union men in his neighborhood. An officer had come to Grafton to make a rendezvous there for Letcher’s troops, “if it was not offensive to the people,” as he told the landlord of the hotel. “But,” said Peirpoint, “the b’hoys live at Grafton—one hundred of them, as good and true as ever trod the soil. They went to this officer and said to him: ‘Now, my friend, we are a hospitable people out here and we will be generous with you. We will give you until the next train starts to leave; but as sure as there is a God in heaven, if you come back this way, you will not get through.’ He left by the first train.”

Mr. Peirpoint proceeded to relate how “a celebrated Captain from Fairmont (Cries ‘What’s his name?’ ‘His name is Thompson!’) had gone to Grafton to establish a camp for the ‘Marion Guards,’ of which he was Captain. But the boys found out he was there and they went to him and told him if he would bring up two hundred of his troops they would kill them off faster than they could come up. He came back to Fairmont and told the Guards he didn’t think there was any necessity for a camp at Grafton—no good ground there!”
On Wednesday morning the Secessionists at Fairmont were
very brave about the encampment they were going to form, and
they said to us Union men: "Now you fellows had better look
out." But next day came the news of the arrival of two thousand
rifles here in Wheeling, and their feathers fell; and now Drink­
ard (editor of the Virginian) says there is no necessity for any
troops in this part of the country.

Probably no man supplied a larger proportion of the
moral force in the resistance to secession in Northwestern
Virginia than Francis H. Peirpoint. In its issue of May
6th, the Intelligencer paid him this merited tribute:

Frank Peirpoint is one of those men well fitted for the
stormy and revolutionary times that are upon us. He has the
moral, physical and mental power of a leader. A truer man to
the cause of the Union does not live; and he has the vigor of
apprehension, that incisiveness of speech and that indomitable
will and courage that carries the people with him.

PORTERFIELD'S MISSION.

The officer referred to by Peirpoint as having gone
to Grafton to establish a Letcher rendezvous was Col.
George A. Porterfield, concerning which and whom Pol­
lard says in his Southern History of the War:

Colonel Porterfield had been ordered to Grafton about the
middle of May, 1861, with written instruction from General Lee
to call for volunteers from that part of the State and receive
them into the service to the number of 5,000, and to coöperate
with the agents of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad [1], and with
verbal orders to try to conciliate the people of that section and
to do nothing to offend them. Finding soon after his arrival
that the country was in a state of revolution, and that there was
a large and increasing Federal force at Camp Denison, in Ohio,
opposite Parkersburg, and another in the vicinity of Wheeling,
Colonel Porterfield wrote to the commanding general that unless a strong force was sent very soon, Northwestern Virginia would be overrun.

Upon directing the captains of volunteer companies to proceed with their companies to Grafton, they replied that not more than twenty in companies numbering sixty were willing to take up arms on the side of the State; that the others declared that if they were obliged to fight it would be in defense of the Union. Colonel Porterfield succeeded in a week in getting together three newly organized companies. This force was increased by the arrival of several other companies, two of which were unarmed cavalry companies, amounting in all to about five hundred infantry and one hundred and fifty cavalry. These troops had been at Grafton but a few days when (about the 25th of May) Colonel Porterfield was reliably informed of the forces of the enemy and withdrew his command to Phillippa. Orders were given for the destruction of Cheat bridge, but were not executed. The enemy's force at Grafton was about eight thousand men.

On the 3rd of June, through the failure of the guard or infantry pickets to give the alarm, the command at Phillippa was surprised by about five thousand infantry and a battery of artillery and dispersed in confusion, but with inconsiderable loss of life, through the woods. The command had no equipments and very little ammunition.

General Garnett succeeded Porterfield in the command in Northwestern Virginia with about six thousand men.

LINING UP.

In many counties people had armed themselves, either privately or by the organization of companies for home protection. In some places State volunteer companies in sympathy with Richmond were holding themselves in readiness to receive orders from Letcher; but matters soon took such a turn—so overpowering was the Union sentiment—that such organizations were put on the defensive, and those of them who wanted to fight for the Confederacy left the country, singly or in groups, and found their way into
the Confederate camps. Everywhere the lines were being rapidly drawn and men compelled to take their stand on one side or the other.

**THE CITY OF REFUGE.**

Wheeling, by reason of its geographic location and equally because of its resolute Unionism, was the city of refuge towards which the loyalists throughout Northwestern Virginia turned their eyes in this emergency. Carlile went to Wheeling early, to be in consultation with the Panhandle members of the Convention and other leaders of public opinion to be met at that point. Willey held aloof and reports were rife that he was disaffected, and that on his way home through Virginia he had made a speech in which he had violently denounced President Lincoln for issuing his call for troops. Granville Parker, in his "Formation of West Virginia," notices these reports in connection with his comment on the election of Mr. Willey as senator over Lamb and Van Winkle. But generally from every quarter the note that came up from the Union element was one of attachment to and confidence in the government as the only possible breakwater against the rising tide of the Confederacy in Virginia.

**THE PANHANDLE GETS GUNS.**

There was abundance of courage but lack of weapons to make it effective, if the actual emergency of an attempt by Letcher or Lee to mobilize or quarter troops in the Northwest should have to be suddenly met. In the Panhandle the consciousness of this need took shape. A committee of Brooke County men—Campbell Tarr, Adam
Kuhn, Joseph Applegate and David Fleming—went to Washington to procure arms. They called on Edwin M. Stanton, with whom as a lawyer at Steubenville some of them had a personal acquaintance, and who was then practicing his profession at Washington, and he introduced them to Simon Cameron, Secretary of War. Upon Mr. Cameron hesitating as to his legal right to supply government arms to private citizens, Stanton told him "The law of necessity gives the right. Let them have the arms, and look for the book law afterwards." Mr. Cameron was convinced; and on the 8th of May 2000 of Maynard's self-priming rifles, with munitions and accoutrements complete, were unloaded from a Pittsburg steamer at Wellsburg. Announcement of their arrival was made in the *Wheeling Intelligencer* in these words:

We have the unspeakable satisfaction of announcing that two thousand United States Minie rifles, with munitions and equipments, have arrived for the Union men of the Panhandle.

In the same issue appeared a letter from the Secretary of War to John H. Atkinson, of New Cumberland, under date of April 16th, as follows:

In those States in which the executives have refused to obey the call of the President for troops, volunteers enrolled and organized into companies, battalions or regiments and inspected, if mustered into the service of the United States, will be armed and equipped by the Government.

These announcements had an inspiring effect on the Union people throughout the Northwest and correspondingly discouraged the other side, as illustrated in the story Peirpoint told about the change of views wrought in the mind of Editor Drinkard at Fairmont.
May 10th, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* said editorially:

The Union men are rising in their strength. Letters are exhibited to us by friends here in the city from their friends, acquaintances and relatives in all the various counties of Western Virginia, and so far as we have read them they bring good news. There is a most unprecedented awakening on the subject of secession. The fact that we have been foully, treacherously and despotically dealt with has come upon the convictions of the people like a horrid fright. That fright has been succeeded by a most intense indignation, which is rapidly kindling into a towering and devouring flame of resentment and repudiation.

The *New York Times* about this period made this comment:

Virginia in rebellion, one-half her territory gravitates by kindred attraction to the North. Already is a victory gained which is conclusive of the whole contest. A territory equal to a first-class State is thrown off from the South by mere force of repulsion. It can never be reclaimed. Its people have no sympathy with slave propagandism and earnestly cling to a government which maintains law and order.

**A JUDICIAL CRANK.**

Judge George W. Thompson, of Wheeling, whose son William P. was the Captain of the "Marion Guards" referred to by Peirpoint in his McLure House speech, waiting Letcher's call to enter the Confederate service, undertook at this time to employ his judicial functions to intimidate the Unionists. Friday morning, May 10th, he charged the grand jury at Wheeling that:

If any person should attempt, by force or in any other manner than is constitutionally and lawfully provided for, to separate the State and establish a different government from the
existent one, it would not only be treason against the State, but it would be contrary to the Constitution of the United States; and if he should hear of any such design or attempt to subvert the State government in his judicial district, he would convene court in every county and bring such offenders to the bar of justice for their crime.

It must not be supposed this fulmination was aimed, as it might justly have been, at Jefferson Davis and the Convention commissioners who had just set up the government of the Confederate States in Virginia. It was directed at the much smaller game, the persons who were talking about a division of the State. But the threat fell flat. Nobody paid any attention to it. All realized that however else the fundamental questions at issue might be solved, they were not to be solved by the interpretation of small-bore courts.