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UNION LEAGUE CLUB

OF

NEW YORK.

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

CONFERENCE AT RICHMOND,

JUNE 11th and 12th, 1867.

CLUB HOUSE, UNION SQUARE,

No. 29 East Seventeenth Street.

1867.



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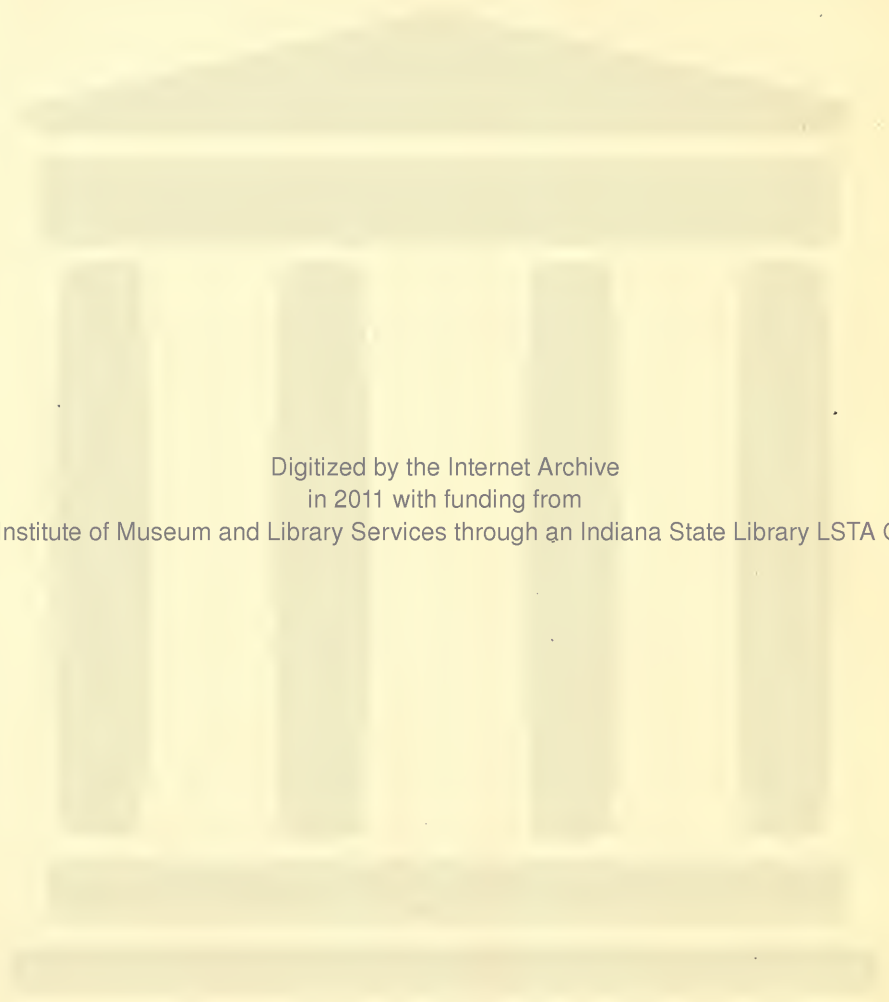
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AID FOR VIRGINIA.

UNION LEAGUE CLUB, }
NEW YORK, *June 15, 1867.* }

To the Members of the Union League Club:

THE undersigned, a committee appointed by the Club to raise funds in behalf of the Union cause in Virginia, beg leave to call your attention to the accompanying report of the happy result of the recent mission to Richmond in harmonizing and uniting the radical and conservative wings of the Union party in Virginia.

The advice of their Northern friends having been so cordially acted upon by the Virginia Republicans, it seems peculiarly proper that some assistance should be rendered to them by our Club in view of the exhausted condition of the people of the State, and of the immense influence which the example of the "Old Dominion" will have in inducing the prompt reconstruction of the Union throughout the South. The sum proposed to be raised is \$1,500, and your aid by a small donation is earnestly requested. To save trouble, we beg that you will enclose it to Richard Butler, Treasurer.

JACKSON S. SCHULTZ, }
ISAAC H. BAILEY, } *Committee.*
RICHARD BUTLER, }



THE MISSION TO VIRGINIA.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT.

AT a meeting of the Union League Club, on February 21, 1867, it was resolved, in accordance with a recommendation from the Executive Committee, to appoint a committee of five members to confer, from time to time, with the Union League clubs of Philadelphia, Boston, and other cities, "with the view to more harmonious action in reference to national questions." Messrs. Le Grand B. Cannon, Christian E. Detmold, Charles A. Dana, Isaac H. Bailey, and Isaac Sherman were appointed to act as such committee, to whom the President, Mr. Jay, was added. A correspondence on the subject was soon after opened with the Union League of Philadelphia, which entered very heartily into the project; and on May 7th, a delegation of its members, comprising Messrs. Morton McMichael, Charles Gibbons, Lindley Smyth, John P. Verree, and George H. Boker, dined with the New York Committee at the Club House in Union Square. The interest of this occasion was greatly enhanced by the accidental presence of Gov. Pierpont, of Virginia, who gave a full

and clear account of the condition of parties in that State.

The result of this conference may be seen in the following preamble and resolutions reported to the next monthly meeting of the Club, on May 9th, from the Executive Committee :

Whereas, At a meeting of the Conference Committee, at which delegates from the Philadelphia League and from this Club and Gov. Pierpont, of Virginia, were present, it was "resolved that it be recommended to the Union Leagues of New York and Philadelphia to appoint a joint committee from the two Clubs to confer at Richmond with leading men of Virginia on the best means of organizing the Republican party in that State;" and

Whereas, It was further "resolved that the Secretary of the Union League Club of Philadelphia be requested to confer with leading men and Union Clubs in Boston, Chicago, and Baltimore, with reference to the same end;" therefore,

Resolved, That the Executive Committee cordially approve of the measures proposed, and recommend to the Club the appointment of such a delegation, and they hereby appropriate a sum not exceeding five hundred dollars to defray its expenses.

The recommendation of the Executive Committee was unanimously adopted, and the President was authorized to appoint the delegation, to which he was also added. He nominated Messrs. Thomas B. Van Buren, George F. Noyes, and John G. Holbrook, and in company with them departed on June 10th for Richmond, where, through the instrumentality of Mr. George H. Boker, Secretary of the Union League of Philadelphia, a conference had been arranged for the 11th, with a view of reconciling differences among Union men in Virginia. The President returned to New York

in time to participate in the regular monthly meeting of the Club on the 13th, and having toward the close of the meeting called to the chair Mr. George Cabot Ward, made, in behalf of his associates in the mission to Virginia, the following informal

REPORT.

The differences among the Unionists of Virginia, he said, although, as Mr. Botts observed, they rested upon etiquette rather than upon principle, had reached a point where they threatened an absolute and fatal division of the party. Exception had been taken by Mr. Botts, Mr. Chandler, and other gentlemen representing a large number of substantial Union men throughout Virginia, to the convention held at Richmond in April last, by whom the present State Committee had been appointed. They objected to the authority by which it was called; they laid stress on the fact that it represented comparatively few counties; they complained that it was composed almost exclusively of the colored element, and they insisted that the citizens of Virginia who avowed themselves unconditional Union men, and who desired the organization of a great Union party, would not come into the party thus imperfectly organized and exclusively led. They had accordingly issued for signature a call for a new State Convention, to be held at Charlottesville on the Fourth of July, to organize the Republican party in the State. This call, which entirely ignored the existing organization, had been signed, as Mr. Botts stated, by nearly three hundred names of respectability and note in their respective localities,

representing in a large measure the old Union whigs and land owners. Colonel Lewis, himself of a Revolutionary family, remarked that most of the names belonged to families which had settled in Virginia previous to the war of the Revolution. All the efforts which had been made to harmonize the views of these differing leaders had failed to lessen their antagonism; and, with the approval of the Congressional Committee at Washington, the Union League Clubs of New York and Philadelphia, with a delegation of gentlemen from Boston, were asked to undertake the task of composing a matter that threatened to disturb the harmony and unity of the party, not simply in Virginia, but throughout the South. The several delegates met by appointment on Monday evening, in Philadelphia, where they were most cordially received and pleasantly entertained by the President and officers of the Union League of that city. After dinner at the club house the party, including Senator Wilson and Messrs. C. W. Storey, H. H. Coolidge, C. W. Slack, R. M. Morse, with Mr. Bird and Mr. Bond of Massachusetts, and Mr. Charles Gibbons and Mr. George H. Boker, of the Philadelphia Club, took the night train, which brought them to Richmond on Tuesday afternoon. The same evening, at eight o'clock, by invitation of Governor Pierpont, they met at the Executive mansion. Some fifty gentlemen, of both wings of the Union party, had assembled to greet them, and the Governor, after calling the meeting to order, paid to the Union League Club of New York the compliment of asking its President to preside over the Conference. The sitting was continued until two in the morning.

The discussion was opened by Judge Underwood, who submitted some interesting statistics, approved by General Strong, of the voting population of Virginia, white and colored; and he was followed at length by John Minor Botts, Mr. Hauxhurst, of Alexandria, Mr. Hunnicut, Governor Pierpont, Mr. Beckley, Mr. Chandler, the United States District Attorney, and other gentlemen, who gave the whole history of the dispute from their opposing points of view. In reply to the views already alluded to as advanced by Mr. Botts, Mr. Hunnicut and his friends suggested that the committee who called the Richmond Convention had been appointed by Mr. Botts himself; that their action had been as regular as circumstances would permit; that if the convention had been thinly attended it was the fault of Mr. Botts' friends; that were they to accept Mr. Botts' proposition to come to the Charlottesville Convention and organize anew, they would stultify themselves and invalidate their own acts; that they would like to have Mr. Botts' friends with them, but, if they would not come, the Radical Republicans could do without them; that with the colored vote the Radicals could carry the State, and the freedmen would not follow Mr. Botts' separate lead. Mr. Botts said this might be possible, but he asked them to consider whether the establishment of the Republican party in Virginia chiefly upon a negro basis, even granting their success for a few elections, would be really beneficial to the colored people when there should be a revolution of public sentiment; and he declared his firm belief that should the Democrats ever again obtain the ascendancy in Virginia—which might God forbid!—they would en-

deavor to enslave the blacks. In this connection he referred to a letter from Mr. O'Connor, a leading Democrat and the head of the New York bar—a letter which was being made use of in Maryland—to the effect that slavery had not been constitutionally abolished, but still existed by law, and declared his great desire to be so to unite in the Republican party all the Union men of the State that in time of trouble they might throw their arms around the blacks and afford them protection. The discussion was characterized by ability and great earnestness, and exhibited at times strong personal feeling, the expression of which was, however, tempered by mutual expressions of regard and a formal courtesy. Mr. Botts, for instance, in replying to a colored speaker who had expressed the devotion of his people to Mr. Hunnicut, said that they had every reason to be attached to him, and were perfectly right in standing by and trusting him. Before adjourning it was agreed that each party should appoint a committee of five, to be heard the next morning, although the general impression seemed to be that a reconciliation was very improbable.

The next day, at eleven o'clock, the conference was renewed at the Ballard House, with Mr. Gibbons, of the Philadelphia League, in the chair. The committees were requested to confine themselves as far as possible to propositions for a reunion; and the first proposition was made by Mr. Beckley, of Alexandria, that the State Committee ignore the proposed Charlottesville Convention, and should call a new convention to perfect their organization. This Mr. Botts promptly rejected, declaring that it was absolutely inadmissible.

He exhibited the call for the Charlottesville Convention, with signatures from the various counties, and declared that he could not in honor recede from that call and desert those who had signed it; that that convention must be held, and that the call would be published the next morning. But he would on his part, as a step toward union, invite the State Committee to attend that convention, which, he believed, would in that case ratify what had been done at Richmond, and simply extend and perfect the organization. To the question whether he would now modify the call, so as to make its object the extending and perfecting the organization commenced at Richmond, he, after a little, assented. This was approved by some and disapproved by others; but the way for reconciliation was clearly opened, and at the conclusion of a brief and animated discussion, both parties agreed upon the following joint call:

TO THE UNCONDITIONAL UNION MEN OF VIRGINIA.

The Republican Executive State Committee and the undersigned citizens of the State of Virginia, who hereby avow ourselves unconditional Union men and members of the great Republican party of the United States, call upon all others of like condition, as common sufferers, not to throw away this golden opportunity to rescue ourselves, our children, and our State from the hands of those who have brought nothing but desolation, war, want, and wretchedness upon our land, to meet in council at Richmond—as more convenient than Charlottesville—on the first day of August next, at twelve o'clock M., at the African church, for the purpose of extending and perfecting the organization of the Republican party, commenced by the convention which assembled at Richmond on the seventeenth of April last.

The result was greeted with warm applause, and a cordial reconciliation followed. In the evening a large meeting was extemporized at the African church to welcome the gentlemen from the Northern cities, and its proceedings were marked by unbounded enthusiasm. Speeches were made by Messrs. Noyes, Van Buren, and Jay, of the New York delegation, and by Senator Wilson, Messrs. Storey, Slack, Morse, and others, from Massachusetts. The general impression in Richmond seemed to be that the Republican party in Virginia is by this movement placed upon a firm foundation, and that its success is beyond question. Among the names attached to the call are those of John Minor Botts, Governor F. H. Pierpont, Peyton Coles, of Albemarle; Joseph Segar, of Elizabeth city; A. Y. Thomas, of Henry county; Alexander Mosely, of Buckingham; Daniel Lewis, of Fairfax; W. W. Forbes, Wm. A. Wilkinson, Jas. W. Jackson, of Petersburg; Wm. N. Nash, P. H. Keenan, Wm. D. Massy, and a long list of equal respectability, which will add to the character and dignity of the party, and convince the country that a large body of the most intelligent and substantial landowners of the South are ready, if properly approached, to assist in the reconstruction of their States on the basis of equal political rights and universal education.

The leading men on both sides, headed by his Excellency, Governor Pierpont (to whom the committees would especially return their thanks), received the delegation with marked cordiality, and united in thanking them for their friendly intervention, without which they thought a reunion would have been hardly pos-

sible. The colored people of Richmond exhibited a deep interest in the proceedings, and the delegation was impressed with the intelligent understanding, on the part of their representatives in the conference, of the whole question of reconstruction and State organization, and with the fact that, with a perfect consciousness of their power, and a firm resolve to consent to no compromise of their rights, they thoroughly appreciated the importance of combining in the movement the large and influential party represented by Mr. Botts, and were ready to concede and conciliate by any sacrifice but one of principle. It was from one of their number that the first proposition came looking toward a reconciliation. The general conduct of the conference, exhibiting on both sides manliness, courtesy, earnestness, and resolution, in the opinion of the delegates augured most favorably for the future of Virginia, and while furnishing an example of mutual consideration to the Republicans throughout the South, should inspire with confidence and respect the Republicans of the North.

The report was received by the Club with loud demonstrations of applause, and thanks were tendered to the committee for its valuable labors. It was also resolved to raise by subscription the sum of \$1,500 toward the establishment of Union Leagues in Virginia, and a committee, consisting of Messrs. Jackson S. Shultz, Isaac H. Bailey, and Richard Butler, was appointed to take charge of the subscription.



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