

the judgment in regard to the Idaho test oath. We observe from the public journals that attorneys in different suits are citing it as an authority in cases in which there is an opportunity for insisting upon an application of its purport. Discussions arise during which the unconstitutionality of religious test oaths and acts that inflict political disabilities on the ground of religious belief, is clearly delineated. The Supreme Court inevitably suffers from these legal contentions, the untenable character of its conclusion in the Idaho matter being plainly exhibited.

No source of authority can gain or retain the respect of the people by mere virtue of its power. That condition of sentiment is the sole result of the proper and just use of the authority with which it is invested. The highest court of the nation is no exception to the rule.

One of the most striking symptoms of depreciation of the U. S. Supreme Court is that which has arisen among the farmers of Minnesota over a decision rendered in what are termed the granger cases. The judgment practically shelves the Minnesota Railway Commission.

The executive committee of the State Farmers' Alliance, which represents over 30,000 farmers, met in the early part of this month, at St. Paul, and passed the most remarkable set of resolutions ever adopted in this country. They are terribly denunciatory, and by way of spreading the feeling the committee ask all the Farmers' Alliances in the country to join with them in a National Convention looking to the abolition of the Supreme Court. Following are the resolutions:

Whereas, It is reported by the daily press that the United States Supreme Court has recently decided in a case appealed from this State that the Railroad Commission (and inferentially the State Legislature) has no right or power to prescribe rates for transportation on the railroads of the State or to do more than establish *prima facie* reasonable rates, each detail to be fought over in a succession of courts, with interminable litigation, thereby practically nullifying or reversing the great decisions of the same court made some years since in the granger cases; therefore

Resolved, By the executive committee of the State Farmers' Alliance, speaking in behalf of 30,000 farmers of Minnesota, that we regard the said recent decision as one of the greatest injustices in the history of our country and as signifying the subjection of the people and the State to the unlimited control of the railroad corporations of this country.

Resolved, That we appeal from this second Dred Scott decision to the people of the nation and we ask them to consider whether any other race would

submit to have their liberties thus wheedled away from them on technicalities by a squad of lawyers sitting as a supreme authority high above Congress, President, and people. We call attention to the fact that the citizens of England, from whom we have largely derived our form of government, would not permit for one instant a bench of judges to nullify an act of Parliament. There the people are properly omnipotent. No civilized government on earth has ever conferred such powers upon any court as are by our Constitution granted to the United States Supreme Court. In our anxiety to protect the rights of property we have created a machinery that threatens to destroy the rights of man.

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be sent by our secretary to the alliances of the several States of the Union with the request that they unite with us in an effort to so amend the Constitution of the United States as to abolish this new slavery of the States and nation established by and for the benefit of corporate wealth, and to make it so plain that the people are masters in this event that no court, however shallow or corrupt, shall ever again attempt to subject them to the domination of the artificial personages they have themselves created.

Resolved, That we recommend the holding of a convention by the alliances of the United States at an early date to consider the very grave and momentous questions arising out of the extraordinary decision.

Resolved, That we hereby express the gratitude of the farmers of Minnesota to Judges Bradley, Lamar, Gray and the other Judges of the Supreme Court who dissented from the said decision and stood by the people upon the question.

The same causes which reduce the degree of esteem in which the chief court of the country should be held, have a similar effect in relation to the respect that ought to exist for the Constitution. That glorious instrument is gradually being regarded as a "moss-back" production which should either be altered beyond recognition or abandoned. In these fast times it is beginning to be looked upon a good deal as a fashionable lady would regard one of the old style coal-skuttle sky-scraping bonnets with which the great grandmothers of the present generation used to trudge to church, looking, with their narrow skirts, like so many animated axes. The fashionable woman of the day prefers a little flower and feather bedecked birdsnest, saving her complexion with a sunshade. So the politicians of today want to change or discard the Constitution, leaving the people's rights to be scorched and destroyed by the hot breath from the furious furnace of selfish majorities. The fundamental law of the nation is, in the estimation of many political wireworkers, too antiquated and restrictive to longer adorn the comely form of our system of government.

It will be a sorry day for the nation when there shall be no line of demarcation over which majorities may not step in their efforts to crowd minorities to the wall. Unless the present tendency of the times—visible in high and low places—is checked by some unforeseen conditions, the calamity is not distant.

DISTURBING PREDICTIONS.

FREQUENTLY of late the coast papers have contained references to a man named Erickson and a woman named Mrs. Woodworth, who have been reiterating with the utmost assurance, predictions to the effect that San Francisco and Oakland were to be destroyed during the present month by a tidal wave, and that Chicago and Milwaukee were to be obliterated by an earthquake. So marked was the effect which these prophecies had upon the minds of a certain class in California that the *San Francisco Chronicle* felt called upon to exert an influence to counteract it. Ridicule was mingled with an argument which aimed to convince the reader that, as human eyes could not penetrate to the interior of the earth, no man could possibly foretell when such a disturbance of its surface would occur as would produce either a tidal wave or an earthquake.

It is reported that many people of Oakland sold out for what they could get and fled to the interior of the State, that numbers of persons were driven insane by the fear caused by the dire predictions of the individuals referred to, and that many have subjected themselves to destitution in their terror at the prospect held up before them. That serious consequences attended the prophesying of Erickson and Mrs. Woodworth seems to be abundantly sustained, but the good that has thereby been accomplished is an invisible quantity.

The *New York World* takes up the subject, remarking, "It is one of the inconveniences of liberty that under a system of free speech the knave and the fool may exploit themselves as freely as the philosopher." It speaks of the "grave mischief" which has been done by these predictions, and continues:

"And all this occurs simply because Erickson and Mrs. Woodworth desired to attract attention to themselves and make a sensation by confidently pretending to a foreknowledge which no human being can possess and predicting calamities, of which they know no more than brute beasts.