

A Prospective Stampede.

Private advices from different parts of the State inform us that a large number of our largest slaveholders are already making preparations for an exodus, which they consider may be rendered necessary as well by the dilatory action of the Convention now assembled, as by final submission on the part of the Convention. When this prospective stampede shall once become present and actual, none can predict the extent to which it will be carried.— Some opine that some of our largest and most flourishing agricultural districts will be left as desolate as the wilderness of Jamaica. Even if it shall fall far short of this, it will still involve incalculable damage to all our interests. These large slaveholders comprehend a large quota of the very flower of our population—representing much of the wealth, talent, virtue and commanding influence of the State. They will carry away from us millions of property. They will carry away from us what is far more valuable to the State than property—thousands and tens of thousands of busy hands, which now constitute the **PRODUCTIVE LABOR** of the State.

Nor will the stampede be confined at all to slaves and slaveholders. If there shall be a stampede of large agriculturists, there will be a corresponding stampede of large merchants and manufacturers. If there shall be a stampede of slave labor, there will be a corresponding stampede of free white labor, now appreciated, dignified, and maintained by a demand created by slave labor. The large slaveholders are the principal customers of our large merchants and manufacturers. Moreover, the

merchants and manufacturers will justly regard the exodus of the large slaveholders as an unmistakable indication of the final separation of Virginia from the Southern States, and her irrevocable dependence on a Northern Confederacy. Now, our large merchants and manufacturers have little or no Northern custom. Outside of Virginia, their custom is found almost exclusively in States South of Virginia.

What can they do, then, when their custom in Virginia shall be broken down by a prostration of the agricultural interest of the State; when they shall be cut off, by a foreign tariff, from all custom with the Southern States, and when, without a foothold at the North, they must, in Virginia and elsewhere, compete with the larger and more firmly established commercial and manufacturing establishments of the North? The case is clear. When the slaveholders shall be stampeded, all the large merchants and manufacturers, and all the numerous white laboring men whom they employ must join the stampede. And when, by this general stampede, the agricultural, commercial and manufacturing interests of the State shall be equally prostrated, will the State Government be in a condition to continue payment, even of the interest of the State debt?

In short, with timid and time-serving procrastination in the van, agricultural, commercial and manufacturing ruin will swell the procession of events, and **REPRISAL** will finally close up the rear. This is what masterly inactivity will do for us. From this, prompt resistance to Black Republican outrage—prompt resistance alone can save us. God save the Commonwealth!