

tempted investigation has been abandoned, and the mantle of dignity assumed as defying or forbidding the inquiry.

Whatever the bad effects likely to flow from the cause resolved upon by the Committee, this minority were, and are, powerless to prevent them. They were overruled by a decided majority of the Committee, who are presumed to reflect the sentiments and wishes of the still more powerful majority in the House. The undersigned can then only submit to a power they have no means of controlling; and, abandoning all hope of obtaining direct and positive proofs, as to the matters the Committee were commanded to inquire into, will now proceed to examine, in the regular order of their succession, the several points of inquiry, and to lay before the House upon each the next best evidence the nature of the case admits of; which they cannot and dare not omit to do,—the obligation resting upon them being to perform their whole duty to the best of their ability, and as fully and perfectly as the means allowed them, or within the reach of their power can be made to avail to that end.

First, then, as stated in a preceding part of this report, comes the inquiry, “Whether any, and if any, what secret political societies exist in this State?” In answer to this, the undersigned beg leave to say, that it is a fact so universally known and admitted, as no longer to admit of doubt or question, that there arose in this State and country, within the last two or three years, a political society, formidable both in numbers and its influence upon elections, whose principles and purposes were for a long time covered with an impenetrable veil of *secrecy*, and who, bound together by secret oaths, recognized each other by mysterious signs, grips and passwords, and acted always and every where in concert, and to some common end or purpose.

This party openly assumed and became generally known by the name of the *Know Nothing party*. It was not long before it became publicly known that its members had secret places of meeting and conference in almost every quarter of the State and country, at which proselytes were made and received, and where great vigilance and care were used to prevent any thing that was done or said transpiring or coming to the knowledge of the public. Secrecy continued to shroud their principles and purposes in darkness; mystery and novelty lent their united powers to work upon excited curiosity, and are supposed to have won them many associates. Their successes in a number of elections alarmed the fears and awakened the anxiety of the public; these led to closer scrutiny and more diligent inquiry—the veil of secrecy