

The Attempted Assassination of Governor Packard.

The startling intelligence from New Orleans which we publish this morning may not, perhaps, have much political significance, and yet it is calculated to arouse the country and produce a bad state of feeling. Packard is one of the rival claimants to the Governorship of Louisiana. He is hated and detested by a large proportion of the citizens of that excited State. Of course his embittered and passionate political enemies did not wish to have him murdered; but the attempt to murder him yesterday, in which they had no direct complicity, is a very unfortunate occurrence in this political exigency, tending, as it does, to awaken old prejudices and inflame political passions.

Toward noon yesterday a well dressed and respectable looking young man gained entrance to the private room of Governor Packard, in the State Capitol, where he was seated in consultation with a number of friends, and when the assassin had approached close to him he pulled out a pistol and aimed it at Mr. Packard's breast. The latter, with prompt presence of mind, seized the arm of his assailant and changed the direction of the pistol, which was discharged into his leg just above the knee, inflicting only a flesh wound, which is not dangerous. Half a score of pistols were immediately drawn on the assassin, who received two wounds. But Mr. Packard, with a magnanimity which his worst enemies must applaud, threw himself between the uplifted weapons and his fallen assailant and saved the young man's life. The would-be assassin was not very well identified, but it is at least certain that he is not an inhabitant either of New Orleans or the State. What motive had this young stranger in attempting to commit a foul and disgraceful murder? Governor Nicholls thinks that he was either drunk or a lunatic; but Nicholls and the democrats have an obvious interest in wishing to extenuate his crime. It is against their interest to have it supposed that the motive was political or that the crime was instigated by the local enemies of Packard. We do not believe at all that the democrats of New Orleans instigated this crime, but have quite as little doubt that it was prompted by political passion.

This unfortunate affair in New Orleans conveys an impressive lesson which the whole country should heed. It exhibits the danger of carrying feelings of political hostility to a high and heated pitch. Had it not been for the saving influence of the Electoral Commission the whole country would have been brought into a state resembling that which has so long prevailed in New Orleans, where, in spite of earnest attempts to keep the peace, the chief of one of the political parties has barely escaped assassination. This sort of murderers expect indulgence if not sympathy. The young man who attempted to take Governor Packard's life probably imagined that if he succeeded and was brought to trial a Louisiana jury would not convict him. The foundation has already been laid for letting him off on a plea of insanity, the plea on which so many murderers escape in other communities, and which he may have thought would be readily accepted when he had rid the community of a hated man, denounced as a political usurper. We trust that a prompt trial and severe sentence will prove that this was a mistaken calculation.