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THE
MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

WITH
NOTES AND QUERIES

Extra Number—No. 19

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THE NASBY PAPERS - - *Petroleum V. Nasby*

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ON THE AMERICAN REBELLION - - *Samuel A. Goddard*

PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA REGARDING THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (December 9, 1863)
James Russell Lowell

WILLIAM ABBATT

410 EAST 32D STREET, NEW YORK

1912

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COMPRISING

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Lincoln Bibliography, published in 1906 by Judge Daniel Fish, contains (with its supplement) about 1500 items. There are certainly 200, and perhaps 300, not listed by him: making a total of seventeen or eighteen hundred books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, broadsides, etc., all relating, in whole or part, to the "Great Emancipator."

Some of these are extremely scarce; others, while not so scarce, are practically unknown to the public, often because the character of the publication is such that no one would think to find in it an article upon Mr. Lincoln.

In this, the first of our series (for we expect to print two or more in addition), the opening article is taken from the publication which it is said Mr. Lincoln referred to as the third force which put down the Rebellion—the *Nasby Papers*, by David R. Locke, for many years editor of the *Toledo Blade*. All of the President's biographers refer to his keen appreciation of *Nasby's* humor, and his frequent reading of selections from the book, to members of the Cabinet, or distinguished visitors. The original is now very scarce.

The second is from a publication practically unknown to Americans, though Mr. Goddard's letters to the Birmingham papers were of such great value to the Union cause that he was warmly congratulated by Charles Francis Adams, our Minister to England, John Bright, and other representative men.

The third is the record of the action of the Union League of Philadelphia, upon the occasion of the assassination. Originally printed as a pamphlet, chiefly for the members, it is now very scarce, and has never before been reprinted.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The fourth is Lowell's famous article on Mr. Lincoln's Message (commonly called "The President's Policy"), published in the *North American Review* of January, 1864.

This number of the *Review* is very scarce, and copies of the article in separate form have sold as high as \$85.

THE NASBY PAPERS

BY

PETROLEUM V. NASBY

“Paster uv sed Church in charg”

C. O. PERRINE & CO.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

1864

HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT

CHURCH OF ST. ———, Nov., '63.

I FELT it my dooty to visit Washinton. The misarable condishon the Dimocrisy find themselves into sinse the elecshen makes it nessary that suthin be did, and therefore I determind to see wat cood be effectid by a persnel intevue with the President.

Interdoosin myself, I opened upon him delikitly, thus: "Lin-kin," sez I, "ez a Dimocrat, a free-born Dimocrat, who is prepar'd to die with neetnis and dispatch, and on short notis, fer the inalienable rite of free speech—Knoin also that you er a goriller, a feendish ape, a thirster after blud, I speak."

"Speak on," sez he.

"I am a Ohio Dimocrat," sez I, "who has repoodiatid Valandigum."

"Before or sinse the elecshin did you repoodiate him?" sez he.

"Sinse," retorted I.

"I thot so," sed he. "I would hed dun it too, hed I bin you," continuered he, with a goriller-like grin.

"We air now in favor uv a viggerus prosecushen uv the war, and we want you to so alter your polisy that we kin act with you, cor-jelly," sez I.

"Say on," sez he.

"I will. We dont want you to change your polisy materially.

We air modrit. Anxshus to support yoo, we ask yoo to adopt the follerin' triflin' changis:

Restoar to us our habis corpusses, as good ez new.

Arrest no moar men, wimmin and children fer opinyun's saik. Repele the ojus confisticashen bill, wich irrytaits the Suthern mind and fires the Suthern hart.

Do away with drafts and conskripshens.

Revoak the Emansipashen proclamashen, and give bonds that you'll never ishoos another.

Do away with tresury noats and such, and pay nuthin but gold.

Protect our dawters from nigger equality.

Disarm yoor nigger soljers, and send back the niggers to ther owners, to conciliate them.

Offer to assoom the war indetednis uv the South, and plej the Government to remoonerate our Suthern brethren fer the losses they hev sustaned in this onnatral war.

Call a convenshen uv Suthern men and sech gileless Northern men ez F. Peerce, J. Bookannun, Fernandough Wood and myself, to agree upon the terms of reunion.

"Is that all?" sez the goriller.

"No," sez I, promptly. "Ez a guarantee uv good faith to us, we shel insist that the best haff uv the orifises be given to Dimocrats who repoodiate Valandigum. Do this, Linkin, and you throw lard ile on the trubbled waters. Do this and you rally to yoor support thowsends uv noble Dimocrats who went out uv offis with Bookannun, and hev bin gittin ther whisky on tick ever sinse. We hev maid sakrifises. We hev repoodiated Valandigum—we care not ef he rots in Canady—we are willin to jine the war party, reservin to ourselves the poor privilidge uv dictatin how and on what prin-

sipples it shel be carried on. Linkin! Goriller! Ape! I hev dun.”

The President replide that he wood give the matter serious considerashen. He wood menshen the idee uv resinin to Seward, Chais and Blair, and wood address a serculer to the Postmasters et settry, an see how menny uv em wood be willin’ to resine to acommodait Dimocrats. He had no doubt sevrал wood do it to wunst. “Is ther any littel thing I kin do fer you?”

“Nothin pertikler. I wood accept a small Post orfis, if sitooatid within ezy range uv a distilry. My politikle daze is well-nigh over. Let me but see the old party wunst moar in the assendency—let these old eyes onct moar behold the Constooshen ez it is, the Union ez it wuz, and the Nigger ware he ought 2 be, and I will rap the mantel of privit life arownd me, and go in2 delirum tremens happy. I hev no ambishen. I am in the sear and yaller leef. These whitnin lox, them sunken cheak, warn me that age and whisky hev dun ther perfeck work, and that I shell soon go hents. Linkin, scorn not my wurds, I hev sed. Adoo.”

So sayin I wavd my hand impressively and walkd away.

PETROLEUM V. NASBY,

Paster uv sed Church, in charge.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS ON
THE AMERICAN REBELLION

BY

SAMUEL A. GODDARD

OF BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

LONDON, 1870

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The author was a brother of the wife of Rev. Samuel A. May, the eminent Unitarian clergyman and abolitionist of Boston. Residing in Birmingham, England, during the whole period of the Rebellion, he contributed a series of letters to the newspapers of that city, upholding the Union cause, and informing the British people as to the real nature and objects of the secession insurrection. They form a valuable though little-known part of Lincoln literature, and their author truly says, in his *Preface*: "Being for the most part elicited by the speeches of eminent men and the statements put forth by influential writers, they lay claim to some historic value as replies to these, insomuch as they exhibit the views and bias of the day, and link together a series of events, opinions of men of the time, and phases of political feelings not elsewhere to be learned without extensive and laborious research."

PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND SLAVERY

To the Editor of the *Daily Post*:

SIR: "Young Birmingham" raises his voice to stay the attempt on the part of his townsmen to encourage President Lincoln in his efforts to emancipate the slaves.

He thinks emancipation not desirable if it be effected through "political trickery." He thinks a Union which has countenanced slavery heretofore not worth preserving without slavery. He hates slavery, both where openly avowed and where shuffled with, and therefore would not aid the President in putting it down, nor oppose the rebels in establishing it. He would not sympathize in Mr. Lincoln's efforts, because Mr. Lincoln's aspirations are not so high and holy as he thinks they should be, and would lend him no aid because he doubts his ability to triumph without aid. He doubts the political right of Mr. Lincoln to war against the establishment of a slave empire, and would not lend him assistance because he is not sincere in prosecuting a doubtful right. He stigmatises the thousands and millions of Abolitionists in America as hypocrites; as pretenders to a sentiment they do not entertain.

Can this young man, in offering these reasons at the present time, be ignorant of the fact that they have been constantly in the mouths of all persons for the last two years, who have been true to one idea, viz: that of assisting to build up a Slave Empire? Can he be ignorant that, until these reasons had been worn threadbare and their worthlessness exposed, the proposal to address the President was not agitated? Is he so conceited in his own opinion as not to be conscious of the shameful impertinence of stigmatizing the tens of thousands of Abolitionists in America, who had grown gray in the cause before he was born, the position, the intelligence,

and the sincerity of many of whom place them at the head of the noble army of philanthropists, as hypocrites! No doubt his appeal to his fellow-townsmen will be as ineffective as his arguments are weak. I will now give some reasons why every labouring man and woman, and every Christian, in Birmingham and in all Great Britain, should sign the address to President Lincoln:

First—Because it is always right to assist in a good cause, whatever the motive of some of the actors in it may be.

Second—Because if President Lincoln succeeds, four millions of human beings and their progeny forever, will be relieved from slavery and beastly degradation.

Third—Because if President Lincoln does not succeed, the fetters of these four millions and their progeny to endless ages, so far as the mind can scan, will be riveted and confirmed, and because if this should occur through the want of our sympathizing aid, the curse of God will rest upon us.

Fourth—Because America, freed from slavery, will offer a happy home, fifty times larger than England, to which the surplus population of Europe can resort for ages to come, and where they can enjoy full protection, free schools, a free church, and undisputed political equality with all classes.

Fifth—Because Mr. Lincoln's cause is just and holy; the cause of truth and universal humanity; and

Sixth—Because, although at times the clouds lower, Christian faith gives the certain expectation that Providence will eventually smile on the cause, and shower blessings upon all who promote it.

AN OLD INHABITANT OF BIRMINGHAM.

January 10, 1863.

MR. LINCOLN'S PROCLAMATION

To the Editor of the *Daily Gazette*:

Sir—You have stated in the *Gazette* of to-day that "Mr. Lincoln's Emancipation proclamation could not be based upon any

broad principles of humanity, for humanity knows no material boundaries," and that "it was remarkably objectionable, inasmuch as it declared freedom to slaves whom Mr. Lincoln's armies could not reach, and left in slavery those whose freedom his soldiers could achieve and maintain."

I wish, with your permission, to reply, first, that, with respect to the dogma that "humanity knows no material boundaries," it may be said that obedience to law is perhaps the highest evidence of an advanced state of civilization and of humane rule; and that it is in the interests of humanity that rulers should abide by law, not trespassing upon it, but directing their efforts to its revision when it appears opposed to the dictates of humanity; therefore, if this be true, Mr. Lincoln, in abiding by law, has not evinced that his proclamation was not the result of a high order of humanity; and, secondly, with respect to the second portion of the quotation, the opinion there advanced has been so often and so conclusively shown to be erroneous, I cannot find any justification for its re-assertion by any well-informed journalist.

It is truly stated in the article alluded to that "the Emancipation proclamation was a military measure," for it was only as a military measure that the President had any power to issue it. He had no right to apply it to the slave States not in rebellion; no one throughout the whole nation, friend or foe, disputes this; but in the rebel States, as "a military necessity" he *had a right*, and if up to the present time he has been unable to enforce it throughout those States, it has been his misfortune, not his fault; one of the greatest impediments, however, the cannon and gunpowder supplied from Great Britain. Mr. Lincoln, therefore, in this instance, has followed the dictates of humanity and still kept within the law, and in the case of the slave States not in rebellion, he has kept within the law in not applying the Proclamation to them, and has followed the dictates of humanity in advising them to free their slaves, and

in recommending Congress to indemnify them for so doing. One of these States has already passed a gradual Emancipation act, and others are taking steps in the same direction. Mr. Lincoln has made gigantic strides toward the total abolition of slavery, and his acts will confer lasting honour upon him in the page of history, notwithstanding the cavils of those who, seeking for an excuse for sympathy with pro-slavery oligarchs, and knowing absolutely nothing of the difficulties of the situation, will not accept a good action because, as they assert, it springs from a wrong motive or is not calculated to accomplish all the good which they in their wisdom think should be attained.

England in the Union with Scotland has conceded certain rights to the Scotch Church. In its Union with Ireland, it has also conceded certain rights; the concessions in both instances we will *suppose*, for argument's sake, being highly offensive to the English conscience. Now, should Scotland rebel, it cannot be doubted that England would have a perfect right to abolish this concession, nor that it would be politic to do so, if its existence were found to retard the march of armies into Scotland to suppress the rebellion. But because the rebellion gave the right to abolish the concession in Scotland, it would give no right to abolish the concession in Ireland, where there had been no rebellion. This, to some extent a parallel case, is, however, weaker, inasmuch as that the slaves are a more material instrument of war, and can be more practically dealt with, than speculative theological opinions.

If, as reported by the correspondent of the *Tribune*, any United States officers or soldiers assist in returning slaves to their masters, it renders them liable to be cashiered or dismissed from the service in disgrace. It is contrary to an express law of Congress and to the intentions of the President. In fact, *it is owing to its being contrary to law that the correspondent points it out*; indeed, in one of the three instances named, he represents the actor (who, by the States jacket under an overseer's coat," all that need be here added

on the subject is that, if such things really do occur, it is high time to send General Butler back to the district. *He* did not permit such acts of insubordination.

The article on this subject occupies but half a column in the *Tribune*, while the correspondent gives two columns of other matter in the same paper; from the purport of which a very different state of things would be inferred; and, among other remarks, is one that the judge of a district had decided that "a master could not legally beat a slave, but might be proceeded against for an assault—a very great advance in favour of the slave. All the "horrors," however, named by the correspondent are trivial in comparison with those which took place, according to the same correspondent, while the rebels had possession. Then slaves were "mumified on the fly-wheel of a steam engine" or "buried alive to the chin and left without food for days"; and it does seem that one must be greatly in want of an excuse for holding a particular opinion, or have peculiar notions in the "interests of humanity," who can desire to see the establishment of a system which produced the latter horrors, in preference to the present rule, even if it be true that soldiers are occasionally guilty of breaking the law and committing outrages upon the slaves.

"Mr. Charles Sturge," and others who signed the address, no doubt considered the Proclamation to be issued in good faith, as it certainly was; and they are in no wise amenable to reproach because there are difficulties in the way of its execution, nor is the President. It is a gratuitous assumption, altogether unwarranted by facts, that "the President has, for prudential reasons, permitted these cruelties to be practised." *It is in no respect true*; nor is the President responsible for Mr. Greeley's opinion, the correctness of which appears to be generally denied. Mr. Greeley holds, not pertinaciously, but "subject to correction," as he himself declares, that should the rebel States return to their allegiance, the Proc-

lamation would not have affected slaves in the districts where the Government had obtained no military control; while others are of the opinion that, by virtue of the Proclamation, all blacks in the rebel States are now free men, and can no more be enslaved, should the rebellion be put down, than any white citizen of the United States. The Government is bound to protect all its citizens; no one could be enslaved by any State power; and as the law forbids the importation of slaves or of persons *to be* enslaved, it follows that, under a restoration of the Union, slavery could never be re-established in the rebel States, nor in any new State, the latter being already prohibited by law. Mr. Greeley and all admit that slaves who come within the military lines of the Government are forever free; so those persons who really wish to see the slaves emancipated must desire to see these military lines extended throughout the whole of the rebel territory.

May 2, 1863.

SAMUEL A. GODDARD.

THE DEATH OF MR. LINCOLN

To the Editor of the *Daily Post*:

Sir—As the mind partially recovers from the shock caused by the sad news of yesterday, the thought which arises and the question which all will ask is, what effect will the removal of Mr. Lincoln have upon the foreign and domestic relations of the American nation?

In attempting to solve this question it must be recollected that Mr. Lincoln did not create the national policy. His policy was created, sustained and enforced by public opinion. He may have modified and shaped it in some respects, but he took no important

step not urged by public opinion through its legal and recognized channels. Indeed, he constantly declared he was but the exponent of the wishes of the nation, being inclined to conservatism because the ruling power in America, "the landed democracy," is conservative.

The death of Mr. Lincoln does not necessarily effect the removal of a single person in office; nor is there any probability that any change will be made in the Cabinet, further than the appointment of a substitute for Mr. Seward, while he is unable to attend to the duties of office. The Congress is already chosen, and, having a much larger majority of the dominant party than the last, it is not likely to enforce, nor even to recommend, a different line of policy to that hitherto pursued.

With respect to the new President, he was nominated by the same convention that nominated Mr. Lincoln, chosen by the same party, and received about the same number of votes; which *should be* conclusive of his fitness for the office to which he was elected. He had been before the public, and those who nominated him, fifteen years as a Representative and Senator to Congress, and three years as military governor of Tennessee, appointed by Mr. Lincoln. Born in a slave State, he was not originally an Abolitionist, but, witnessing the evils of slavery, he adhered to the Union on the breaking out of the rebellion, and became an advocate of universal Emancipation. The fault that has been found with him, and over which an outcry is raised, is that he was to some extent under the influence of drink at the time of his inauguration. This is to be lamented; but it may here be noticed that those who are foremost in casting stones at him are not teetotalers, but persons whose gauge of drinking morality is the quantity they can "stand under" without exposing their position¹. It is now, however, understood that Mr. Johnson's state on the day of inauguration arose from a medical prescription administered to recruit exhausted nature.

¹ Condition.

but which proved too much for his temporary weak state. Mr. Johnson is reported to be a man of ability, thoroughly in favor of the total abolition of slavery, a staunch supporter of the Union, and it may be fully expected that he will fill the office to which he is called creditably to himself and the nation. His mode of accepting the Presidency has already created a favourable impression, and no doubt he will pursue the course marked out by Mr. Lincoln, except that, in consequence of the outrage now deplored, he may be less lenient to rebels who may be brought to trial and condemned than Mr. Lincoln would have been.

It would be ungenerous and unjust not to acknowledge the universal sympathy that is felt and expressed throughout this nation, with respect to the sad calamity which has overtaken the American nation and people. It is apparently as general and sincere as it would have been had a like calamity occurred to any of its people outside the Royal family. An effort, however, is making by those writers who sided with the rebels to create distrust in the future by predicting great misfortunes to America, through the imputed infirmity and unfitness for office of the new President. Some suppose that Grant or Sherman must take command, and others that the people will insist on the President's resigning, and others that the Congress will turn him out; which suppositions are so purely nonsensical that it is unnecessary further to notice them. If these writers had a wholesome recollection of past errors, they would not forget how they abused and ridiculed Mr. Lincoln without cause, and would avoid falling again into like error.

On the whole, therefore, it may be regarded as certain that there will be no material change of policy. The surrender of Johnston's army and of Mobile will soon be heard of, and that will about end the war. The Emancipation Proclamation will be adhered to; the rebel States will be reorganized rapidly; and twenty-seven States, the required number, possibly thirty-one, will ratify the

amendment to the Constitution forever prohibiting slavery throughout the land. A better system of direct taxation will be adopted, the Customs duties will be revised and placed upon a more liberal footing, and the national resources will be directed to the rapid extinction of the expenses of the war.

This attack upon Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward, so unmeaning and fruitless in every possible view that can be taken of it, may have been planned by a few individuals only; but it is the legitimate fruit of the institution of slavery, familiarity with which so demoralizes and brutalizes the mind as to render it defiant of law and morality. This event should be a warning to separate from the accursed thing; to countenance neither it nor its abettors; and not to rest until this longstanding and unspeakable disgrace is banished from the face of the Earth.

SAMUEL A. GODDARD.

April 27, 1865.

THE ASSASSINATION OF MR. LINCOLN

To the Editor of the *Daily Post*:

Sir—When great crimes are committed, the welfare of society requires they should be traced to their source, and that while the actual perpetrators are not allowed to escape, the instigators should not go unpunished. Charity seeks to exonerate the leaders in the American rebellion from complicity in the murder of Mr. Lincoln, but charity is often unreasoning, and too much inclined to shield the guilty.

The following article from a New York paper, the *Iron Age*, of 20th ult., puts the foul act upon its proper footing; it being but the sequence of innumerable acts in reality as heinous. The bombardment of Sumter was a stab at the life not of an individual only, but at that of thousands, and of the nation. A greater crime could

hardly be committed, but it gave the death-blow to Slavery, which the murder of Mr. Lincoln buries in everlasting oblivion. Is not the finger of Providence clearly discernible in these events?

Mr. Lincoln had finished his mission. He was of too kindly a nature to deal with conquered rebels; and nought but his death would have insured a full acknowledgment of his merits. A sterner nature was required to establish permanent peace and concord. The world is to be taught, and individuals everywhere are to be taught, that there is no greater crime against society than wanton, careless rebellion, especially for a wicked purpose. The originators of such a rebellion can hardly go unpunished—expatriation is the lightest sentence they should receive.

And here it may not be out of place to call attention to the *Punch* of this week. Has not the public been told continuously by me during the past four years that the cartoons in *Punch*, illustrative of the acts of the President, taught falsehood and not truth?—and how fully does *Punch* confirm this in its lines on the subject this week, one of the most wonderful productions of the day. Will the *Times* turn these lines into prose, and apply them to itself? What a proper and truthful act it would be!

SAMUEL A. GODDARD.

May 6, 1865.

The article which Mr. G. refers to, from the *Iron Age*, N. Y., April 20, 1865.

THE BARBARISM OF SLAVERY

We do not say, nor do we think, that Davis and Breckinridge, Benjamin, Hunter and Stephens and the other prominent leaders of the rebellion, either procured or sanctioned the murder of the President. On the contrary, we doubt not its occurrence has caused them terror and confusion. But this is not because of any moral complexion to this guilt from which these men would shrink, but because they know how to calculate its dire effects upon themselves and their evil cause. But these men are none the less responsible for the fearful crime. It is the natural result of all their teachings, the fittest illustration of the barbarism of slavery of which they are the advocates, even in the moment of its

death. The spirit that for years asserted a brutal terrorism in the South, debauching the morals and debasing the conscience of an entire people, so that the filthiest crimes were committed not only without remorse, but without effort at concealment; the spirit that nerved the arm of Brooks to strike down Sumner with an assassin's purpose, and then palliated or justified the act; the spirit that controlled the rebel conduct of the war from the very first, that sanctioned the massacre of Fort Pillow and ordered the slow tortures of Libby Prison; the same spirit of unscrupulous tolerance of brutal violence, of fiendish hate, was manifested in Booth, the last champion and defender of slavery, when he murdered the beloved President of the United States. We seek not to lessen his responsibility; his appalling crime we know stands without a parallel, but we trace it to its polluted source, and we find it *slavery*.

Two men, with the prescience of prophets, had testified of the "irrepressible conflict" between Slavery and Freedom, which was inevitable, and proclaimed that it must go on until America was "all slave or all free." It was fitting that in their own persons should be vindicated the truth of their philosophy, and that in them the conflict with Slavery, of which they were able philosophers and guides, should find its culminating point. The assassin of the President did his work more skilfully than the assassin of the Secretary, but in the purpose of slavery and in the eye of Heaven, they both were murdered: murdered, too, in a manner becoming the character of their murderer; the one by the assassin's bullet in the back, without forewarning, without possibility of defence; the other stabbed as he lay helpless on his bed of weakness. But let all the world rejoice in knowing that it was the last effort of the dying monster. Henceforth the man who dares to lift his voice in defence or palliation of slavery will be regarded as an accomplice in this transcendent crime. The conscience and the judgment of the people alike demand that slavery be at once and completely extirpated; and the nation's heart feels by an unerring instinct that the true murderer of Abraham Lincoln and William H. Seward is the Slave Power, of which the leaders of the rebellion are the exponents and the head.

THE LINCOLN MEETING

No better proof of the value of Mr. Goddard's letters could be found than the fact that at a meeting of the Birmingham workingmen, held at the Odd Fellows' Hall in May, 1865, a vote of thanks was given him for their publication. The following is a copy of his acknowledgment of the secretary's notice to that effect:

Mr. Geo. Bill, Hon. Sec'y, &c.

DEAR SIR: I am favoured with your note of this date, informing me of a vote of thanks that was passed at a meeting of the workingmen of Birmingham and its district, held at the Odd Fellows' Hall, for my letters on the American Rebellion, which have appeared from time to time in the *Daily Post*, and for the information contained therein. This vote of thanks is especially gratifying to me. I regard the workingmen as brethren of the brave and true men of America who have been fighting the battle of Freedom there, the battle of labour; for the right of every one, however humble in position, whatever may be the colour of his skin or the hardness of his hands, to enjoy the fruits of his own labours; who have been fighting against the attempt, by an unscrupulous slave oligarchy, to establish despotic rule, not only over the black labourer but the white labourer—keeping one in perpetual bondage and the other in abject subjection. That the latter was the intention as well as the former is rendered unquestionable by indisputable evidence. At this moment the world in its prospects is two centuries in advance of the position it would have occupied had the Slave Power prevailed. The strength of the loyal people of America in the late contest, the wonderful power displayed both in a military and financial point of view, consists in the fact that the Government is every man's Government. None considered they were fighting for Mr. Lincoln, none have considered they were lending money to Mr. Lincoln, but all have regarded Mr. Lincoln simply as the chosen man to carry out the behests of the Nation, and consequently of each individual comprising the Nation. The workingmen of England under like circumstances would have acted in like manner. Wherever in America workingmen from England have gone, wherever they or their descendants have invaded the forest or the prairie, the schoolhouse has been reared and the Christian meeting-house has been established. The State of Illinois, which was a wilderness when Birkbeck and Flower went there, only a few years ago, say 1818, now contains twelve thousand free schools. This the workingman has done. Mr. Lincoln was the type of what workingmen will accomplish under circumstances which it is their right to enjoy. Enfranchisement with them does not lead to mobocracy, but to an enlightened conservatism, and this history confirms. The sympathy shown by the working classes and by all classes, and by the Queen (who is as popular in America as in England) in the terrible bereavement to which the American people have been subject, will occasion a profound impression there, and will long be remembered. . . .

I am very truly your obedient servant,

SAMUEL A. GODDARD.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA
REGARDING
THE ASSASSINATION
OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

PHILADELPHIA:
HENRY B. ASHMEAD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER
Nos. 1102 and 1104 Sansom Street
1865

PROCEEDINGS

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AT a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Union League of Philadelphia, held April 15, 1865, immediately after information had been received of the murder of the President of the United States, Mr. J. Gillingham Fell, President, called the meeting to order in the following terms:

Gentlemen: I have called you together for the purpose of announcing officially the awful calamity which has befallen the nation in the assassination of its Chief Magistrate. At this critical period, when we have so much need of his ability, disciplined judgment and patriotism, we are overwhelmed by the suddenness and terrible circumstances of his death. We stand in wonder at the providence of God, and are made to know that his ways are not our ways. As the mind reverts to his dealings with his people in times past, its thoughts fall naturally upon the history of the great leader of Israel who, after conducting his children through their protracted perils, breathed his last on the brink of the promised land. We mourn our leader with as sincere a sorrow; but we know that the same God who sustained the Hebrews still lives and has placed in the hands of our people the preservation of a great nation. Therefore, while we bow our heads in deep submission, let us address ourselves with energy to the responsibilities thus suddenly thrust upon us. To maintain order, obedience to the laws and respect for the constituted authorities is the immediate duty of every citizen.

On motion of Mr. Morton McMichael, the following Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God, in his inscrutable wis-

dom, to permit our beloved Chief Magistrate, Abraham Lincoln, to be removed by the hands of an assassin from the sphere of duty which he filled with so much honor to himself and so much profit to the nation; and,

Whereas, by this catastrophe the administration of the National Government has suddenly and most unexpectedly devolved on Andrew Johnson, the chosen Vice President of the people; and,

Whereas, this Board feel, in this first hour since the knowledge of this great change has reached it, the importance of conveying to the new President assurances of the aid which the body it represents, in common with all loyal citizens, will render him in his trying situation; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Union League of Philadelphia have the highest confidence in the patriotism, integrity and ability of Andrew Johnson, now by the providence of God President of the United States, and will give to him in the discharge of the vast responsibilities devolved upon him, the same zealous support which it has always given to his lamented predecessor.

Resolved, That the Secretary be requested to transmit to the President of the United States the Gold Medal of the League, as a proof of its esteem for his merits as a citizen, and its recognition of his claim as the first officer of the Republic.

On motion of Mr. Horace Binney, Jr., it was

Resolved. That the members of the Union League be requested to assemble at Concert Hall on Monday, the 17th instant. at 12 M., to take such action as they may deem necessary in view of the awful calamity which has just befallen the nation.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to prepare a series of resolutions for presentation to the meeting, to be held as before stated, expressive of the sense which the League entertains

of the bereavement the country has sustained, and the duties which are now demanded of the citizens.

The President appointed Messrs. Horace Binney, Jr., Wm. H. Ashhurst, and Charles Gibbons the committee.

On motion, adjourned.

GEORGE H. BOKER,
Secretary.

MEETING OF THE UNION LEAGUE

In pursuance of a call for a Special Meeting, made by the Board of Directors, the members of the Union League of Philadelphia assembled on Monday, April 17, 1865, at 12 M., at Concert Hall.

Mr. McMichael, Vice President, who occupied the chair, opened the meeting as follows:

Members of the Union League: The Board of Directors have invited your presence at this time in order that you may take such action in reference to the events which have recently startled and horrified the country as in your judgment you shall deem most appropriate. It does not need that I should say the occasion of your meeting is one of more than ordinary solemnity. Less than three short days ago our entire city, in common with all loyal portions of the Union, was jubilant and resonant, for it was stirred to its utmost depths by the prospect of a great deliverance. After four long and weary years, a war almost illimitable in the extent to which it had spread and wholly unparalleled in the magnitude of its sacrifices and its sufferings, had, by wisdom in the cabinet and valor on the field, been brought so near a close that all men saw, and rejoiced in, the peaceful end. As was natural under such circumstances, the thunderous report of holiday artillery shook the morning air; bonfires and illuminations lighted the evening sky;

flags and streamers danced gaily on every breeze; unaccustomed hands grasped each other in mutual congratulation; eyes of young and old alike beamed with delight, and reverent lips thrilled with grateful thanksgiving to Almighty God for the supreme blessing He had vouchsafed. Foremost among the human agencies by which the grand consummation was realized, all recognized the then President of the United States. To his sagacity, to his skill, to his prudence, to his firmness, to his unflinching adherence to the right, all agreed the final triumph was pre-eminently due, and believed that by the exercise of the same qualities he would guide us safely through any new perils we might be called on to encounter. No wonder, therefore, that all hearts turned towards him with sentiments of earnest affection; no wonder that all tongues spoke of him in words of glowing praise; no wonder that wherever his name was mentioned the shoutings of the exultant people were loudest, and the tumultuous demonstrations of patriotic zeal most vehement and prolonged.

What a change do we witness to-day! Gladness is converted into grief; the sable draperies of woe replace the gorgeous emblems of joy; the din of festive preparation has ceased; the sounds of mirth are no longer heard; over all countenances there is diffused an anxious gloom, and sadness and sorrow sit heavily on all bosoms. For alas! alas! alas! our good, our true, our honest, our noble, our dearly cherished President is dead! dead in his prime, and has not left his peer—and all that was mortal of Abraham Lincoln lies stiff and cold in the White House at Washington, where for so long his genial presence, amid the darkest hours, dispensed a radiant cheerfulness, and in the most trying straits reflected a calm content. My friends, among the many awful crimes for which the authors of this rebellion should suffer the most condign punishment here, and for which, unless the testimonies of Divine retribution are false they must make fearful expiation hereafter, there is none that will count against them so terribly as the deep damnation of his taking off—the foul, base and brutal murder of the best citizen, as well as the

highest officer of the Republic—the fiendish assassination of the gentlest and kindest being that ever administered public affairs, whose daily life, even under the severe pressure of the most arduous duties and the gravest cares, was a constant illustration of charity and love. Already, indeed, the avenging Nemesis is in swift pursuit on their track. Even now while the miserable wretch whom their evil teachings and example wrought [up] to the commission of the blackest of all deeds, skulks and shivers in dreaded anticipation of his doom; now, while the arch-traitor whom they lately hailed as chief like the primal fratricide is a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth; there ascends unto the judgment-seat which they made vacant a sterner ruler, who has been taught by his own wrongs the enormity of their offending, and whose ears are open to hear and his sinews stretched to answer the cry of outraged humanity. And who, in this crisis, shall venture to stay the uplifted hand of justice? Who, contemplating the virtues and the fate of Abraham Lincoln, shall ask for mercy to his slayer? Who, recalling the ravaged fields, the desolated homes, the slaughtered inhabitants of Eastern Tennessee, can hope for forgiveness to the spoilers from Andrew Johnson?

Mr. McMichael then introduced Rev. Phillips Brooks, who offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler and Commander of the World, in whose hands are power and might which none are able to withstand, we look up to thee for comfort and consolation in this dark hour of bereavement. O Lord of life and light, we invoke thy presence and favor in our midst. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! Lord help us, for we are unable to help ourselves; we look up to thee for strength. We thank thee for the gift of such a President; we thank Thee that thou didst put it into the hearts of this people to choose a man so full of goodness and truth and faithfulness; of patience and

serenity and composure; of such wisdom to perceive the truth, and such a steadfastness to do it. We thank Thee for the earnestness with which he laid hold upon the great purposes set before him, and the calm and wise perseverance with which he followed them. We thank Thee that his eye was permitted to see the first fruits of his labor, in the dawn of returning peace. We thank Thee that as we stand by the grave of so great a President, we can feel that he has been a kindly father to all his people, and that to all alike, from the highest in the land to the poor slave, long trodden under foot, he has proved himself so good a brother and friend. We pray not for vengeance, but for justice. Make bare Thine own arm and do the work that must now be done. Leave us not until every vestige of the accursed thing that has wrought us this fearful wrong be done away. O God! Thou hast Thy martyr for Thy cause; assert that cause until slavery be rooted out from all the borders of our land. We pray for the afflicted family of our beloved President. Comfort them in their sore affliction; lift up the light of Thy countenance upon them and give them peace. And we pray for Thy gracious favor to be bestowed on him who in Thy providence is raised up to rule over this land. Come Thou to him in wisdom and strength. Give him courage and discretion. Make his staff strong, and let the spirit that was in him who was taken away fall upon him. We pray for Thy servant, now lying stricken by the hand of the assassin. Bring him up again from the jaws of death, and suffer us not to lose the advantage of his wisdom and patriotism and zeal for our country's good. We bend our heads before Thee, that Thy consolations may come down upon us. Here, in the presence of the memory of Thy faithful servant, we pledge ourselves anew to Thy service. Hold us up until the great ends of Thy providence be fulfilled, until all the wrong that has cursed our land be righted and the iniquity of our fathers be done away. May none of us hesitate or falter until Thy work is done, and until Thine own peace return and rest upon us.

The following Preamble and Resolutions were then read by Horace Binney, Jr., Esq.:

An awful event has stricken and shocked the hearts of the members of the Union League of Philadelphia, and of every true friend to his country. Abraham Lincoln, the twice-chosen President of the United States; the unselfish and devoted patriot; the friend of all men; "who never willingly planted a thorn in any man's breast," while the first rays of the clear sunshine of a consummate victory for the Union were still lighting up his countenance, sitting without a personal guard, which he always rejected, and without a suspicion, which his heart never harbored; in the presence of his wife and family¹ and surrounded by friends and smiles to partake of a public recreation for the gratification of a happy community, has been shot to death by the pistol of a dastardly miscreant, conspirator and assassin.

No personal hostility could have prompted the execrable deed. There never was a man, public or private, who gave less occasion for personal rancor against him. No one ever imputed a fault to him as a public man, but the benignity of his heart, which could hardly come up to the demands of vindictive public justice without pain and reluctance. Personally he could not have been an object of malice. But he personated and represented the Union and its loyal people. The assassin represented the spirit of rebellion, and the great conspiracy against the Union and the Government bequeathed to us by our fathers, and vouchsafed to them by the beneficence of Heaven; and what secession could not achieve against our arms, the infernal malice of the representative assassin has achieved upon the superintending and sustaining head of the Nation.

It is a blessed memory which survives and will ever survive with the name of this noble and courageous President, that while he contemplated even this cruel result to himself, he never suffered the fear of it to disturb him in the onward march of his duty.

Hear his own words in his first Presidential message:

"As a private citizen the Executive could not have consented that these institutions shall perish, much less could he in betrayal of so vast and so sacred a trust as these free people had confided to him. He felt that he had no moral right to shrink, nor even to *count the chances of his own life*, in what might follow."

¹This was a singular error: none of Mr. Lincoln's family, other than his wife, were present that night at Ford's theatre.

His last inaugural, on the fourth of March, is a sublime manifestation of the righteousness of his moral and political faith, which even England acknowledges and respects, and which posterity in this land will never suffer to die.

Never has any event so maddened and then melted the heart of an entire people. The first impulse of every honest heart was to cry out for the lightning and thunderbolt to smite the wretch to the earth; to consume him to ashes, and to scatter his ashes to the winds as unworthy of the earth. The next and better impulse has been to listen to, and obey, the voice from above: "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay."

Never has any man, public or private, been so wept and deplored. Never has universal rage been so instantly succeeded by universal tears. The whole people are in tears in the presence of victory, the uplifting of the flag of honor and restoration on the walls of Fort Sumter, and even on the Resurrection Day of our Lord and Saviour, the Prince of Victory and Peace.

Honoring the noble character, the pure principles and the political services of President Lincoln, as the Union League of Philadelphia has always done, we relieve our own hearts and add their testimony to the tribute of the whole people by adopting the following resolutions:

Resolved, That we honor the name of Abraham Lincoln, our twice-elected President, and will ever honor it, as that of a most pure and unselfish patriot, and as a wise-hearted and sagacious leader and administrator of the country, which from a beginning that lay in weakness and unpreparedness for the crisis then upon it, with nothing but his firm heart and good purpose under God to rely upon, has been brought by the spirit and power of his administration to a position of preparation and strength, from which it may now look with confidence over the entire domain of the nation, as soon to be reclaimed to Union, universal Freedom and concord.

Resolved, That we loathe with our whole hearts the pistol and dagger of the assassin, and with scarcely less abhorrence the lash of the slave-driver and the starvation of imprisoned soldiers; and that we should witness with joy and hope such manifestations of sympathy in the South, in detesting and denouncing this execrable crime against humanity and against Heaven, as will become the

omen and precursor of our fraternal concord in all things, and of the redemption of the old Union from the sin of treason and secession to order, law, freedom and peace.

Resolved, That no change in the head of this nation by assassination, nor any other event, will shake the Union League of Philadelphia from the firm purpose for which it was instituted, the devotion of life, honor and estate to the defence of the Union against all assaults, and to secure its transmission to our posterity, as our fathers transmitted it to us, without one star extinguished or dimmed, or one bar of its stripes effaced.

Resolved, That we hereby pledge ourselves to Andrew Johnson, who in the providence of God is now placed in the chair of the lamented Lincoln as President of the United States, to sustain him by all our efforts in the same principles and purposes which his predecessor has now sealed, as a martyr, with his blood.

Resolved, That we call upon our fellow-citizens throughout the land to join with us in reverently invoking for President Johnson, in the performance of the high duties of his office, the protection and support of Almighty God, in whom he has publicly declared his trust, and for our President, our country and ourselves we desire to adopt the closing words of the first message of him whose mantle, we trust, has now fallen upon his successor: "Having thus chosen our cause without guile, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear and with manly hearts."

Resolved, That we have received with the most unqualified satisfaction the information that it is the purpose of President Johnson to retain in his own Cabinet the able and faithful Secretaries of Department, whose selection by the sagacity of President Lincoln has been so well vindicated by their successful performance of the arduous duties of their public trusts.

Resolved, That the Union League of Philadelphia hereby tender

to the Honorable William H. Seward, Secretary of State, their most earnest and profound sympathy under the unparalleled and cruel outrages inflicted upon him and upon the members of his household; and that we pray Almighty God that he may yet survive, surrounded by an unbroken family, to resume the arduous duties of the post in which he has been retained, and to witness the perfect realization of the measures begun under his late friend and head, for the restoration of the peace and happiness of the nation and for the maintenance of all its rights, both abroad and at home.

Resolved, That a committee of thirteen be appointed whose duty it shall be to transmit a copy of this Preamble and Resolutions under the signature of the president and secretary, and under the seal of the Union League of Philadelphia to His Excellency Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, and to the heads of the Departments of the Government, and another copy to the widow and children of the late President, with the assurance of our most heartfelt sympathy and condolence with them in their overwhelming affliction.

The resolutions were seconded by Mr. Charles Gibbons, who said:

Treason has done its worst! Nor steel nor poison,
Nor malice domestic, foreign levy—nothing
Can touch him further.

Slavery has done *its* worst! Its hatred of all that is just and pure, its malevolence, its brutality, its violence, its heartlessness, its treachery, its defiance of every law, human and Divine, are all embodied in that miserable assassin who murdered our good President as he sat, in supposed security, in the capital of our country, by the side of his wife. They are embodied, too, in that twin representative who entered a private house at midnight, on a pretended mission of mercy, rushed to the bedside of a sleeping, helpless and almost dying man, plunged his dagger into his throat, and struck down his

sons who were watching by his side. These were not the deeds of two individuals, but representative acts committed by the right hand and left hand of slavery, which illustrate and typify its soul and its spirit; one and the same spirit which gathered and ruled those secret societies in the North and in the South, where the rebellion was hatched. One and the same spirit that introduced murderous weapons into the halls of Congress, and swaggered and hectorred and threatened whenever its influence was baffled.

One and the same spirit that struck a United States Senator from his seat by a murderous blow, without warning or provocation, because he would not worship it.

One and the same spirit that organized a band of murderers to take the life of Abraham Lincoln while on his way to the seat of Government, to assume the duties of the Presidential office, to which the American people had called him.

One and the same spirit that has "poured the sweet milk of concord into hell," and marks its supremacy everywhere with human blood.

One and the same spirit that burned the flesh from the bones of our gallant dead, and fashioned them into trinkets for the necks of its Jezebels.

One and the same spirit that entered the hotels of a neighboring city, in the garb of peace, and sought to envelop women and children in the flames which it secretly kindled.

One and the same spirit that massacred our troops at Fort Pillow, after they had surrendered as prisoners of war.

One and the same spirit that starved thousands of our soldiers to death in the prison-pens of Georgia and Carolina, where they were crowded with no covering but the sky or the storm-clouds that burst over them.

One and the same spirit that mined the Libby building when filled with patriots captured in war, and stood with lighted torch to blow them to eternity, on the entry of victorious troops into the rebel capital.

It is a spirit that never looks up to Heaven for what is just, but looks ever in the dust for some worm to tread upon or some living creature to torture.

It is the spirit that excludes the brave and faithful soldier of the Republic from a Philadelphia railway car if the Creator has colored his complexion too much, but surrenders its seat to the white traitor, who claps his hand with joy over the murdered body of our President.

It is the spirit that exults in the deed of the assassin, and hides itself from popular indignation behind the black weeds of sorrow.

What does the law demand for this foul murder of our honored President, a President of whom it must be said that of those becoming graces—

As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
HE RELISHED ALL!

He relished all, slavery *hated* all, and therefore slavery murdered him! The law is offended; what will satisfy it? It asks no more than the death of that one miserable man, the mere instrument of the murder. But will that satisfy this mourning nation? No! Surely no! What then would your stricken hearts demand? What can satisfy them but the everlasting death of slavery itself, the head and front, the life and soul of treason, rebellion and all their attendant crimes? What should we pray for—what *can* we pray for, but that justice may sweep the land like a whirlwind, leaving

behind it no traces of that foul spirit which has brought this deep sorrow and humiliation upon the nation, but only that blessed and glorious liberty which will satisfy the ordinances of God? Should this be the result of the murder of Abraham Lincoln, and we could hear his voice once more, it would come ringing to us from the courts of Heaven in hallelujahs for the Nation's victory over the powers of hell!

The time is coming! Andrew Johnson is in the seat of power. He has walked the pavements of slavery, and sat in its towers. He knows the spirit with which he has to deal. In the Senate it flattered him and tempted him, and threatened him; but in vain!

Among the faithless, faithful only he;
 Among innumerable false, unmoved,
 Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
 His loyalty he kept—his love, his zeal;
 Nor number nor example with him wrought
 To swerve from truth or change his constant mind,
 Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd,
 Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
 Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
 And with retorted scorn, his back he turn'd
 On those proud towers, to *swift destruction doom'd*.

He does not stand alone. He has accepted as his aid the constitutional advisers of President Lincoln. Stanton is with him; that fearless patriot whose name shall ever be honored in the history of a country he has served so well; that friend of liberty who has never quailed before its enemies or faltered in his devotion to its cause. Grant is with him. Sherman is with him. The noble Army of the Republic is with him; the *people* are with him; and above all He to whom all vengeance belongs, the LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT, is with him, and with us!

The Preamble and Resolutions were unanimously adopted by

the meeting. After which Mr. Frederick Fraley addressed the meeting, as follows:

I feel a great weight of responsibility in attempting to address this meeting.

The solemn occasion that has brought us together; the deep sense of the great national calamity; the sorrow for a martyred and honored Chief Magistrate, and the grave consequences that must follow such events present topics for our mournful as well as patriotic consideration.

Your eloquent opening, Mr. Chairman, of these proceedings, and the sentiments you have uttered with so much propriety and feeling; the fervent prayer, and earnest and truthful speech of the gentlemen who have followed you, would seem to be all that our heads could ask or our hearts desire for the realization of sorrow or the call of duty.

And yet, with a deep sense of my own inability to add much, if anything to the solemnity or instruction of this occasion, I comply with the wish of the Committee, and will state briefly the impressions that this mysterious dispensation of Providence has made on me.

In common with the whole loyal country, I have been rejoicing in our recent national triumphs, and have believed that the war was practically at an end; the reign of Union and Peace inaugurated, and the country redeemed and purified by the blood and treasure expended in our struggle for law and freedom.

I supposed that the kind-hearted and honorable man who occupied the chief place in the Republic, and had given such assurance to the people of the South of liberal, just and merciful treatment for past offenses, would be permitted to welcome back the returning prodigals, and that as they had repented of their great sin, and were returning to the home of their fathers, we could put on them the

golden ring of Union and prepare the feast of National and fraternal rejoicing.

But alas! alas! it has been otherwise ordered; and in the hour of our hope and of our rejoicing, the black hand of death, not of defeat, has been put forward, and we are stayed by the arm of God from carrying our own purposes into effect; but

His purposes are ripening fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

I have sought to read for myself and for my country a lesson in the deep darkness of this dispensation.

It has impressed me with a new and intense feeling of our duties as citizens of a great and free nation; and I feel it as an awakening call to a closer and more intelligent study of the genius and principles of our form of government, so that each man that is called on to think and vote and act, on the matters of common weal, will not be a blind servant of party, but a pure, enlightened and patriotic supporter of the right.

By our lamentable departures from the principles of our National fathers; by our restricting rather than enlarging the area of freedom; by our neglect of the rights of the poor and the oppressed; the degradation of the bondman, and an inordinate appetite for wealth and power, we have sadly marred the heritage they left to us, and now have as sadly suffered the penalty for our sinning.

They left us a flag whose folds were darkened by a shadow, gradually fading away when they passed it into our hands. By the passage of the Act of Congress prohibiting the slave trade after the year 1808, they proclaimed that a power had risen which was to dispel that shadow; but we failed to follow in their footsteps; we

bowed down to slavery rather than to extirpate it; to consider it a blessing rather than a curse, and verily we have had our reward.

Degraded by its existence in our own eyes, and dishonored on account of it in almost all lands, we yet clung to it in the mistaken hope that thereby we should preserve the Union.

We gave it compromise on compromise for the sake of National peace, and sad as the confession may be, we did great evil in the hope that God would wink at it and deem it good.

But at last, as if wearied with our sin and blindness, He compelled us to put our hands to the plough, and we have been labouring in many deep and long furrows without as yet being able to discern the end of our work. In my judgment we have fallen far short of duty to ourselves and duty to the country.

In this hard struggle for national life, for freedom, for law, we have forgotten that there is a power as potent for victory as the sword. That power is public opinion, it is the searching influence of social intercourse.

We have failed to use this power; we have relied too much on the sword, and too little on that which reaches the heart and the hearthstone, and makes a traitor or a traitorous sympathizer feel that there is a punishment worse, infinitely, than death itself.

To walk the streets as a marked traitor, to be pointed at as a disloyal man, to be shut out from homes and hearts that of old warmed, as it were, into new life when he approached them, these are the sorest and bitterest punishments for treason that can be administered.

We have hitherto failed to use them as we should, but the time has now come when they are called for by every impulse of honor and patriotism. Let us not falter in their application; let us not by any mawkish sensibilities permit disloyal men to think that their departures from duty are softened down as amiable weaknesses and

Christian charity, but let them be marked as with the mark of Cain if they persist in staying among us, and be accounted as vagabonds and fugitives; or what will be still better, let us compel them to join themselves body and soul to their idols and masters, and finally to share with them the perils as well as the pleasures of rebellion and treason.

Our noble Army, God bless them! Our gallant Navy, God bless them too! have successfully vindicated on the land and on the water the honor of the Nation, and the strength and value of those armed in a righteous cause. They and we have labored, not to impose shackles and burthens on the people of the South; not even at first to alter one jot or tittle of their peculiar State institutions and policy. From the first we have said to them, "Submit to the law and be safe; submit to the law laid down by our fathers; submit to that which has been so long a pillar of cloud to us by day and a pillar of fire by night; submit to the bonds of the Union and the Constitution."

But they would not listen; the dark and wicked spirits of secession, slavery and State rights have seized upon them; and for these miserable and lying demons they sacrificed all that is glorious in the past, all that was hopeful for the future.

If by such malice, wickedness and folly war desolates their fields and makes blood-marks in their families, who shall pity them?

But, my friends, I think that war has almost done its work, and the time has come for law to step in and do its more appropriate duty.

The traitor is unworthy of a soldier's death; there must be an end of the allowance of belligerent rights; the court and the jury, the public trial, the solemn hall of justice, the verdict, the judgment and the halter, must now do *their* work, and thus an end be put to this great rebellion.

Public opinion, social ostracism and the law will be found sufficient for the vindication of the right, and there is no need to set on foot the rule of the mob or the torch of the incendiary.

When treason and sympathy with treason are treated with honesty to ourselves, with faith in our good cause, and with fidelity to our obligations as men, we shall emerge from the gloom and fear which so often have made us falter, and God will indeed be with us, and crown our labors with his blessing.

Members of the Union League, you have done much already for the preservation of the Nation, but your work is not yet finished. The awful crime that has brought us together had its origin in a depraved and dishonest political and social system. It was not so much the work of a single criminal as of a host of offenders; blinded, ignorant offenders, as many no doubt are, but of other offenders whose lives for the past thirty years have been preparing their heads, hearts and hands for the work of iniquity. By the force of circumstances not fully foreseen or appreciated when the League was organized, we have had to take a more active interest in politics than anyone anticipated, but we are now called on to do much more.

Questions of the most grave importance must now be settled probably forever.

The great future of an emancipated race already numbering four millions, is one of these questions. Shall they be men; be clothed with the rights and duties of freemen, or shall they be returned to a worse slavery than that from which we have freed them? Shall they be our political equals?—if so, when and how shall this be accomplished? Shall our old notions about race and color shut our eyes to the manifest march of the times, or shall we accept and solve the problem with truth and reason? When I say that we have much of this work in our hands, I state only an accepted fact.

Our great State has always been a battlefield for extreme political opinions, and at all times its vote has for every Presidential term fixed the destiny of the nation.

As it has been in the past so it will be in the future; as our public virtue has raised the scale of public morals, so have our public faults and ignorance made their mark for evil.

While I feel the great blow which has been struck at the Republic through its Chief Magistrate, I do not despair; the great crime has made a terrible awakening; it has reached the deepest depths of the national heart, and from high and low, rich and poor, there comes to us but one cry. Is it the cry of vengeance? No, my friends, it is not vengeance but justice; it is the cry to mete out to the real authors of the foul deed, the leaders of the rebellion, their just punishment. That punishment, properly and promptly inflicted, will be mercy to ourselves, will save many from death and suffering, and be acknowledged by the world as most righteously inflicted.

I will not attempt to add to the eulogies already paid to Abraham Lincoln: he deserved them all, they are the appropriate tribute of this hour, when the great work he has done is fresh in our remembrance; when the still greater work he had yet to do is rising before us. Shall it be treated, as it seemed to be his purpose to treat it, with that simplicity, honesty, mercy and long suffering he had so long and so faithfully practised, or shall it be treated with stern, unrelenting justice? The very breath that was giving utterance to forgiveness, to charity, to brotherly kindness, was checked in its course by the hand of the assassin; the foul deed causing a nation to mourn for the removal of so much that was good; but may we not rejoice that the hands of the conspirators were stayed in the midst of the bloody work, and that we still have preserved to us the rulers duly chosen to perpetuate the Government, and pledged to protect and defend it?

The death of Abraham Lincoln has made a solemn and peculiar

impression on me. I have reverently wondered what so signal a dispensation of Providence can mean; it has filled my inner thoughts and awakened feelings in harmony with those of the solemn season that has just closed. The words, "It was expedient that one man should die for the people," have been ringing in my ears ever since I heard of the death of the President.

These words, I speak it in fear and trembling lest I should err, have filled my heart with a glorious hope for the future. They seem to say to me: The blood that has thus been shed shall be a passover for this nation. It shall cleanse us from all malice, from all strife, from all hatred, from all self-sufficiency; it shall teach us to be just as well as merciful; it shall make our country a glorious kingdom for the manifestation of those sublime teachings of obedience to law, of charity and peace, and good-will to men, which were given to the world by Him who died on Calvary. It will make our land the land of virtue and freedom, the guiding and ruling star of the whole earth.

Mr. John C. Knox then addressed the meeting in the following remarks: I am here to-day, Mr. President, to unite with my fellow-members of the Union League, in the solemnities due to this mournful occasion.

A great nation mourns the loss of its Chief Magistrate. The good men of that nation mourn as well the loss of the *man* Abraham Lincoln.

The heart of the nation was glad. Rejoicing in the assurance that its own existence was safe, the American Republic is appalled by the announcement that its chosen head no longer lives. The country, thank God, is safe, but one of the noblest of its sons is gone forever.

The same spirit which attempted the destruction of the Government caused the assassination of the President. Abraham Lin-

coln was assassinated because he was in favor of the unity of this Republic, and because he successfully resisted the attempt to establish here a government whose chief object should be the perpetuation of human slavery.

His devotion to human freedom was at the cost of his life. But his blood has not been shed in vain. The same murderous bullet which sent his pure spirit to its God, sealed forever and forever the fate of African slavery in this our beloved country. For it there will be neither conditions, terms nor compromise, neither time nor resurrection. It must and will be blotted out at once and forever, and to be remembered only to be denounced as the favorite institution of the great enemy of mankind, the arch fiend himself.

I know how unnecessary it is for me to speak the praises of our martyred chief. He was an honest, true and pure man. He understood and loved the American people, and the American people knew and loved him. Day by day was the feeling in his favor strengthened and increased, thereby lessening the number of his political opponents, and giving to the people as a body confidence in his wisdom to devise, his ability to execute, and his determination to carry out such measures as would promote the greatest good of the greatest number.

Originally elected to the Presidency by a plurality of the popular vote; having to conduct the Executive department during the most trying period that the country ever witnessed, he so bore himself in his high office that he was again chosen by the largest numerical majority ever given to a candidate for the Presidency whose election was contested.

But alas! this great and good man is gone. His name, however, will be a household word with the American people, and his fame will be as dear to future ages as that of the Father of his Country, our beloved Washington.

May our Heavenly Father protect and preserve the successor of Abraham Lincoln, and may Andrew Johnson in the future be as dear to the hearts of American citizens as the man whose untimely end we this day meet to deplore.

On motion of Mr. John H. Towne it was

Resolved, That the Board of Directors be requested to devise some proper badge of mourning to be worn by members of the League and their families for the next thirty days.

On motion of Mr. William D. Lewis, the meeting adjourned.

GEORGE H. BOKER,
Secretary.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(DECEMBER 9, 1863)

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL



The North American Review

January, 1864

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ¹

(December 9, 1863)

THERE have been many painful crises since the impatient vanity of South Carolina hurried ten prosperous Commonwealths into a crime whose assured retribution was to leave them either at the mercy of the nation they had wronged, or of the anarchy they had summoned but could not control, when no thoughtful American opened his morning paper without dreading to find he had no longer a country to love and honor. Whatever the result of the convulsion whose first shocks were beginning to be felt, there would still be enough square miles of earth for elbow-room; but that ineffable sentiment made up of memory and hope, of instinct and tradition, which swells every man's heart and shapes his thought, though perhaps never present to his consciousness, would be gone from it, leaving it common earth and nothing more. Men might gather rich crops from it, but that ideal harvest of priceless associations would be reaped no longer; that fine virtue which sent up messages of courage and security from every sod of it would have evaporated beyond recall. We should be irrevocably cut off from our past, and be forced to splice the ragged ends of our lives upon whatever new conditions chance might twist for us.

We confess that we had our doubts at first whether the patriotism of our people were not too narrowly provincial to embrace the proportions of national peril. We had an only too natural distrust of immense public meetings and enthusiastic cheers, and we knew that the plotters of rebellion had roused a fanaticism of caste in the Southern States sure to hold out longer than that

¹ The title at the head of the article is *The President's Message*, but the running head is *The President's Policy*. From the *North American Review*, January, 1864.

fanaticism of the flag which was preached in the North for hatred has deeper roots than sentiment, though we knew also that frenzy would pass through its natural stages, to end in dejection, as surely in Carolina as in New York.

That a reaction should follow the holiday enthusiasm with which the war was entered on, that it should follow soon, and that the slackening of public spirit should be proportionate to the previous over-tension, might well be foreseen by all who had studied human nature or history. Men acting gregariously are always in extremes; as they are one moment capable of higher courage, so they are liable, the next, to baser depression, and it is often a matter of chance whether numbers shall multiply confidence or discouragement. Nor does deception lead more surely to distrust of men, than self-deception to suspicion of principles. The only faith that wears well and holds its color in all weathers is that which is woven of conviction and set with the sharp mordant of experience. Enthusiasm is good material for the orator, but the statesman needs something more durable to work in,—must be able to rely on the deliberate reason and consequent firmness of the people, without which that presence of mind, no less essential in times of moral than of material peril, will be wanting at the critical moment. Would this fervor of the Free States hold out? Was it kindled by a just feeling of the value of constitutional liberty? Had it body enough to withstand the inevitable dampening of checks, reverses, delays? Had our population intelligence enough to comprehend that the choice was between order and anarchy, between the equilibrium of a government by law and the tussle of misrule by *pronunciamento*? Could a war be maintained without the ordinary stimulus of hatred and plunder, and with the impersonal loyalty of principle? These were serious questions, and with no precedent to aid in answering them.

At the beginning of the war there was, indeed, occasion for the most anxious apprehension. A President known to be infected

with the political heresies, and suspected of sympathy with the treason, of the Southern conspirators, had just surrendered the reins, we will not say of power, but of chaos, to a successor known only as the representative of a party whose leaders, with long training in opposition, had none in the conduct of affairs, an empty treasury was called on to supply resources beyond precedent in the history of finance; the trees were yet growing and the iron unmined with which a navy was to be built and armored; officers without discipline were to make a mob into an army; and above all, the public opinion of Europe, echoed and re-inforced with every vague hint and every specious argument of despondency by a powerful faction at home, was either contemptuously sceptical or actively hostile. It would be hard to over-estimate the force of this latter element of disintegration and discouragement among a people where every citizen at home, and every soldier in the field, is a reader of newspapers. The pedlers of rumors in the North were the most effective allies of the rebellion. A nation can be liable to no more insidious treachery than that of the telegraph, sending hourly its electric thrill of panic along the remotest nerves of the community, till the excited imagination makes every real danger loom heightened with its unreal double. The armies of Jefferson Davis have been more effectually strengthened by the phantom regiments of Northern newspapers, than by the merciless dragoony of his conscription.

And even if we look only at more palpable difficulties, the problem to be solved by our civil war was so vast, both in its immediate relations and its future consequences; the conditions of its solution were so intricate and so greatly dependent on incalculable and uncontrollable contingencies; so many of the data, whether for hope or fear, were, from their novelty, incapable of arrangement under any of the categories of historical precedent, that there were moments of crisis when the firmest believer in the strength and sufficiency of the democratic theory of government might well hold

his breath with vague apprehension of disaster. Our teachers of political philosophy, solemnly arguing from the precedent of some petty Grecian, Italian or Flemish city, whose long periods of aristocracy were broken now and then by awkward parentheses of mob, had always taught us that democracies were incapable of the sentiment of loyalty, of concentrated and prolonged effort, of far-reaching conceptions; were absorbed in material interests; impatient of regular, and much more of exceptional restraint; had no natural nucleus of gravitation, nor any forces but centrifugal; were always on the verge of civil war, and slunk at last into the natural almshouse of bankrupt popular government, a military despotism. Here was indeed a dreary outlook for persons who knew democracy, not by rubbing shoulders with it lifelong, but merely from books, and America only by the report of some fellow Briton who, having eaten a bad dinner, or lost a carpet bag here, had written to the *Times* demanding redress, and drawing a mournful inference of democratic instability. Nor were men wanting among ourselves who had so steeped their brains in London literature as to mistake Cockneyism for European culture, and contempt of their country for cosmopolitan breadth of view, and who, owing all they had and all they were to democracy, thought it had an air of high breeding to join in the shallow epicedium that our bubble had burst. Others took up the Tory gabble that all the political and military genius was on the side of the Rebels, and even yet are not weary of repeating it, when there is not one of Jefferson Davis's prophecies as to the course of events, whether at home or abroad, but has been utterly falsified by the event, when his finance has literally gone to rags, and when even the journals of his own capital are beginning to inquire how it is that, while their armies are always victorious, the territory of the Confederacy is steadily diminishing.

But beside any disheartening influences which might affect the timid or the despondent, there were reasons enough of settled gravity against any over-confidence of hope. A war—which, whether

we consider the expanse of the territory at stake, the hosts brought into the field, or the reach of the principles involved, may fairly be reckoned the most momentous of modern times—was to be waged by a people divided at home, unnerved by fifty years of peace, under a chief magistrate without experience and without reputation, whose every measure was sure to be cunningly hampered by a jealous and unscrupulous minority, and who, while dealing with unheard-of complications at home, must soothe a hostile neutrality abroad, waiting only a pretext to become war. All this was to be done without warning and without preparation, while at the same time a social revolution was to be accomplished in the political condition of four millions of people, by softening the prejudices, allaying the fears, and gradually obtaining the cooperation of their unwilling liberators. Surely, if ever there were an occasion when the heightened imagination of the historian might see Destiny visibly intervening in human affairs, here was a knot worthy of her shears. Never, perhaps, was any system of government tried by so continuous and searching a strain as ours during the last three years; never has any shown itself stronger; and never could that strength be so directly traced to the virtue and intelligence of the people,—to that general enlightenment and prompt efficiency of public opinion possible only under the influence of a political framework like our own. We find it hard to understand how even a foreigner should be blind to the grandeur of the combat of ideas that has been going on here,—to the heroic energy, persistence and self-reliance of a nation proving that it knows how much dearer greatness is than mere power; and we own that it is impossible for us to conceive the mental and moral condition of the American who does not feel his spirit braced and heightened by being even a spectator of such qualities and achievements. That a steady purpose and a definite aim have been given to the jarring forces which, at the beginning of the war, spent themselves in the discussion of schemes which could only become operative, if at all,

after the war was over; that a popular excitement has been slowly intensified into an earnest national will; that a somewhat impracticable moral sentiment has been made the unconscious instrument of a practical moral end; that the treason of covert enemies, the jealousy of rivals, the unwise zeal of friends, have been made not only useless for mischief but even useful for good; that the conscientious sensitiveness of England to the horrors of civil conflict has been prevented from complicating a domestic with a foreign war;—all these results any one of which might suffice to prove greatness in a ruler, have been mainly due to the good sense, the good humor, the sagacity, the large-mindedness, and the unselfish honesty of the unknown man whom a blind Fortune, as it seemed, had lifted from the crowd to the most dangerous and difficult eminence of modern times. It is by presence of mind in untried emergencies that the native metal of a man is tested; it is by the sagacity to see and the fearless honesty to admit, whatever of truth there may be in an adverse opinion, in order more convincingly to expose the fallacy that lurks behind it, that a reasoner at length gains for his mere statement of a fact the force of argument; it is by a wise forecast which allows hostile combinations to go so far as by the inevitable reaction to become elements of his own power, that a politician proves his genius for state-craft; and especially it is by so gently guiding public sentiment that he seems to follow it by so yielding doubtful points that he can be firm without seeming obstinate in essential ones, and thus gain the advantage of compromise without the weakness of concession, by so instinctively comprehending the temper and prejudices of a people as to make them gradually conscious of the superior wisdom of his freedom from temper and prejudice,—it is by qualities such as these that a magistrate shows himself worthy to be chief in a commonwealth of freemen. And it is for qualities such as these that we firmly believe history will rank Mr. Lincoln among the most prudent of statesmen and the most successful of rulers. If we

wish to appreciate him we have only to conceive the inevitable chaos in which we should now be weltering, had a weak man or an unwise one been chosen in his stead.

“Bare is back,” says the Norse proverb, “without brother behind it”; and this is, by analogy, true of an elective magistracy. The hereditary ruler in any critical emergency may reckon on the inexhaustible resources of *prestige*, of sentiment, of superstition, of dependent interest, while the new man must slowly and painfully create all these out of the unwilling material around him, by superiority of character, by patient singleness of purpose, by sagacious presentiment of popular tendencies and instinctive sympathy with the national character. Mr. Lincoln’s task was one of peculiar and exceptional difficulty. Long habit had accustomed the American people to the notion of a party in power, and of a President as its creature and organ, while the more vital fact, that the executive for the time being represents the abstract idea of government as a permanent principle superior to all party and all private interest, had gradually become unfamiliar. They had so long seen the public policy more or less directed by views of party, and often even of personal advantage, as to be ready to suspect the motives of a Chief Magistrate compelled for the first time in our history to feel himself the head and hand of a great nation, and to act upon the fundamental maxim, laid down by all publicists, that the first duty of a government is to defend and maintain its own existence. Accordingly, a powerful weapon seemed to be put into the hands of the opposition by the necessity under which the Administration found itself of applying this old truth to new relations. They were not slow in turning it to use, but the patriotism and common sense of the people were more than a match for any sophistry of mere party. The radical mistake of the leaders of the opposition was in forgetting that they had a country, and expecting a similar obliviousness on the part of the people. In the undisturbed possession of office for so many years, they had

come to consider the government as a kind of public Gift Enterprise conducted by themselves, and whose profits were nominally to be shared among the holders of their tickets, though all the prizes had a trick of falling to the lot of the managers. Amid the tumult of war, when the life of the nation was at stake, when the principles of despotism and freedom were grappling in deadly conflict, they had no higher conception of the crisis than such as would serve the purpose of a contested election; no thought but of advertising the tickets for the next drawing of that private speculation which they miscalled the Democratic party. But they were too little in sympathy with the American party to understand them, or the motives by which they were governed. It became more and more clear that, in embarrassing the Administration, their design was to cripple the country; that, by a strict construction of the Constitution, they meant nothing more than the locking up of the only arsenal whence effective arms could be drawn to defend the nation. Fortunately, insincerity by its very nature, by its necessary want of conviction, must ere long betray itself by its inconsistencies. It was hard to believe that men had any horror of sectional war, who were busy in fomenting jealousies between East and West; that they could be in favor of a war for the Union as it was, who were for accepting the violent amendments of Rebellion; that they could be heartily opposed to insurrection in the South who threatened government with forcible resistance in the North; or that they were humanely anxious to stay the effusion of blood, who did not scruple to stir up the mob of our chief city to murder and arson,¹ and to compliment the patriotism of assassins with arms in their hands. Believers, if they believed anything, in the divine right of Sham, they brought the petty engineering of the caucus to cope with the resistless march of events, and hoped to stay the steady drift of the nation's purpose, always setting deeper and stronger in one direction, with the scoop-nets that had served their turn so well in

¹ The New York Draft riots of 1863.

dipping fish from the turbid eddies of politics.² They have given an example of the shortest and easiest way of reducing a great party to an inconsiderable faction.

The change which three years have brought about is too remarkable to be passed over without comment, too weighty in its lesson not to be laid to heart. Never did a President enter upon office with less means at his command, outside his own strength of heart and steadiness of understanding, for inspiring confidence in the people, and so winning it for himself, than Mr. Lincoln. All that was known of him was that he was a good stump-speaker, nominated for his *availability*,—that is, because he had no history—and chosen by a party with whose more extreme opinions he was not in sympathy. It might well be feared that a man past fifty, against whom the ingenuity of hostile partisans could rake up no accusation, must be lacking in manliness of character, indecision of principle, in strength of will—that a man who was at best only the representative of a party, and who yet did not fairly represent even that,—would fail of political, much more of popular support. And certainly no one ever entered upon office with so few resources of power in the past, and so many materials of weakness in the present, as Mr. Lincoln. Even in that half of the Union which acknowledged him as President, there was a large and at that time dangerous minority, that hardly admitted his claim to the office, and even in the party that elected him there was also a large minority that suspected him of being secretly a communicant with the church of Laodicea. All that he did was sure to be virulently attacked as ultra by one side; all that he left undone, to be stigmatized as proof of lukewarmness and backsliding by the other. Meanwhile he was to carry on a truly colossal war by means of both; he was to disengage the country from diplomatic entanglements of unprecedented peril undisturbed by the help or the hinder-

²The reader can not fail to notice in this paragraph two striking similes, involving as many everyday incidents familiar to most men, which are homely and forcible enough to have come from Mr. Lincoln himself.

ance of either, and to win from the crowning dangers of his administration, in the confidence of the people, the means of his safety and their own. He has contrived to do it, and perhaps none of our Presidents since Washington has stood so firm in the confidence of the people as he does after three years of stormy administration.

Mr. Lincoln's policy was a tentative one, and rightly so. He laid down no programme which must compel him to be either inconsistent or unwise, no cast-iron theorem to which circumstances must be fitted as they rose, or else be useless to his ends. He seemed to have chosen Mazarin's motto, *Le temps et moi*. The *moi*, to be sure, was not very prominent at first; but it has grown more and more so, till the world is beginning to be persuaded that it stands for a character of marked individuality and capacity for affairs. Time was his prime-minister, and, we began to think at one period, his general-in-chief also. At first he was so slow that he tired out all those who see no evidence of progress but in blowing up the engine; then he was so fast that he took the breath away from those who think there is no getting on safely while there is a spark of fire under the boilers. God is the only being who has time enough; but a prudent man, who knows how to seize occasion, can commonly make a shift to find as much as he needs. Mr. Lincoln, as it seems to us in reviewing his career, though we have sometimes in our impatience thought otherwise, has always waited, as a wise man should, till the right moment brought up all his reserves.

*Semper nocuit differre paratis*³ is a sound axiom, but the really efficacious man will also be sure to know when he is *not* ready, and be firm against all persuasion and reproach till he is.

One would be apt to think, from some of the criticisms made on Mr. Lincoln's course by those who mainly agree with him in prin-

³ Postponement has always proved a disadvantage to those who are prepared to take action.

inciple, that the chief object of a statesman should be rather to proclaim his adhesion to certain doctrines, than to achieve their triumph by quietly accomplishing his ends. In our opinion there is no more unsafe politician than a conscientiously rigid *doctrinaire*, nothing more sure to end in disaster than a theoretic scheme of policy that admits of no pliability for contingencies. True, there is a popular image of an impossible He, in whose plastic hands the submissive destinies of mankind become as wax, and to whose commanding necessity the toughest facts yield with the graceful pliancy of fiction; but in real life we commonly find that the men who control circumstances, as it is called, are those who have learned to allow for the influence of their eddies, and have the nerve to turn them to account at the happy instant. Mr. Lincoln's perilous task has been to carry a rather shakely raft through the rapids, making fast the unrulier logs as he could snatch opportunity, and the country is to be congratulated that he did not think it his duty to run straight at all hazards, but cautiously to assure himself with his setting-pole where the main current was, and keep steadily to that. He is still in wild water, but we have faith that his skill and sureness of eye will bring him out right at last.

A curious, and as we think not inapt parallel might be drawn between Mr. Lincoln and one of the most striking figures in modern history—Henry IV of France. The career of the latter may be more picturesque, as that of a daring captain always is; but in all its vicissitudes there is nothing more romantic than that sudden change, as by a rub of Aladdin's lamp, from the attorney's office in a country town of Illinois to the helm of a great nation in times like these. The analogy between the characters and circumstances of the two men is in many respects singularly close. Henry's chief material dependence was the Huguenot party, whose doctrines sat upon him with a looseness distasteful certainly, if not suspicious, to the more fanatical among them. King only in name over the greater part of France, and with his capital barred against

him, it yet gradually became clear to the more far-seeing even of the Catholic party, that he was the only centre of order and legitimate authority round which France could reorganize itself while preachers who held the divine right of kings made the churches of Paris ring with declamations in favor of democracy rather than submit to the heretic dog of a Béarnais—much as our *soi-disant* Democrats have lately been preaching the divine right of slavery, and denouncing the heresies of the Declaration of Independence—Henry bore both parties in hand till he was convinced that only one course of action could possibly combine his own interests and those of France. Meanwhile the Protestants believed somewhat doubtfully that he was theirs, the Catholics hoped somewhat doubtfully that he would be theirs, and Henry himself turned aside remonstrance, advice and curiosity alike with a jest or a proverb (if a little *high*, he liked them none the worse), joking continually as his manner was. We have seen Mr. Lincoln contemptuously compared to Sancho Panza by persons incapable of appreciating one of the deepest pieces of wisdom in the profoundest romance ever written; namely, that while Don Quixote was incomparable in theoretic and ideal statesmanship, Sancho, with his stock of proverbs, the ready money of human experience, made the best possible practical governor. Henry IV was as full of wise saws and modern instances as Mr. Lincoln, but beneath all this was the thoughtful, practical, humane and thoroughly earnest man, around whom the fragments of France were to gather themselves till she took her place again as a planet of the first magnitude in the European system. In one respect Mr. Lincoln was more fortunate than Henry. However some may think him wanting in zeal, the most fanatical can find no taint of apostasy in any measure of his, nor can the most bitter charge him with being influenced by motives of personal interest. The leading distinction between the policies of the two is one of circumstances. Henry went over to the nation: Mr. Lincoln has steadily drawn the nation over to him.

One left a united France; the other we hope and believe will leave a reunited America. We leave our readers to trace the further points of difference and resemblance for themselves, merely suggesting a general similarity which has often occurred to us. One only point of melancholy interest we will allow ourselves to touch upon. That Mr. Lincoln is not handsome nor elegant, we learn from certain English tourists who would consider similar revelations in regard to Queen Victoria as thoroughly American in their want of *bienséance*. It is no concern of ours, nor does it affect his fitness for the high place he so worthily occupies; but he is certainly as fortunate as Henry in the matter of good looks, if we may trust contemporary evidence. Mr. Lincoln has also been reproached with Americanism by some not unfriendly British critics; but with all deference, we cannot say that we like him any the worse for it, or see in it any reason why he should govern Americans the less wisely. The most perplexing complications that Mr. Lincoln's government has had to deal with have been the danger of rupture with the two leading commercial countries of Europe, and the treatment of the slavery question. In regard to the former, the peril may be considered as nearly past, and the latter has been withdrawing steadily, ever since the war began, from the noisy debating-ground of faction to the quieter region of practical solution by convincingness of facts and consequent advance of opinion which we are content to call Fate.

As respects our foreign relations, the most serious, or at least the most obvious cause of anxiety has all along been the irritation and ill-will that have been growing up between us and England. The sore points on both sides have been skilfully exasperated by interested and unscrupulous persons, who saw in a war between the two countries the only hope of profitable return for their investment in Confederate stock, whether political or financial. The always supercilious, often insulting, and sometimes even brutal tone of

British journals and public men, has certainly not tended to soothe whatever resentment might exist in America.

“Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me downstairs?”

We have no reason to complain that England, as a necessary consequence of her clubs, has become a great society for the minding of other people's business, and we can smile good-naturedly when she lectures other nations on the sins of arrogance and conceit; but we may justly consider it a breach of the political *convenances* which are expected to regulate the intercourse of one well-bred government with another, when men holding places in the ministry allow themselves to dictate our domestic policy, to instruct us in our duty, and to stigmatize as unholy a war for the rescue of whatever a high-minded people should hold most vital and most sacred. Was it in good taste, that we may use the mildest form, for Earl Russell to expound our own Constitution to President Lincoln, or to make a new and fallacious application of an old phrase for our benefit, and tell us that the Rebels were fighting for independence and we for empire? As if all wars for independence were by nature just and deserving of sympathy, and all wars for Empire ignoble and worthy only of reprobation, or as if these easy phrases in any way characterized this terrible struggle, —terrible not so truly in any superficial sense, as from the essential and deadly enmity of the principles that underlie it. His Lordship's bit of borrowed rhetoric would justify Smith O'Brien, Nana Sahib, and the Maori chieftains, while it would condemn nearly every war in which England has ever been engaged. Was it so very presumptuous in us to think it would be decorous in English statesmen if they spared time enough to acquire some kind of knowledge, though of the most elementary kind, in regard to this country and the questions at issue here, before they pronounced so off-hand a judgment? Or is political information expected to come Dogberry fashion in England, like reading and writing, by nature?

And now all respectable England is wondering at our irritability, and sees a quite satisfactory explanation of it in our national vanity. *Suave mari magno*,¹ it is pleasant sitting in the easy-chairs of Downing Street, to sprinkle pepper on the raw wounds of a kindred people struggling for life, and philosophical to find in self-conceit the cause of our instructive resentment. Surely we were of all nations the least liable to any temptation of vanity at a time when the gravest anxiety and the keenest sorrow were never absent from our hearts. Nor is conceit the exclusive attribute of any one nation. The earliest of English travellers, Sir John Mandeville, took a less provincial view of the matter when he said "that in whatever part of the earth men dwell, whether above or beneath, it seemeth always to them that dwell there that they go more right than any other folk."

It is time for Englishmen to consider whether there was nothing in the spirit of their press and of their leading public men calculated to rouse a just indignation, and to cause a permanent estrangement on the part of any nation capable of self-respect, and sensitively jealous, as ours then was, of foreign interference. Was there nothing in the indecent haste with which belligerent rights were conceded to the Rebels, nothing in the abrupt tone assumed in the *Trent* case, nothing in the fitting out of Confederate privateers, that might stir the blood of a people already overcharged with doubt, suspicion and terrible responsibility? The laity in any country do not stop to consider points of law, but they have an instinctive apprehension of the *animus* that actuates the policy of a foreign nation; and in our own case they remembered that the British authorities in Canada did not wait till diplomacy could send home to England for her slow official tinder-box to fire the *Caroline*. Add to this, what every sensible American knew, that

¹ Sweet it is, when on the great sea the winds are buffeting the waters, to gaze from the land on another's struggle; not because it is pleasure or joy that anyone should be distressed, but because it is sweet to perceive from what misfortune you yourself are free.

—*Lucretius*: Book II.

the moral support of England was equal to an army of two hundred thousand men to the Rebels, while it insured us another year or two of exhausting war. Even if we must come to grief, the openly expressed satisfaction of a disinterested acquaintance, and his triumphant "I told you so's," are not soothing to the best-regulated nerves; but in regard to the bearing of England toward ourselves, it was not so much the spite of her words (though the time might have been more tastefully chosen) as the actual power for evil in them that we felt as a deadly wrong. Perhaps the most immediate and efficient cause of mere irritation was the sudden and unaccountable change of manner on the other side of the water. Only six months before, the Prince of Wales had come over to call us cousins; and everywhere it was nothing but "our American brethren," that great offshoot of British institutions in the New World, so almost identical with them in laws, language and literature,—this last of the alliterative compliments being so bitterly true, that perhaps it will not be retracted even now. To this outburst of long-repressed affection we responded with genuine warmth, if with a little of the awkwardness of a poor relation bewildered with the sudden tightening of the ties of consanguinity when it is rumored that he has come into a large estate. Then came the Rebellion, and *presto!* a flaw in our titles was discovered, the plate we were promised at the family table is flung at our head, and we were again the scum of creation, intolerably vulgar, at once cowardly and overbearing,—no relations of theirs, after all, but a dreggy hybrid of the basest bloods of Europe. Panurge was not quicker to call Friar John his *former* friend. We could not help thinking of Walter Mapes's jingling paraphrase of Petronius:

Dummodo sine splendidis vestibis ornatus,
 Et multa familia sine circumvallatus,
 Prudens sum et sapiens et morigeratus,
 Et tuus nepos sum et tu meus cognatus.

which we may freely render thus:

So long as I was prosperous, I'd dinners by the dozen,
Was well-bred, witty, virtuous, and everybody's cousin:
If luck should turn, as well she may, her fancy is so flexible,
Will virtue, cousinship and all return with her from exile?

There was nothing in all this to exasperate a philosopher, much to make him smile rather; but the earth's surface is not chiefly inhabited by philosophers, and we revive the recollection of it now in perfect good humor, merely by way of suggesting to our *ci-devant* British cousins that it would have been easier for them to hold their tongues than for us to keep our tempers, under the circumstances.

The English Cabinet made a blunder, unquestionably, in taking it so hastily for granted that the United States had fallen forever from their position as a first-rate power, and it was natural that they should vent a little of their vexation on the people whose inexplicable obstinacy in maintaining freedom and order, and in resisting degradation, was likely to convict them of their mistake. But if bearing a grudge be the sure mark of a small mind in the individual, can it be a proof of high spirit in a nation? If the result of the present estrangement between the two countries shall be to make us more independent of British criticism, so much the better; but if it is to make us insensible to the value of British opinion, in matters where it gives us the judgment of an impartial and cultivated outsider, if we are to shut ourselves out from the advantages of English culture, the loss will be ours, and not theirs. Because the door of the old homestead has been once slammed in our faces, shall we in a huff reject all future advances of conciliation and cut ourselves foolishly off from any share in the humanizing influences of the place, with its ineffable riches of association, its heirlooms of immemorial culture, its historic monuments, ours no less than theirs, its noble gallery of ancestral portraits? We have only to succeed, and England will not only respect, but for the first time, begin to understand us. And let us not, in our justifi-

able indignation at wanton insult, forget that England is not the England only of the snobs who dread the democracy they do not comprehend, but the England of history, of heroes, statesmen and poets, whose names are dear, and their influence as salutary to us as to her.

Undoubtedly slavery was the most delicate and embarrassing question with which Mr. Lincoln was called on to deal, and it was one which no man in his position, whatever his opinions, could evade; for though he might withstand the clamor of partisans, he must sooner or later yield to the persistent importunacy of circumstances, which thrust the problem upon him at every turn and in every shape. He must solve the riddle of this new Sphinx, or be devoured. Though Mr. Lincoln's policy in this critical affair has not been such as to satisfy those who demand an heroic treatment for even the most trifling occasion, and who will not cut their coat according to their cloth, unless they can borrow the scissors of Atropos, it has been at least not unworthy of the long-headed King of Ithaca. Mr. Lincoln had the choice of Antonio offered him, which of the three caskets held the prize which was to redeem the fortunes of the country? There was the golden one whose showy speciousness might have tempted a vain man; the silver of compromise, which might have decided the choice of a merely acute one; and the leaden,—dull and homely-looking, as prudence always is,—yet with something about it sure to attract the eye of practical wisdom. Mr. Lincoln dallied with his decision perhaps longer than seemed needful to those on whom its awful responsibility was not to rest, but when he made it, it was worthy of his cautious but sure-footed understanding. The moral of the Sphinx-riddle, and it is a deep one, lies in the childish simplicity of the solution. Those who fail in guessing it fail because they are over-ingenious, and cast about for an answer that shall suit their own notion of the gravity of the occasion and of their own dignity, rather than the occasion itself.

In a matter which must be finally settled by public opinion, and in regard to which the ferment of prejudice and passion on both sides has not yet subsided to that equilibrium of compromise from which alone a sound public opinion can result, it is proper enough for the private citizen to press his own convictions with all possible force of argument and persuasion; but the popular magistrate, whose judgment must become action, and whose action involves the whole country, is bound to wait till the sentiment of the people is so far advanced towards his own point of view that what he does shall find support in it instead of merely confusing it with new elements of division. It was not unnatural that men earnestly devoted to the saving of their country, and profoundly convinced that slavery was its only real enemy, should demand a decided policy round which all patriots might rally,—and this might have been the wisest course for an absolute ruler. But in the then unsettled state of the public mind, with a large party decrying even resistance to the slaveholders' rebellion as not only unwise, but even unlawful; with a majority, perhaps, even of the would-be loyal so long accustomed to regard the Constitution as a deed of gift conveying to the South their own judgment as to policy and instinct as to right, that they were in doubt at first whether their loyalty were due to the country or to slavery; and with a respectable body of honest and influential men who still believed in the possibility of conciliation—Mr. Lincoln judged wisely, that, in laying down a policy in deference to one party, he should be giving to the other the very fulcrum for which their disloyalty had been waiting.

It behooved a clear-headed man in his position not to yield so far to an honest indignation against the brokers of treason in the North as to lose sight of the materials for misleading which were their stock in trade, and to forget that it is not the falsehood of sophistry which is to be feared, but the grain of truth mingled with it to make it specious—that it is not the knavery of the leaders so much as the honesty of the followers they may seduce, that gives

them the power for evil. It was especially his duty to do nothing which might help the people to forget the true cause of the war in fruitless disputes about its inevitable consequences.

The doctrine of State rights can be so handled by an adroit demagogue as easily to confound the distinction between liberty and lawlessness in the minds of ignorant persons, accustomed always to be influenced by the sound of certain words, rather than to reflect upon the principles that give them meaning. For, though secession involves the manifest absurdity of denying to a State of making war against any foreign power while permitting it against the United States; though it supposes a compact of mutual concessions and guarantees among States without any arbiter in case of dissension; though it contradicts common sense in assuming that the men who framed our government did not know what they meant when they substituted Union for Confederation; though it falsifies history, which shows that the main opposition to the adoption of the Constitution was based on the argument that it did not allow that independence to the several States which alone would justify them in seceding;—yet, as slavery was universally admitted to be a reserved right, an inference could be drawn from any direct attack upon it (though only in self-defense) to a natural right of resistance, logical enough to satisfy minds untrained to detect fallacy, as the majority of men always are and now too much disturbed by the disorder of the times to consider that the order of events had any legitimate bearing on the argument. Though Mr. Lincoln was too sagacious to give the Northern allies of the Rebels the occasion they desired and even strove to provoke, yet from the beginning of the war the most persistent efforts have been made to confuse the public mind as to its origin and motives, and to drag the people of the loyal States down from the national position they had instinctively taken to the old level of party squabbles and antipathies. The wholly unprovoked rebellion of an oligarchy proclaiming negro slavery the cornerstone of free institutions, and

in the first flush of over-hasty confidence venturing to parade the logical sequence of their leading dogma, that "slavery is right in principle, and has nothing to do with difference of complexion," has been represented as a legitimate and gallant attempt to maintain the true principle of democracy. The rightful endeavor of an established government, the least onerous that ever existed, to defend itself against a treacherous attack on its very existence, has been cunningly made to seem the wicked effort of a fanatical clique to force its doctrines on an oppressed population.

Even so long ago as when Mr. Lincoln, not yet convinced of the danger and magnitude of the crisis, was endeavoring to persuade himself of Union majorities at the South, and to carry on a war that was half peace in the hope of a peace that would have been all war,—while he was still enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law, under some theory that Secession, however it might absolve States from their obligations, could not escheat them of their claims under the Constitution, and that slaveholders in rebellion had alone among mortals the privilege of having their cake and eating it at the same time,—the enemies of free government were striving to persuade the people that the war was an abolition crusade. To rebel within reason was proclaimed as one of the rights of man, while it was carefully kept out of sight that to suppress rebellion is the first duty of government. All the evils that have come upon the country have been attributed to the Abolitionists, though it is hard to see how any party can become permanently powerful, except in one of two ways—either by the greater truth of its principles or the extravagance of the party opposed to it. To fancy the Ship of State, riding safe at her constitutional moorings, suddenly engulfed by a huge kraken of Abolitionism, rising from unknown depths and grasping it with slimy tentacles, is to look at the natural history of the matter with the eyes of Pontoppidan. To believe that the leaders in the Southern treason feared any danger from Abolition, would be to deny them ordinary intelligence, though there can be

little doubt that they made use of it to stir the passions and excite the fears of their deluded accomplices. They rebelled, not because they thought slavery weak, but because they believed it strong enough, not to overthrow the Government, but to get possession of it; for it becomes daily clearer that they used rebellion only as a means of revolution; and if they got revolution, though not in the shape they looked for, is the American people to save them from its consequences at the cost of its own existence?

The election of Mr. Lincoln, which it was clearly in their power to prevent had they wished, was the occasion merely, and not the cause, of their revolt. Abolitionism, till within a year or two, was the despised heresy of a few earnest persons, without political weight enough to carry the election of a parish constable; and their cardinal principle was Disunion, because they were convinced that within the Union the position of slavery was impregnable. In spite of the proverb, great effects do not follow from small causes,—that is, disproportionately small—but from adequate causes acting under certain required convictions. To contrast the size of the oak with that of the parent acorn, as if the poor seed had paid all costs from its slender strong-box, may serve for a child's wonder; but the real miracle lies in that divine league which bound all the forces of nature to the service of the tiny germ in fulfilling its destiny. Everything has been at work for the past ten years, in the cause of anti-slavery, but Garrison and Phillips have been far less successful propagandists than the slaveholders themselves, with the constantly-growing arrogance of their pretensions and encroachments. They have forced the question upon the attention of every voter in the Free States, by defiantly putting freedom and democracy on the defensive. But even after the Kansas outrages, there was no widespread desire on the part of the North to commit aggressions, though there was a growing determination to resist them. The popular unanimity in favor of the war three years ago was but in small measure the result of anti-slavery sentiment, far less

of any zeal for abolition. But every month of the war, every movement of the allies of slavery in the Free States, has been making Abolitionists by the thousand. The masses of any people, however intelligent, are very little moved by abstract principles of humanity and justice, until those principles are interpreted for them by the stinging commentary of some infringement upon their own rights, and then their instincts and passions, once aroused, do indeed derive an incalculable reinforcement of impulse and intensity from those higher ideas, those sublime traditions, which have no motive political force till they are allied with a sense of immediate personal wrong or imminent peril. Then at last the stars in their courses begin to fight against Sisera. Had any one doubted before that the rights of human nature are unitary, that oppression is one hue the world over, no matter what the color of the oppressed,—had any one failed to see what the real essence of the contest was,—the efforts of the advocates of slavery among ourselves to throw discredit upon the fundamental axioms of the Declaration of Independence and the radical doctrines of Christianity, could not fail to sharpen his eyes. This quarrel, it is plain, is not between Northern fanaticism and Southern institutions, but between downright slavery and upright freedom, between despotism and democracy, between the Old World and the New.

The progress of three years has outstripped the expectation of the most sanguine, and that of our arms, great as it undoubtedly is, is trifling in comparison with the advance of opinion. The great strength of slavery was a superstition, which is fast losing its hold on the public mind. When it was first proposed to raise negro regiments, there were many even patriotic men who felt as the West Saxons did at seeing their high-priest hurl his lance against the temple of their idol. They were sure something terrible, they knew not what, would follow. But the earth stood firm, the heavens gave no sign, and presently they joined in making a bonfire of their bugbear. That we should employ the material of

the rebellion for its own destruction, seems now the merest truism. In the same way men's minds are growing wonted to the thought of emancipation; and great as are the difficulties which must necessarily accompany and follow so vast a measure, we have no doubt that they will be successfully overcome. The point of interest and importance is, that the feeling of the country in regard to slavery is no whim of sentiment, but a settled conviction, and that the tendency of opinion is unmistakably and irrevocably in one direction, no less in the Border slave states than in the Free. The chances of the war, which at one time seemed against us, are now greatly in our favor. The nation is more thoroughly united against any shameful or illusory peace than it ever was on any other question, and the very extent of the territory to be subdued, which was the most serious cause of misgiving, is no longer an element of strength, but of disintegration, to the conspiracy. The Rebel leaders can make no concessions; the country is unanimously resolved that the war shall be prosecuted, at whatever cost; and if the war go on, will it leave slavery with any formidable strength in the South?—and without that, need there be any fear of effective opposition in the North?

While every day was bringing the people nearer to the conclusion which all thinking men saw to be inevitable from the beginning, it was wise in Mr. Lincoln to leave the shaping of his policy to events. In this country, where the rough and ready understanding of the people is sure at last to be the controlling power, a profound common-sense is the best genius for statesmanship. Hitherto the wisdom of the President's measures has been justified by the fact that they have always resulted in more firmly uniting public opinion. It is a curious comment on the sincerity of political professions, that the party calling itself Democratic should have been the last to recognize the real movement and tendency of the public mind. The same gentlemen who two years ago were introducing resolutions in Congress against coercion, are introducing them now in

favor of the war, but against subjugation. Next year they may be in favor of emancipation, but against abolition. It does not seem to have occurred to them that the one point of difference between a civil and a foreign war is, that in the former one of the parties must by the very nature of the case be put down, and the other left in possession of the government.

Unless the country is to be divided, no compromise is possible, and if one side must yield, shall it be the nation or the conspirators? A government may make, and any wise government would make, concessions to men who have risen against real grievances; but to make them in favor of a rebellion that had no juster cause than the personal ambition of a few bad men, would be to abdicate. Southern politicians, however, have always been so dexterous in drawing nice distinctions, that they may find some consolation inappreciable by obtuser minds, in being coerced instead of subjugated.

If Mr. Lincoln continue to act with the firmness and prudence which have hitherto distinguished him, we think he has little to fear from the efforts of the opposition. Men without sincere convictions are hardly likely to have a well-defined and settled policy, and the blunders they have heretofore committed must make them cautious. If their personal hostility to the President be unabated, we may safely count on their leniency to the opinion of majorities, and the drift of public sentiment is too strong to be mistaken. They have at least discovered that there is such a thing as Country, which has a meaning for men's minds and a hold upon their hearts; they may make the further discovery, that this is a revolution that has been forced on us, and not merely a civil war. In any event, an opposition is a wholesome thing; and we are only sorry that this is not a more wholesome opposition.

We believe it is the general judgment of the country on the acts of the present administration, that they have been, in the main, judicious and well-timed. The only doubt about some of them

seems to be as to their constitutionality. It has sometimes been objected to our form of government, that it was faulty in having a written constitution which could not adapt itself to the needs of the time as they arose. But we think it rather a theoretic than a practical objection; for in point of fact there has been hardly a leading measure of any administration that has not been attacked as unconstitutional, and which was not carried nevertheless. Purchase of Louisiana, Embargo, Removal of the Deposits, Annexation of Texas, not to speak of others less important,—on the unconstitutionality of all these, powerful parties have appealed to the country, and invariably the decision has been against them. The will of the people for the time being has always carried it. In the present instance, we purposely refrain from any allusion to the moral aspects of the question. We prefer to leave the issue to experience and common sense. Has any sane man ever doubted on which side the chances were in this contest? Can any sane man who has watched the steady advance of opinion, forced onward slowly by the immitigable logic of facts, doubt what the decision of the people will be in this matter? The Southern conspirators have played a desperate stake, and if they had won, would have bent the whole policy of the country to the interests of slavery. Filibustering would have been nationalized, and the slave-trade re-established as the most beneficent form of missionary enterprise. But if they lose? They have, of their own choice, put the chance into our hands of making this continent the empire of a great homogeneous population, substantially one in race, language and religion—the most prosperous and powerful of nations. Is there a doubt what the decision of a victorious people will be? If we were base enough to decline the great commission which Destiny lays on us, should we not deserve to be ranked with those dastards whom the stern Florentine condemns as hateful alike to God and God's enemies?

We would not be understood as speaking lightly of the respect

due to constitutional forms, all the more essential under a government like ours and in times like these. But where undue respect for the form will lose us the substance, and where the substance, as in this case, is nothing less than the country itself, to be over-scrupulous would be unwise.

Who are most tender in their solicitude that we keep sacred the letter of the law, in order that its spirit may not keep us alive? Mr. Jefferson Davis and those who, in the Free States, would have been his associates, but must content themselves with being his political *guerilleros*. If Davis had succeeded, would he have had any scruples of constitutional delicacy? And if he has not succeeded, is it not mainly owing to measures which his disappointed partisans denounce as unconstitutional?

We cannot bring ourselves to think that Mr. Lincoln has done anything that would furnish a precedent dangerous to our liberties, or in any way overstepped the just limits of his constitutional discretion. If his course has been unusual, it was because the danger was equally so. It cannot be so truly said that he has strained his prerogative, as that the imperious necessity has exercised its own. Surely the framers of the Constitution never dreamed they were making a strait-waistcoat, in which the nation was to lie helpless while traitors were left free to do their will. In times like these, men seldom settle precisely the principles on which they *shall* act, but rather adjust those on which they *have* acted to the lines of precedent as well as they can after the event.

This is what the English Parliament did in the Act of Settlement. Congress, after all, will only be called upon for the official draft of an enactment, the terms of which have been already decided by agencies beyond their control. Even while they are debating, the current is sweeping them on toward new relations of policy. At worst, a new precedent is pretty sure of pardon, if it successfully meet a new occasion. It is a harmless pleasantry to call Mr. Lin-

coln "Abraham the First,"—we remember when a similar title was applied to President Jackson; and it will not be easy, we suspect, to persuade a people who have more liberty than they know what to do with, that they are the victims of despotic tyranny.

Mr. Lincoln probably thought it more convenient, to say the least, to have a country left without a constitution, than a constitution without a country. We have no doubt we shall save both; for if we take care of the one, the other will take care of itself. Sensible men, and it is the sensible men in any country who at last shape its policy, will be apt to doubt whether it is true conservatism, after the fire is got under, to insist on keeping up the flaw in the chimney by which it made its way into the house. Radicalism may be a very dangerous thing, and so is calomel, but not when it is the only means of saving the life of the patient. Names are of great influence in ordinary times, when they are backed by the *vis inertiae* of life-long prejudice, but they have little power in comparison with a sense of interest; and though, in peaceful times, it may be highly respectable to be conservative merely for the sake of being so, though without very clear notions of anything in particular to be conserved, what we want now is the prompt decision that will not hesitate between the bale of silk and the ship when a leak is to be stopped. If we succeed in saving the great landmarks of freedom, there will be no difficulty in settling our constitutional boundaries again. We have no sympathy to spare for the pretended anxieties of men who, only two years gone, were willing that Jefferson Davis should break all the ten commandments together, and would now impeach Mr. Lincoln for a scratch on the surface of the tables where they are engraved.

We cannot well understand the theory which seems to allow the Rebels some special claim to protection by the very Constitution which they rose in arms to destroy. Still less can we understand the apprehensions of many persons lest the institution of slavery

should receive some detriment, as if it were the balance-wheel of our System, instead of its single element of disturbance. We admit that we always have thought, and think still, that the great object of the war should be the restoration of the Union at all hazards, and at any sacrifice short of honor. And however many honest men may scruple as to law, there can be no doubt that we are put under bonds of honor by the President's proclamation. If the destruction of slavery is to be a consequence of the war, shall we regret it? If it be needful to the successful prosecution of the war, shall anyone oppose it? Is it out of the question to be constitutional, without putting the slaveholders back precisely where they were before they began the rebellion? This seems to be the ground taken by the opposition, but it becomes more and more certain that the people, instructed by the experience of the past three years, will never consent to any plan of adjustment that does not include emancipation. If Congress need any other precedent than *salus populi suprema lex* for giving the form and force of law to the public will, they may find one in the act of Parliament which abolished the feudal privileges of the Highland chiefs in 1747. A great occasion is not to be quibbled with, but to be met with that clear-sighted courage which deprives all objections of their force, if it does not silence them. To stop short of the only measure that can by any possibility be final and decisive, would be to pronounce rebellion a harmless eccentricity. To interpret the Constitution has hitherto been the exclusive prerogative of Slavery: it will be strange if Freedom cannot find a clause in it that will serve her purpose. To scruple at disarming our deadliest foe, would be mere infatuation. We can conceive of nothing parallel, except to have it decided that the arrest of Guy Fawkes and the confiscation of his materials were a violation of Magna Charta; that he should be put back in the cellar of Westminster palace, his gunpowder, his matches, his dark-lantern, restored to him, with handsome damages for his trouble, and Parliament assembled overhead to give

him another chance for the free exercise of his constitutional rights.

We believe, and our belief is warranted by experience, that all measures will be found to have been constitutional at last on which the people are overwhelmingly united. We must not lose sight of the fact, that whatever is *extra*-constitutional is not necessarily *un*-constitutional. The recent proclamation of amnesty will, we have no doubt, in due time bring a vast accession of strength to the emancipationists from the slaveholding states themselves. The danger of slavery has always been in the poor whites of the South; and wherever freedom of the press penetrates—and it always accompanies our armies—the evil thing is doomed. Let no one who remembers what has taken place in Maryland and Missouri think such anticipations visionary. The people of the South have been also put to school during these three years, under a sharper schoolmistress, too, than ever ours has been, and the deadliest enemies of slavery will be found among those who have suffered most from its indirect evils. It is only by its extinction—for without it no secure union would be possible—that the sufferings and losses of the war can be repaid. That extinction accomplished, our wounds will not be long in healing. Apart from the slaveholding class, which is numerically small, and would be socially insignificant without its privileges, there are no such mutual antipathies between the two sections as the conspirators, to suit their own purposes, have asserted, and even done their best to excite. We do not like the Southerners less for the gallantry and devotion they have shown even in a bad cause, and they have learned to respect the same qualities in us. There is no longer the nonsensical talk about Cavaliers and Puritans, nor does the one gallant Southron any longer pine for ten Yankees as the victims of his avenging steel. As for subjugation, when people are beaten they are beaten, and every nation has had its turn. No sensible man in the North would insist on any terms except such as are essential to assure the stability of peace. To talk of the South as our future Poland is to talk with-

out book; for no region rich, prosperous and free could ever become so. It is a geographical as well as a moral absurdity. With peace restored, slavery rooted out, and harmony sure to follow, we shall realize a power and prosperity beyond even the visions of the Fourth of July orator, and we shall see Freedom, while she proudly repairs the ruins of war, as the Italian poet saw her:—

“Girar la Liberta mirai
E baciâr lieta ogni ruina e dire
Ruine sî, ma servitii non mai.”

(I saw Liberty turn
And, joyous, kiss every ruin and say,
“Ruins, yes, but no more slavery.”)

FINIS

