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DR. BRECKINRIDGE'S THIRD ARTICLE ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

Robert J. Breckinridge
D.D., LL.D.

“STATE OF THE COUNTRY.”

BY THE

REV. ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, D. D., LL. D.,

PROFESSOR IN DANVILLE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

REPRINTED FROM THE DANVILLE QUARTERLY REVIEW, FOR JUNE, 1861.

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No. 25 WEST FOURTH STREET,
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B83ART. V. — *State of the Country.*

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I. Civil War. Influence upon it, of the Idea of the Restoration of the Union.

The American people are in the midst of civil war. That calamity which, in the just and almost universal judgment of mankind, is the direst which can befall nations, has already covered our country with its terrible shadow; and the gloom thickens from day to day, portending a conflict as frightful as it is repulsive — whose issues are, in many respects, hardly less uncertain than they may be vast. Hundreds of thousands of armed

men are hastening to slay each other—led by captains many of whom are worthy to command heroes, and provided with every means of mutual destruction which the science and skill of the age can devise. Hundreds of millions of dollars have already been expended in these immense and fatal preparations: and so thoroughly is the most warlike of all races aroused, and so completely are the exigencies of the times held to demand of every man a complete readiness to defend all that he is not willing to surrender, that, at whatever cost, every one capable of bearing arms will be armed, and will use his arms with deadly effect, according as the course of events may seduce or oblige him to do so. It is, indeed, possible that some wonderful interposition of God, or some sudden and heroic impulse falling upon the people, may even yet avert the terrible catastrophe, and arrest the destruction even as it is ready to descend. It is equally possible that, before these lines are printed, great armies which already face each other, may have fought one of those bloody and decisive battles, whose issues determine the fate not only of wars, but of ages. Ignorant of all the future, and imperfectly informed concerning passing events, it becomes us to speak with moderation and candor of the prospects before us. Penetrated with the deepest sorrow at the mournful, though it be in many respects sublime, scene which our country presents, we would forbear to speak at all, if it were not that the general tenor of what we purpose to utter, is designed to keep alive in the hearts of our countrymen the conviction that the whole country may, even yet, be restored; and to influence, so far as anything we can do may influence, the conduct of all these terrible affairs, to that end, and by that idea. It is this which is the burden of all we have hitherto said and done—it is this which justifies nearly any effort, any sacrifice, any suffering, on the part of the nation—it is this which we must keep before the minds of men if we would preserve our countrymen from turning savages, under the influence of the civil war upon which we have entered, and for the prosecution of which such enormous preparations are made by both parties.

II. The long and terrible reign of Parties. Majestic Reappearance of the Nation on the scene of Affairs. Great Truths accepted, and to be maintained.

1. For a long course of years political parties, sectional factions, and the clamor of demagogues, had given that sort of political education to the people, and occupied the thoughts of men with that description of political ideas and desires, that *the nation — the mighty American Nation* — had disappeared from the area of our general politics. It had been for a whole generation Whig, and Democrat, and Republican, and Know-Nothing, and Secessionist, and Abolitionist, and Fire-Eater; the people rent, and confused, and maddened — fraud and violence reigning in the heated canvasses and elections — and the most shameless corruption spreading like a pestilence amongst public men. The glorious Nation had disappeared utterly, as the controlling element in national affairs; — so utterly, that a President of the United States was found capable of conniving — whether through timidity, through folly, through imbecility, or through corruption let posterity decide — at the ruin of the nationality which his Government represented, and the overthrow of the Constitution by virtue of which it existed. So utterly, that a revolt openly conducted in flagrant contempt of the President, the Constitution, and the nation, and attended in all its stages by innumerable acts of war — was allowed to spread from State to State, without the slightest attempt of the nation, or any one representing it, to make itself felt or even heard; until the vast extent of the revolt, and the great number of States on which the partizans of it had seized, became the chief embarrassment in dealing with it at all, and the main plea with timid statesmen why the degraded nation should accept its own destruction, as a fact fully accomplished.

2. *That mighty Nation has reappeared once more on the theatre of affairs.* All thoughtful men knew that such a destruction as was attempted, could not be accomplished by war on one side, without begetting war on the other side. It may be considered madness in the Confederate Government to have preferred the bombardment of Fort Sumter, to its peaceable surrender in three days, through starvation. But it was a choice precisely in the spirit of every act towards the American nation and its Govern-

ment, which had characterized the whole previous course of the revolt, and which has marked the whole treatment extended to Union men in every seceding State, to the present moment. It was possible to have divided the American nation *peaceably*, into two or more nations, by the consent of the American people, and the change of the Federal Constitution. But it was not, in the nature of things, possible to rend it by a military revolt, characterised by a spirit of contemptuous and reckless violence, alike illegal, unjust, and fatal, without arousing the outraged nation, and bringing all the mighty questions at issue, to that arbitrament of arms which the secessionists had chosen — and by which, in one form or another of violence, they have achieved every conquest they have made. We are not partizans of the present National Administration, and have no adequate means of forming an opinion, as to whether the particular occasion and moment — or whether earlier, or whether later, occasions and times — were best suited for armed resistance by it, to the progress of the great military revolt, whose avowed objects were the destruction of the Government, the overthrow of the Constitution, and the ruin of the nation. What we wish to signalize is the majestic reëpppearance of the American Nation in the mighty scene — the simultaneous perishing of all factions, and disappearance of all parties but the party of the nation, and the party of secession — and the unanimous conviction of all American citizens loyal to their country, that the National Government is the true and only lawful representative of the nation itself. With almost absolute unanimity the twenty millions of people in the nineteen Northern States; the great majority of the four millions of white persons in the five Border Slave States; and, as we firmly believe, a very large portion of the four millions of white people in the remaining ten Slave States, though now cruelly oppressed and silenced, cordially recognize these great truths, and will maintain them — namely, that the American people are a nation — that the Constitution and laws of the United States are supreme in this nation — that the Federal Government is the true and only legal representative of this nation, charged with the defence of its safety, the execution of its laws, and the protection of its liberties — in the execution of which duties it is bound to repel force by force.

Nothing can give greater intensity to the facts and principles to which the foregoing statements relate, than a comparison of what has occurred in all the States which have seceded, with what has occurred in all those which have not seceded — touching the means by which the revolutionists have gained the mastery and silenced opposition in the former, and the manner in which the nation has spontaneously roused itself in its own defence in the latter.

III. Duty of the Nation to loyal citizens in the seceded States. Their subjection to a Reign of Terror. Alleged unanimity in the seceded States.

1. Next in importance to the clear apprehension of the duty, which every loyal citizen of the nation owes to the National Government, in this most painful crisis — concerning which we have just endeavored to disclose the enthusiastic conviction of the nation itself; is an equally clear apprehension of the duty which the nation owes to loyal citizens in those States in which the revolutionary party has gained the ascendancy, or in which that party may hereafter gain it. This latter question, as far as we know, seems not, as yet, to have been fully considered or determined by the General Government. The secession party seems to have decided it at once, and according to its violent instincts; and not only does their unanimous judgment demand of them exile, death, or conversion — but their legal authorities are reputed to be prompt, and their ubiquitous committees of vigilance very vehement in the execution of a code — nearly as simple and efficacious as that of Mahomet himself. There is much reason to believe that the actual majority of votes was cast against the secessionists in several States upon which they have seized; that in several others held by them, such a majority would have been cast, if an opportunity had been allowed; that in not one of those States has there been a true and fair popular ratification of secession; that before the actual commencement of armed resistance on a large scale by the Federal Government, the actual majority of the people in the Confederate States, taken as a body, was hostile to secession; and that, undeniably, a certain number, and that considerable, of loyal citizens, are in every one of those States. Allowing that a state of things even tolerably near to that contained in the foregoing statement exists — nothing seems to us more clear than that the

American people, and by consequence the Federal Government, are bound to put forth their utmost strength for the protection of American citizens situated as persons loyal to the Union are believed to be, in every State that has seceded. Questions of property, questions of rights of various kinds, questions of profit and advantage — may be compromised or even gracefully surrendered on many occasions. But no Government — no people — no gentleman — no Christian, can withdraw protection and support from those who are bound to them by the most sacred and tender mutual ties, and leave them to be degraded, oppressed, and persecuted — without atrocious iniquity and boundless degradation. It seems to us that it would be transparently clear, even if nine-tenths of the people in every one of the Confederate States, were decided secessionists — that they should be required to treat the loyal citizens of the United States, found casually amongst them, much more those resident amongst them upon the sudden outbreak of revolt, with justice and humanity. If, however, it is really true that the secessionists are the minority in many of those States, upon which they have seized by superior organization, and the suddenness and violence of their proceedings; then, undoubtedly, the duty of the nation is as obvious to deliver those States from such a despotism, as it would be if their oppressors were foreign invaders. In like manner, it is the duty of the General Government to furnish all the munitions of war to its loyal citizens residing in States where it is necessary for them to defend, by arms, their loyalty to the Union, against armed conspiracies seeking to force them into secession.

2. Peaceable revolutions are made by voting; and the fundamental principle of republican government — which the nation is bound by the Constitution to guarantee to every State — is that the majority of those entitled to vote — and not an armed faction — represents the sovereignty. It would be curious to compare the universal contempt for popular rights and institutions, and for all the principles and usages of American freedom, which has so conspicuously distinguished the career of this secession revolution — since the aristocratic minority has got possession of power; with the theory of “Concurrent Majorities,” so carefully elaborated by their first Apostle, Mr. Calhoun, for the special protec-

tion of the rights of minorities in free governments. Widely different from the principle of Mr. Calhoun's theory, is that now reduced to practice in the seceded States, by getting together a certain number of persons called a "Convention"—in whom the sovereignty of the people is supposed to reside in a permanent and manageable form; bodies which in the revolted States have been converted into secret, permanent, and irresponsible engines, first of revolution, and then of despotism. We do not speak of the suppression of such desperate substitutes for republican government; nor will we stop to point out how fatally such proceedings reveal the anarchy from which they take their rise, and the military despotism in the future to which they unerringly point. What we have to urge is, the solemn duty of the nation to protect loyal minorities, much more loyal majorities, against the ferocious proceedings already made manifest under the workings of these institutions; and to warn those yet free from their pitiless grasp, to prepare for slavery before they rush into the power of such rulers.

3. Nor is it out of place to remind those who clamor incessantly about the unanimity of the South, and the folly and wickedness of attempting to resist the settled purpose of a whole people who have resolved to leave a Union which they detest; that the nation does not believe in either the alleged "unanimity," or the proclaimed "fixed purpose." Doubtless it is true, that the peculiar notions of exclusive loyalty to the State we live in, which prevail extensively in the Southern States—have caused many loyal people to submit to the despotism which forced them into secession; and State pride, affection for our native land, and many other considerations, have swelled the ranks of the army of the secessionists, since war on a large scale, and imminent peril to their cause, suddenly and most unexpectedly met them in their violent career. But the American people, in this great crisis of their destiny, have solemn duties to perform—and have a right to be satisfied that they are truly informed, before they take steps which they may never be able to retrace. The American people fervently desire the entire restoration of the Union, with the entire consent of all the secession States. And they firmly believe that result—attended by the total overthrow of the secession faction—would

immediately succeed a reïction in the South, not the tenth part as great as that which has just occurred in the North — not greater, indeed, than the one, in an opposite direction, which has occurred throughout the South, within half a year. It is, just now, a question of testimony first, and then of duty founded thereon;— a question, not between the South and the North; but between a nation of some twenty-six or seven millions, and an active faction, possibly under one million, in revolt against it.

IV. The Seceded *States* may return to the Union, or the *Secession Party* may maintain their Revolt by Arms. The War one of Self-Preservation, on the Part of the Nation. Not aggressive and against the South—but defensive and against Secessionists. Supposing the Triumph of the Secessionists; insuperable Difficulties. Every benefit contemplated by Secession, defeated by the War into which it plunged. Restoration to the Union the true Result.

1. We have already said that the issues of this unnatural war, are in many respects as uncertain as they will probably be vast. Contingently, however, the most immediate and direct issue of it, can have but one, of two results. Either the seceded States must return to their loyalty to the nation, and their position as members of the United States of America; or the secession party must be able to vindicate by arms the course upon which they have entered, and, maintaining the independence of as many of the States as may finally adhere to them, those States must be acknowledged by the American people and Government as a separate nation. Of course, there can be no such result as the conquest of the seceded States, and the holding them as Provinces or Territories, by the Federal Government. Such an attempt is not to be thought of as possible — nor to be entertained, for a moment, even if it were possible, as a permanent policy — but, beyond all this, even if it were politic and easy, it would be even more abhorrent, if possible, than secession itself, to the feelings of the American people, and the principles of American liberty. Which of these issues will be realized depends, apparently, on the event of the war: concerning which we will add something presently, seeing the probabilities of that event ought to be a very weighty consideration with both parties to it. In the meantime let it be observed, that the mere statement of the case makes it manifest that the war entered upon by the nation, not as one of aggression and con-

quest, but one of self-defence and self-preservation, can be conducted only as war upon the secession party and Government — and not as war against the people of the South; a war, therefore, which would end of itself, upon the overthrow of the secession party, and the suppression of the Confederate Government erected by that party.

2. Upon the happening of such an event, which certainly is possible, perhaps highly probable, the allegation is that no people — no South — would remain to reconstruct society and government, and restore the seceded States to their place in the Union. We have already spoken of the want of faith in all such extravagant statements; an incredulity fortified by the whole career of the revolt, both in its method of usurping power, and its method of producing unanimity afterwards; to which must be added the undeniable proofs existing in public acts and records, in popular movements and votes, in numberless private communications, in the persecutions lavishly inflicted upon thousands of persons, and in the seductions habitually employed against every doubtful, and the menaces against every loyal, citizen. What is now passing in Tennessee and Virginia, while we write, is full of significance as to what might be expected if the army of the secessionists were driven out of those States. What happened, months ago, in various Southern States in which that party succeeded in establishing their despotism — and what has recently happened in Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky, where their desperate efforts failed — is conclusive as to the great fact, that the mass of the community every where needed only to have been wisely and bravely led, to have conquered what seems to have been, almost every where that it existed, a faction of the minority. What made it powerful, was its long previous training — its activity and daring at a moment of great popular discontent, mortification, and alarm — and the fatal connivance of Mr. Buchanan, rendered decisive by the active coöperation with the revolt, of those members of his Cabinet whose positions had given them special opportunities to promote its organization and its first acts. It had, originally, no element of a national movement — it has now no aspect of a national revolution. And, in our judgment, the moment it encounters signal defeat, a counter revolution will set in, that will strip it of all that did not

belong to it in its first stages; and under just and wise treatment, will eventually restore to the Union every seceded State, not excepting South Carolina itself. For ourselves, and we believe in this we utter the sentiments of the whole nation, we desire for the people in the States now held in armed opposition to the National Government, nothing worse than their complete deliverance from the iron despotism of a disloyal and frantic party, and their speedy and complete restoration, in perfect equality and renewed fraternity, to all the glory of our common nationality, and all the blessings of our true and regulated freedom.

3. Supposing we are mistaken in the essential conditions by which the foregoing result is to be obtained, there remains only the alternative of the triumph of the revolt over the nation, and the permanent independence of the seceded States. We do not propose to discuss, at this time, the consequences of such a division of the nation—but only to look calmly at some of the most obvious difficulties of its accomplishment. And in the very front of all these, is the question of the ability of the secession party, either to obtain from the consent of the nation, the concession of the independence of the Confederate States, or its ability to wrest it from the nation by arms. The question of that consent is a question of peace, not of war; a question which the secession party disdained even to discuss before they flew to arms; a question which will, hereafter, depend essentially upon the state of the country, and the wishes of the States now under the dominion of that party, after the war is ended. The great principle on which the consent of the nation could, in any circumstances be given, is precisely opposite to the great principle on which this revolt proceeds—namely, veneration for popular rights and the popular will. What view the people of the South may take of their rights, and what may be their will touching their erection into a separate nation—are questions which may be very greatly affected by the progress of events—and the decision of which, by themselves, may be very various, according as they are in circumstances which allow them to vote and act freely, or, which oblige them to vote and act under a ubiquitous military despotism, administered by armed revolutionary committees of vigilance. What is passing now in Virginia and Tennessee—what has passed

in every State that has already seceded — what was attempted in Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri — would not, in all probability, be taken — by a great nation loyal to popular rights, and full of veneration for free institutions — for such an expression of the popular desire and will, on the part of great numbers of its citizens, as would challenge its consent to its own dismemberment. It is not to be disguised, however, that even under the most favorable aspect in which the subject of the peaceable division of the nation could be presented, there are obstacles in the way of its accomplishment which nothing but the highest and noblest convictions of mutual obligations, united with the profoundest sense of mutual forbearance, accommodation, and good will — could surmount. In the present state of the country, it is superfluous to discuss these obstacles. And in the degree that independence, by whatever means, as the only alternative to restoration to the Union, is environed with difficulties; is the madness of the secession movement manifest, and the duty of the nation to suppress it clear.

4. It seems to remain, then, that the solitary result of the war, is the restoration of the seceded States to the Union, or the triumph of the arms of the secessionists over the nation. The more completely this great truth is fixed in the minds of all parties, the better for all. The more thoroughly the nation understands that it is fighting neither for vengeance nor for conquest, but directly for self-preservation — and remotely for the maintenance of its independence in the face of all other nations, and for its future peace, security, and advancement in the glorious career now threatened to be cut short; the more it will be disposed to prosecute the war forced upon it, in the manner which becomes such a people, driven into such a conflict. And the more completely those who are in arms against the nation realize, that what they seek is, probably, not attainable; and the more clearly the States and people now seduced or terrified into a revolt so unnatural, understand that the suppression of that revolt means, not their degradation, but their restoration to all that was won by the valor, and confirmed by the wisdom of their ancestors; the more certain will be the cure of their present frenzy — the more rapid their deliverance from the delusions under which they have erred ex-

ceedingly — and the more thorough their overthrow of the faction now leading them to destruction.

5. To all human appearance, the establishment of the independence of the Confederate States by the present war, is impossible. How much blood may be shed, how much treasure may be squandered, how much suffering may be inflicted, how much ruin, in ten thousand ways, may be brought upon millions of people, and how near to the brink of destruction the country may be brought — can now be known only to the Ruler of the Universe. But so far as any object avowed, or even conceivable, which ever was, or can be, proposed as a benefit to the Southern States, was expected to be promoted by secession; this war renders that object unattainable. We do not propose to enter into discussions from a military point of view, nor do we underrate the difficulties of every kind, which the General Government has to encounter. But it seems to us perfectly inevitable, that without the special interposition of God for the destruction of this great nation, the certainty is complete — that the independence of the Confederate States cannot be established as the result of this war. In the degree that this judgment may be supposed to be just, two conclusions, both of them of great weight, follow. The first is, the wickedness and folly not only of the revolt itself, but of the whole spirit and method in which it has been prosecuted; the second is the certainty that the fact itself, in proportion as it becomes manifest, must weaken, throughout the whole South, the purpose to prosecute a conflict so ruinous and so bootless. No doubt there are wars which may be prosecuted to the last extremity; and, no doubt, many thousands of secessionists may have persuaded themselves that this is such a war, or may have so deeply wrecked all other hopes that only this desperate stake is left to them. But the dictates of reason and morality — the judgment of mankind — and the irreversible decree of posterity, is different here. This is a revolt, whose complete success would not have justified the war into which it has plunged a great country; and, therefore, the certainty of its failure robs its continuance of all pretext. And such, at no distant period, may be expected to be the judgment of the great mass of the Southern people; and, by consequence, their peaceful and cordial return to their loyalty, and to

the exercise of all their rights as citizens of the United States—instead of being a preposterous dream—is not only the most probable, but apparently the certain result, of a wise and courageous treatment of affairs.

V. Miscalculations of Secession. Miscarriage as to a “United South.” And as to a “Divided North.” And as to the temper, and purpose of the Nation. And as to Expansion, the Slave trade, Free trade, Boundless Prosperity, Cotton Monopoly. Secession a frightful and incalculable mistake.

1. If we consider for a moment the signal miscarriage of all the permanent objects of the secessionists, and the strange miscalculations, and absurd pretensions upon which their hopes of ultimate success rested; it will diminish, on one hand, all distrust of the grounds on which their hopes of establishing their independence by terrifying the nation into consent, or conquering it by arms, have been shown to be futile; and will augment, on the other hand, the just confidence of the nation that it is master of the situation; and augment, also, the confidence with which every man in the South, whether loyal or disloyal, ought to contemplate the disastrous end of this revolt, as inevitable. To succeed in establishing, by force, the independence of the South—using that word in its large sense, as embracing all the Slave States—necessarily involved, as the very first condition, the unanimity of the whole South in the movement. Instead of this, such a line of conduct was adopted, as made the action of every Southern State isolated; and this policy was pursued in such a manner, as to make a resort to violence necessary in securing unanimity in any State—and as to make the principles of despotism supplant the principles of freedom, in every State. The seeds of utter defeat were thickly sown in the first open movement of the conspiracy. To-day, instead of a completely united, there is a thoroughly divided South. And we feel perfectly satisfied, that if every arm was removed from the fifteen Slave States, and every man in them all was allowed freely to choose his side—and then the whole population was equally and completely armed, and the question fought out; the result would be the suppression of the revolt. Born of Southern parents, in a Southern State—never having owed or professed allegiance to any other government than that of the United States, and that

of the Commonwealth of Kentucky—never having even resided, during a life far from short, except temporarily and for brief periods, out of the South—and having been obliged by our course of life to acquire a large acquaintance with the people, the institutions, and the interests of the South; the opinion we have expressed may be fairly weighed against a large amount of clamor. It would, we are convinced, be vouched as true and sound, on the conditions stated, by more than half a million of Southern men—ready upon fair occasion, and if need required, to uphold it with their lives.

2. Again, the second imperative necessity, preliminary to any flagrant proceedings by force, was the absolute certainty that the pretensions of the South would be supported, at least by opinion, in the twenty States of the North, in such a way as to divide and weaken all concerted movements, designed to precipitate the overwhelming force of twenty millions of people, upon eight millions—if the whole South was united—with four millions of slaves scattered amongst them; concerning the freedom or the servitude of which slaves, the revolutionists professed that the chief cause of the war lay. Instead of that, the unanimity of the North proved, from the start, to be complete, and its enthusiasm so great, that a brief proclamation of the President, after the bombardment at Charleston, called three or four hundred thousand volunteers to the standard of the nation; a single State, (Ohio) offering more men than were demanded for the whole nation. With these two facts, nothing can be more obvious, than the utter incompetency or the desperate recklessness, of those who precipitated their followers into a conflict as unequal as it was wicked—and did this with boastings and revilings as unseemly as they were unfounded.

3. Again, no delusion was ever more complete than that into which the leaders of the secession party fell and slept, during their long conspiracy of thirty years, of the true character, and actual position and temper of the American people, and of the force of the power they had themselves accumulated, and the value of the preparation they had made for the setting of a great nation at defiance. They had talked treason so long together, that they seemed to consider it a power of

itself, and all patriotism extinct. The national treasury made bankrupt, the small army put totally out of reach, and the arms of the nation diligently stored where they could be seized — the little navy laid up, or scattered in different seas — the unhappy President deluded, seduced, or terrified — and a secret band of sworn allies made up of desperate adventurers, disloyal soldiers, and corrupt politicians scattered over the nation; these, as far as the public are yet informed, seem to have been the original implements which were deemed adequate for the first start of a military revolution, whose object was the dismemberment of one of the greatest of existing nations of the most warlike people, with the finest and firmest nationality in the world. Their subsequent success — founded upon a temporary phrenzy in the public mind, and upon the military ardor of the Southern people, their devotion to their domestic institutions, and their personal and State pride — may be allowed to redeem, in some degree, the miscalculated force of the conspiracy, from utter contempt. It is not, however, to the force or foresight of the conspiracy, but it is to the disordered and perilous state of the country, itself due to causes which we have developed in publications hitherto recently made; that the great political and military movements throughout the larger portion of the South, subsequent to the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln, are to be attributed. These movements — in many points of view most deplorable, in many others illustrative of noble traits of character of the Southern people, and which have given to the secession cause most of its strength and all its dignity — even if they could have been foreseen as one element of the future, are the farthest possible from excusing the revolt. For great as they may be, and unworthy as the cause of secession may be of them — their inadequacy to achieve the objects proposed by the war, is none the less certain; an inadequacy founded in the nature of things, and which wise leaders would have foreseen, and generous leaders would not have sacrificed.

4. When we turn our thoughts towards topics more remote than those hitherto considered, they all appear to conspire to the same result — the entire defeat of every permanent object proposed to be gained by the secession war. If the whole of the

Slave States were united, as the result of this war, in a separate Confederacy—all the ideas of the future expansion of the new nation, which have occupied so large a space in the thoughts of men, might be surrendered at once. One year would not elapse, in all probability, before an alliance of all nations interested in the vast and increasing commerce which must pass across the isthmus of Panama, and amongst the islands of the Caribbean sea, and across the waters of the Gulf of Mexico; would effectually close the question of expansion, for the Confederate States. In like manner, the question of the Slave Trade, to the free prosecution of which so much importance continues to be attached, in the most earnest of the seceded States; may be considered definitively at an end, let this revolt terminate as it may. In like manner, the doctrine of Free Trade, in favor of which the doctrine of secession took its rise in South Carolina, and which has been continually and conspicuously held forth as one of the priceless blessings to be secured by the revolt; is utterly subverted by one of the earliest acts of the Confederate Congress, imposing a duty on exports—a form of obstructing commerce forbidden by the Federal Constitution. And the boasted career of incalculable wealth which secession promised to inaugurate—in the first year of its existence is signalized by the charity of the people of Illinois sending corn free of charge, to the starving poor of Mississippi; while, if the war shall continue till the Confederate States conquer the United States, their first year of peace will exhibit the heaviest ratable public debt, perhaps, in the world, and the most burdensome taxation ever borne by an agricultural people; and a bankruptcy as absolute as the golden dreams of secession were preposterous. To make but one suggestion more, it would, perhaps, have been impossible for any madness less destructive than this secession war, to have seriously disturbed for a century to come, the near approach which the South was making to the most productive and extensive monopoly, ever possessed by any people in the products of the earth—in its growing control of the cotton market of the world. At present, so imminent is the peril into which this boundless source of wealth has been brought, not only for a few seasons, but it may be in permanence—that the armed intervention of the great mari-

time and manufacturing nations of the world, for the deliverance and protection of the cotton of the Confederate States, is amongst the desperate hopes to which their situation gives expression.

5. Now it does appear to us, that these statements reveal principles and facts of supreme significance, all pointing in the same direction, and challenging profound consideration. They appear to prove, that secession, in its origin, its progress, its present condition, and its terrible future — is a blunder, a failure, a frightful and incalculable mistake, founded upon every sort of error and miscalculation. It is in that view of them, and of their teachings, that we have arrayed them. Allowing whatever may be thought necessary for our mistake, for our want of full knowledge, even for our supposed prejudice or want of candor, enough remains to indicate, what we have so earnestly insisted on, that the complete restoration of the Union, is not only a glorious event within our reach — which it is the highest duty and interest, both of the nation and of the seceded States, to accept and act upon; but that the ordinary course of the immense and terrible affairs now passing before our eyes, leads, though it may be through frightful sufferings, towards that result. Would to God, it might have been in peace, and by reason and love, that the country had been saved! Thanks be to God, for a refuge to all parties, such as seems to us to be set before them all, when these calamities are overpassed! For the blood that is shed, and the crimes that are committed — let them who are responsible answer to God!

VI. The Border Slave States. State of parties in 1860. Sudden and secret Revolution in Virginia. Probable effects, political and military. Western Virginia. Central mountain Route to the central South. Delaware, Maryland, Missouri. The original States — the States carved out of them — the purchased States. Kentucky, her position, peril, temper, purpose.

1. At the start, this secession movement was exclusively confined to the disciples of Mr. Calhoun — and they, having their chief seat in South Carolina, and schools rather than parties in the upper Slave States, did not hold the controlling power even in 1860, in one half of the Cotton States. By degrees, the Democratic party of the South had become imbued, under the abused name of “State Rights,” with the doctrines of free trade, of the

increase and extension of slavery, and of secession : and the disruption of that party at Charleston and Baltimore, as far as the public are now informed, was in the interest of these new ideas, and of those old disciples of Mr. Calhoun. The parties, in the fifteen Slave States, which supported Mr. Bell and Mr. Douglass for the Presidency in 1860, could, if they had united, have carried nearly all those States — and, for the time, have put down secession. If the Whig Convention, at Baltimore, had nominated Gen. Houston, instead of Mr. Bell, this result would probably have followed. It is, in effect, the want of ability, or the want of patriotism, in the leaders of parties in the Slave States in 1860, to which a very large part of the present danger of the nation is to be attributed. In the mean time, the Democratic party had already, before 1860, acquired the predominance in all the Slave States, and when the secession party took up arms against the National Government, the political and military power of all those States was in the hands of that party. The election of Mr. Lincoln, which produced such a shock throughout the Slave States, afforded the opportunity of creating a powerful agitation, upon the extreme pro-slavery aspect of secession ; and it was used with so little scruple and so great diligence, that to be loyal to the Union, and to be an abolitionist, have come to mean the same thing in the vocabulary of secessionists ; and organized political fanatics and ruffians, wherever they are not repressed by the fear of effectual resistance, have, under that pretext, initiated a reign of terror. The common predominance of the Democratic party, and the universal existence of the institution of slavery in all those States, were the bonds of union amongst them all, whereby those who meditated revolt expected and sought to carry them all for secession : the latter fact affording the secessionists the most powerful means of inflaming the passions of men, and the former fact providing the power to coerce such as could not be seduced. So far as the five Border Slave States were concerned, of which we have now to speak particularly, (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri) the presidential election of 1860 broke the back of this scheme, by breaking, in those five States, the power of the party which supported Major Breckinridge for the Presidency. The other part of the scheme of the

secessionists, encountered, in those five States, obstacles which proved to be extremely serious. In the first place, the loyalty of the people was far more stubborn than had been expected, and the peril of attempting to coerce them into disloyalty far more grave than had been encountered elsewhere. In the second place, the institution of slavery, in those States, stood in a position, and the people occupied toward it a relation, widely different from the corresponding facts in the Cotton States; and the people, satisfied with the matter as it stood, saw nothing but peril in the remedy offered by secession. In the third place, the geographical position of those States gave them immense weight while peace could be maintained, and made them the theatre of the war, which every one could see the secessionists were making inevitable; so that every consideration of wisdom, patriotism and self-respect, admonished them to maintain, inviolably, their position as citizens of the United States.

2. Such, briefly, was the nature of the situation, generally considered, in the five Border Slave States; which contain more white inhabitants, and military resources, than the remaining ten Slave States. If these five States had stood firm, the fate of secession was sealed. The war must have been short, as the speedy and complete restoration of the Union certain. The sudden, secret, and deplorable revolution created in Virginia by a Convention, pledged to the great majority of the people who had elected them, and expressly bound, by the law which created the body, to take a widely different course; necessarily changed, in many respects, the posture of events, and the nature and course of the war. It cannot, in our judgment, as we have shown, change the final result. It will inflict incalculable injury upon Virginia herself—and must, so far as she is concerned, end in the division of the commonwealth, or in radical changes in the nature of her government, and in her internal policy. As we understand the matter, the popular representation rests on a mixed and arbitrary basis of land, slaves, and voters, distributing representation by great sections of the State, and then by counties, and towns perhaps, in those sections respectively; the general result being, that the great central section of the State is unequally represented as compared with the eastern section, and the still greater western

section still more unequally as compared with both the others. The government, thus permanently thrown into the hands of a minority of the people occupying the eastern and southern sections of the State, has been long considered disregardful of the ordinary rights and interests of the subject majority, occupying the western and northern sections of the State. A permanent and flagrant instance of this chronic injustice, is an unequal system of taxation, so framed as to relieve the immense aggregate wealth, in the form of slaves, held by the ruling minority, in large part from any tax at all, and as to the remainder, from a large part of the property tax, by fixing a low and arbitrary value on slaves, by act of Assembly. Another instance of the same sort is alleged to exist, in the systematic injustice with which the revenue thus fraudulently raised, is spent entirely in the interest of the same ruling minority, with complete disregard of the special interests of the heavily taxed majority. The Convention which voted, in secret session, the ordinance of secession, with a mob of secession ruffians, as is alleged, clamoring at their reluctant obedience to its behests; passed, also, and submitted with that ordinance, to the people for ratification, an act proposing to concede something concerning this slave taxation. Even this concession, wrung by the necessity of the occasion — was characteristic of the ruling spirit; the great revolution, though submitted to the idle form of a popular vote, under the eyes of fifty thousand armed secessionists — being made effectual and executed at once, as if already approved by the people; the little act of concession, being made ineffectual, till ratified by the popular vote. This statement, necessary to the full understanding of the case between Eastern and Western Virginia, makes it all the more probable that the movement in the latter against secession, and against the dominant minority in the former, will have consequences at once permanent and important; all bearing directly against the efficacy of the revolutionary action of Eastern Virginia, and of the late Convention.

3. Not the least important of the consequences involved in the state of affairs we have been disclosing, is that a perfectly practicable military route is thus opened through the heart of the most loyal population of the whole South, into the very heart of

the inland secession country; whereby the General Government may lead an army for the protection of loyal citizens in the back parts of Georgia and both the Carolinas on the left hand, in Northern Mississippi and Alabama in front, and in West Tennessee on the right. The mountain region which covers Western Virginia and Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee, penetrates into Georgia, Alabama, and North and South Carolina. Two hundred miles wide from east to west, and double as long from north to south, the long valleys of this remarkable region, flanked everywhere by mountain ranges, run precisely in the direction that an army for protection of loyal citizens of the South should take. A march of ten or fifteen days from the Ohio river, through Western Virginia, would place a force in the mountains of East Tennessee, cutting the line of the railroad which connects the Atlantic ocean with the Mississippi river at Memphis. The effects of such a forward movement, invited by the conduct of Virginia, and indicated by the highest military and political considerations — would be immediate and decisive, if sustained by an adequate force, under an able commander. And our persecuted brethren in East Tennessee, Northern Alabama, and the back parts of Georgia and the Carolinas, may see — in the hints that we have ventured to throw out — that they are not out of the reach of succor. We believe that ten thousand volunteers from the mountains of Kentucky, would follow ROBERT ANDERSON in such an expedition, for such an object; and it may be confidently added, ten thousand more from Western Virginia, and ten thousand who would join them in East Tennessee. No portion of America had less motive to betray herself than Virginia had; none could ever put more at stake, by one act of, what seems to us, suicidal folly, than she has done. Renowned and venerated name! — well do we know that many of your heroic sons will die for you, on the mere point of honor, even though they blush at what you have done! They will die in vain; neither maintaining what you have decreed, nor wiping out its stain!

4. The posture of Delaware and Maryland may be considered definitively settled, and, as to the result, essentially the same, in many respects; and that of Missouri is so analagous to that of Maryland, that we need not separate it from them, in the few

remarks it is necessary to make. Delaware casts in her lot, with a prompt movement and a loyal heart, with the nation of which she is so small but so true a part. The relation of Delaware to Maryland is geographically such, that it seems a great marvel that both of them should, in times like these, apparently overlook the great mutual importance of their forming the closest bonds with each other. Maryland looked to Virginia for guidance — when she and Delaware united were really more important to the Federal Government, than Virginia was; and far more entitled, in the circumstances, to give the lead than to follow Virginia. Her great peril before the late revolt in Baltimore, was her want of preparation, watchfulness, and self-reliance; which, but for the wise, forbearing, and firm conduct of the General Government, would have cost her dear. Her great peril now is, from the seductions of Virginia, and the machinations of her own disloyal sons. As to her destiny — no discussion can make it any plainer than it is already, to every one who will reflect upon her whole position. As long as the Federal Government exists, and Washington is the capital of the American nation, Maryland is an indispensable portion of that nation; and as such, has before her a boundless career of prosperity, freedom, and honor. In her, disloyalty to the nation is not only wickedness — it is folly. The same general state of case, though for reasons in some respects different, exists with regard to Missouri. If the country west of Missouri is to remain a portion of the nation, it is impossible for the nation to allow that State to separate from it. If the South is to become a separate nation, it is equally impossible for the United States to give up the military position — one of the strongest in the world — covered by the mouths of the Ohio and Missouri rivers. The position of Missouri is central, and unspeakably powerful and important, as a member of the Federal Union; and there is no degree of wealth, power, and influence, to which she may not attain, if the Union is maintained. So that her own interest, in every conceivable way, points to the same great career, which the absolute necessities of the nation will secure for her, if she continues loyal to it. To us, we admit, this whole affair of secession has been an enigma, in this — that all the reasons and pretexts, alleged as a justification, or even an excuse

for the course which the revolt has taken, have appeared to us so totally disproportioned to the conduct they professed to explain; that we have felt as if there must be other grounds, as yet concealed from the public, upon which men of sense and honor pursued a line of conduct, apparently so monstrous, as compared with all the known defences of it. We regret to say that the secessionists in Missouri, and we must add, though perhaps in a less degree, in Maryland, appear to be signally amenable to this charge, whether we consider what it was they attempted — or the means which they resorted to — or the manner in which they quailed, when it became necessary to assume the responsibility of what they had done — or the machinations they have kept up, since their conspiracy in both those States was defeated. It is clear to us that the million and a half, or upwards, of white inhabitants, in Delaware, Maryland, and Missouri, must be counted out — whenever the strength of secession is summed up. And we will now proceed to show that the million in Kentucky must also be deducted.

5. There are very high senses in which all the States are equal, both in fact, and in the contemplation of the Federal Constitution. Nevertheless, there are circumstances connected with the past history, and indeed with the origin, of all the States, that seem to place them in positions by no means identical — touching the “State Rights,” and the corresponding “National Rights,” which enter so largely into the difficulties produced by secession. We have, in a former publication, attempted to show that a National Government and State Governments united into one political system, is the original, continuous, exclusive, and perpetual form of government chosen by the American people since ever they were a nation, and by all the commonwealths composing that nation since ever they were States; and we have attempted, after establishing this controlling truth, to show its bearing upon secession, in various points of view. What we have to say now is, that at the bar of reason and conscience, there is a difference touching the rights claimed, as to secession, between the original thirteen States, and the twenty-one States added since; and that there is a difference, again, between those out of these twenty-one added States, which were acquired by conquest, treaty, or purchase,

and those which were created out of portions of the first thirteen States. The plea of Virginia or North Carolina, for example, might have a certain aspect entitling it to grave consideration; while the plea, for example, of Louisiana, Texas, and Florida, might provoke only derision; while the plea, for example, of Tennessee to have the benefit of the Repeal Ordinance of her mother North Carolina, might appear to be nearer, in equity, to the first than to the second of the two other classes. Our judgment is against the validity of the very highest of these pleas; and the lowest of them seem to us monstrous, in every point of view. Considering the past history of the case of Louisiana, for example, her recent conduct, so far from being founded in justice, is even destitute of a decent regard for appearances.

6. The position of Kentucky, the only remaining Border Slave State, is historically at the head of the class of new States carved out of old ones. From her birth as the first State added, nearly seventy years ago, to the original thirteen, her whole career has been marked by the noble qualities of Virginia, at that period, and before, and long after, and which shone, with peculiar luster, in the founders of the young commonwealth. And we confidently predict, that let Virginia falter and fall, as she may, her daughter will maintain her loyalty to the good, and will reject the evil, in her example. Behold an example and a proof: Virginia asked her to meet her in counsel to *preserve* the Union; meantime, Virginia suddenly determined, before the appointed day of counsel, to *destroy* the Union. Kentucky having accepted the former counsel and invitation, went on totally regardless of the subsequent madness—elected her commissioners without opposition, and by the largest popular vote she ever gave to any proposition—and kept the appointed day. There is, in fact, but one internal peril hanging over Kentucky. The executive power of the State, and the command of her military force, is in the hands of a Governor—having yet two years to serve—who is totally out of sympathy with the great mass of the people, and who has used the influence of his office, and all its power, in a direction, and towards an end, hateful to the bulk of those whose Governor he is. If Mr. Magoffin was a loyal Union man, the whole internal difficulty of Kentucky would terminate in a

week; unless the secession minority should be mad enough to take up arms, and call in Confederate troops; in which case, of course, unless Kentucky should instantly suppress them, she would become one of the theatres of the war. That event may happen. It is believed by many to be highly probable, under present circumstances. Situated as the State is, it is a contingency which is constantly impending; and to meet which, if it should happen, there is no way but by arms. The very plainest duty of the Union men of Kentucky, therefore, for months past, has been to arm and organize themselves, to the very last man, and in the most effectual manner, and in the shortest possible time. We desire, from the bottom of our heart, that Governor Magoffin, and the party with which he acts, may be content to guide their conduct by law, and in obedience to the known will of the people of Kentucky; and that by so doing, he may keep the calamities of war from desolating the State. But if he and his party will not do this, or cannot do it—upon both of which points there is deep and wide distrust in the public mind—then he and they must take the responsibility of all that may follow. And he and they both well know, that the people of Kentucky will not submit to the despotism of the Confederate States—will not allow of a reign of terror—will not tolerate revolutionary committees—will not tamely submit to injuries, insults, oppressions, or usurpations of any kind—and will not give up their loyalty to the American nation, or their place in the American Union. The mass of the people of Kentucky sincerely desire the restoration of the entire Union; they strongly disapprove of the whole course of the secessionists from the beginning; they believe, at the same time, that the whole South has had great cause of dissatisfaction—and they do not feel free to take part in the war against the Confederate States: nor will they take part against the Federal Government, which, however they may disapprove of it, or its acts, they recognize as the representative of the nation of which they are a loyal part, and the chief executive authority under that Constitution which is the supreme law. What they desire and propose, therefore, is to take no part in this war; and by this means, they intend—in the first place, to express the true state of their feelings; in the second place, to occupy a position in

which, as a mediator, they may, as soon and as often as occasion offers, do all in their power to restore peace and Union, if that be possible; and in the third place, to preserve themselves and their State from the horrors of a conflict which they did all they could to prevent, which they cannot engage in with a good will, and which, in the divided state of opinion amongst her people, and by reason of her geographical position, would probably be ruinous to the State, by means of her becoming actively engaged in it.

7. Such we believe to be the existing state of opinion and affairs in Kentucky. With regard to it, we will make but two general remarks. The first is, that in our judgment, the state of opinion in Kentucky is chiefly characterized by the public mind being torn by conflicting principles and passions, often working even in the same mind, in opposite directions,—and, as the general result, begetting a decided popular reluctance to any violent measures, or any extreme courses, or any irrecoverable step; but that the tendency of opinion has been constant and rapid, in favor of the Union; and that, at every period, and especially at present, the number of persons who would vote to take Kentucky out of the Union, is a comparatively small portion of the people—made dangerous by their violence, their activity, their organization, their being extensively armed, their good understanding with the secession leaders and military officers, and their sympathy with the chief executive and military authorities in the Commonwealth. The second remark we have to make is, that the same wise and lofty forbearance manifested by the general Government towards Maryland, and we will add towards Missouri—will be manifested, there is every reason to believe, towards Kentucky, in the high but unusual position she has felt it to be her duty to assume. In the case of Kentucky—and we may add Missouri—this conduct of the President, which those States certainly should applaud, and which would give them peace at once, if it were imitated by the Confederate Government, is extremely significant; as it seems to indicate that, in his opinion, the neutral and yet loyal position of these two great central States, may, in certain highly probable events of the war, be turned to great advantage, in that complete restoration of the

Union, which the loyal citizens of both of those States ardently desire.

VII. General Conclusion.

There remain many topics of great importance and significance, concerning which we have said nothing. And yet the number and the magnitude of those we have attempted to elucidate, compared with the narrowness of the space they occupy, might indicate that our error may rather be in attempting too much, than in not attempting more. The whole subject is one, of which we never think seriously, without profound astonishment and anguish; about which we have never written a line without attempting to exercise the severest rectitude, as if we were speaking in the face of another generation. This civil war is a terrible portent. All civilized nations regard it with horror; and posterity will be obliged to pronounce it an inconceivable outrage upon the freedom, the morality, and the civilization of the present age. To what ends God, in his adorable Providence, has allowed it, and will conduct it, and use it — it behooves every one, who acknowledges there is a God, to ponder deeply — and every one, who professes to serve God, to search diligently.

A few great truths seem to us transparently clear — and amongst them not one is more impressive, at the present moment, than that which we have attempted to illustrate in this paper. The American Nation ought to be preserved, and the American Union ought to be restored. This war ought to be conducted by the Nation — under the impression of that solemn necessity — which, as far as we can judge, is shown to be attainable, alike by the indications of Divine Providence, and by all the circumstances upon which enlightened human judgments can be formed. If in these things we err, nothing will remain, but for the nation to bow its august head reverently before the known will of God, and the irresistible force of destiny. It has already redeemed itself from the ignominious fate to which the last Federal Administration had consigned it. Let its destruction bear some just proportion to the glory of its past life.

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