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PROCEEDINGS

IN REFERENCE TO THE DEATH

OF

HON. JOHN A. KING,

JULY 11TH, 1867.

CLUB HOUSE, UNION SQUARE,
No. 29 East Seventeenth Street,
1867.





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TRIBUTE

TO THE

HON. JOHN A. KING.



AT a meeting of the Union League Club, held at the Club House in Union Square, on the evening of July 11th, 1867, the President, Mr. JOHN JAY, in the Chair, the following resolutions, prepared by Mr. HENRY T. TUCKERMAN, were offered by Mr. FREDERIC PRIME :

Whereas, Ex-Governor John A. King, of Jamaica, L. I., was stricken down on the Fourth of July, while in the act of giving expression to the patriotic principles and the noble sympathies characteristic of the man and the citizen, and on the following Sunday expired, full of years and of honors ; and

Whereas, He was one of the earliest members and most devoted friends of this Club ; therefore

Resolved, That in the death of John Alsop King we have met with a national bereavement, his example and character being of the highest order of civic virtue and republican consistency.

Resolved, That his prompt and brave protest against the Fugitive Slave Law, while a member of Congress, his faithful and intelligent discharge of his duties as a State Legislator, a Governor of New York, and a National Representative, his eminent courtesy

and rectitude in private life, and his kindness and geniality in domestic and social relations, endear his memory, and add new lustre to the patriotic record of his family.

Resolved, That his efforts to save the country from the horrors of civil war, as a member of the Peace Convention of 1861, his earnest loyalty to the Union when war became inevitable, and the influence he constantly exerted in behalf of the national cause at the most critical period of our history, render complete and harmonious his long, honorable, and patriotic career, and entitle his name and memory to our grateful and affectionate respect.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of the deceased.

In presenting the resolutions, Mr. PRIME said that it had been his privilege to enjoy during many years a considerable intimacy with Governor King, and it afforded him a melancholy satisfaction to testify to the private virtues of one who throughout life had maintained with simplicity and dignity the character of an American gentleman. Compelled in his youth, through restricted means, to till with his own hands his little farm on Long Island, he never allowed the amenity of manners, which was one of the most pleasing features of his character, to become blunted by such rough experiences. The young man who, as a boy at Harrow school, had sat at the same form with Byron and Peel, felt it no disgrace to pursue an avocation which in popular estimation may not have seemed compatible with his education or social position; but by his cheerful submission to circumstances lent dignity to his humble labors. The speaker had in his youth seen "Gentleman George" at Ascot Heath in England, tricked out with all the finery which Brummell's taste and the

tailor's skill could supply, and surrounded with that halo of royalty in which even the meanest nature must assume some of the attributes of greatness; and yet, he declared, plain John A. King, coming in from his daily labor, with the sweat of honest toil upon his brow, was incomparably the greater, if not the finer, gentleman of the two.

After briefly sketching Governor King's family history, he alluded to his political career, which, if less distinguished than that of his honored father, Rufus King, of whom he was the eldest son, was marked by high probity, consistency, and courage. For many years of his life a member of a party hopelessly in the minority, he never condescended to become a factionist, or to oppose for the sake of opposition merely. He contended for truth and principle, not victory, and knew better than most men how to sustain an unwelcome position with patience, moderation, and magnanimity. Born in 1788, contemporaneously with the birth of our Constitution, of which his father was one of the chief framers, John A. King lived to see that instrument survive every attack which political chicanery or audacity, or open-mouthed treason could direct against it; and to him, also, was accorded the rare good fortune to see the States which that Constitution formed into a Union, pass through the furnace of civil strife, and become welded into a mighty nation, more respected, more feared, and of far grander domain than its founders ever dreamed of creating.

Mr. PRIME was followed by Mr. CHARLES P. KIRKLAND, who spoke as follows :

A personal acquaintance with Mr. King of more than thirty years justifies me in saying a few words on this occasion, and in adding my humble but earnest tribute of regard to his memory. We were both members of the Harrisburg Convention of 1839, which nominated General Harrison for the Presidency, each of us representing a district of this State; and I deem this a fitting opportunity to declare that, as a member of that body, our departed friend exhibited the elevated and pure patriotism for which, perhaps more than for any other quality, he has been distinguished through life. He, with a large majority of his fellow-members, came to the Convention with a strong personal preference for Henry Clay as the candidate of the party; and Mr. King, in addition, represented a district which was warmly in favor of that eminent statesman, and which had emphatically expressed to him its preference. But after three days of anxious and friendly consultation among the members (every Congressional District in the Union being represented), the deliberate conclusion, though reluctantly arrived at, was, that under the existing circumstances the nomination of Mr. Clay would result in defeat. It was deemed of vital importance to the great interests of the nation, that the Whig party should succeed in that canvass; and therefore that personal feelings and preferences should be yielded to the country. Accordingly, the friends of Mr. Clay, including Mr. King, with a patriotism rarely witnessed, made the required sacrifice, and General Harrison was nominated. I am induced now thus publicly to mention these facts, because no longer ago than yesterday a most worthy member of the Union party stated, in

my hearing, that Mr. King, at that Convention, faltered in his duty, and disregarded the wishes, if not the instructions, of his immediate constituents. I am glad of this opportunity of doing justice to his memory in this particular, and of declaring that his conduct in that Convention was marked by high moral courage, and by a spirit of unselfish patriotism. He acted then, as he never failed to act in all his public transactions, without regard to personal consequences, and with sole reference to what he deemed the true interests of the republic.

Indeed, in the severe and bitter party contests in which, in various periods of his career, he was called upon to participate, I do not believe that, however his views may have been dissented from, any man of any party ever questioned his purity or his patriotism.

In the numerous important official stations he has filled, he has never on any occasion been known to have acted, or been suspected of acting, under the influence of any mercenary or unworthy motive, or of seeking to advance his personal interests any further than they would be advanced by an honest and honorable discharge of public duty. Had his pure spirit pervaded our legislative halls for the last few years, this club would never have been required, in the performance of what it deemed its duty, to send its remonstrances and its memorials to the capitol of our State.

Mr. King, by birth, education, and fortune, belonged to our aristocracy, if indeed such a thing as aristocracy can exist among us of the North, but his heart and his sympathies were always with the people and with

liberty ; and never for a moment did he have a feeling in common with the imperious, overbearing, and selfish slave aristocracy of the South. While in Congress, he incurred their dislike by his bold and manly attacks on their cherished institution ; and as a member of the "Peace Congress" of February, 1861, he avowed his deep and enduring enmity to slavery and to the slave-power, which had for half a century exercised so great and so deleterious an influence in the national Government.

In private life, among his associates, he was invariably the accomplished gentleman, the genial friend, and the loved companion, while to all who had not his advantages of education and social position, his demeanor was uniformly characterized by courtesy, benevolence, and gentle kindness. His funeral, which I attended yesterday, was an occasion of deep and solemn interest ; the multitudes who crowded to it from the village of his residence and from the surrounding country, testified the heartfelt sorrow and affection of those among whom he had lived for more than a quarter of a century : as one of them said to me, expressing the universal feeling, "He has been a *father* to us."

We may feel a just pride that he was one of the founders of this club, and that he had continued in full and hearty communion and sympathy with us. No member of the club was more enthusiastic in approval and admiration of our work in raising and sending to the field our negro regiments in the gloomiest period of the War of the Rebellion.

He was vouchsafed a long life, and one uncommonly

free from bodily disease ; indeed, up to the hour of the attack which so soon ended in death, he was in excellent mental and physical health. His last public appearance was on the late anniversary of our nation's birthday, and, by a beautiful coincidence, his last words were addressed, on that occasion, to the young men of his vicinity ; and they were emphatically the words of a patriot and a Christian.

He has departed as full of years as of honors, and has left to us who survive the invaluable legacy of his example. Let us study to follow it, and thus pay the best and a continuing tribute to his memory.

Mr. ISAAC H. BAILEY spoke as follows :

MR. PRESIDENT : It is a grateful task to strew flowers upon the grave of a man whose life has been one long career of purity, manliness, and useful service to his kind. Eulogies upon the dead are worse than valueless if they are not truthful ; but what words in praise of John A. King could be woven into a panegyric that would exceed the measure of his great worth ? He was, *par excellence*, a gentleman—of the old school, so called—of great personal dignity, of courtly bearing, of commanding presence ; but with his dignified address there was blended so much geniality and kindness of heart that, while he commanded the respect, he also won the love of all who knew him.

He believed in *blood* ; and if that was a weakness, it was in his case a pardonable one, for in his veins flowed the blood of an American patriot and statesman of noble fame, and it did not degenerate in its transmission

to his sons, all of whom have reflected honor upon their heritage.

But while Mr. King belonged, by birth, education, and sympathy, to the aristocratic element of society, he was a life-long and consistent advocate of human rights. He espoused the doctrine of the equality of man before the law, while it was too generally regarded as a "glittering generality" rather than as the corner stone of our republican system.

He was an early, steadfast, and determined opponent of slavery and every form of oppression. In this respect he was a DEMOCRAT in the best sense of the term. He had no sympathy with that spurious democracy which vented itself in wordy professions of devotion to the welfare of the people, but denied not merely justice but even common humanity to millions of them because of a mere accident of complexion. Beautiful as was the character of Mr. King in all respects, it is from this point of view especially that I love to contemplate it. He seems to me to have realized the highest ideal of citizenship in a republic, and to have had that sublime faith in man on which rests the hopes of the world's future. No pride of lineage withheld his sympathies from his fellow men, no surroundings of wealth and luxury deafened his ear to the plea of the humblest of his kind. His public life was marked by a strict adherence to the principles of justice, his private walk was one of generous philanthropy and modest benevolence. He illustrated in his own person the sovereignty that inheres in the *individual man*—the peer of all his race—reared under a government of the PEOPLE, where privileged orders are unrecognized and caste is unknown.

His life was prolonged far beyond the period allotted to mortality, as if a benignant Providence willed that he should witness the fruition of his labors for freedom in the purification of his beloved country from that hideous stain which made its professions of love for liberty a mockery. He lived, too, to see the lowly race he had befriended endowed with civil rights, and entering, under the sanction of national authority, upon all the privileges and responsibilities pertaining to equal citizenship in a *reconstructed* and *regenerated* UNION.

The Hon. C. H. PEABODY said :

MR. PRESIDENT: At this late hour of the evening, and after the pleasing remarks that have been made, it will not become me to detain you and this audience by protracted comment upon a subject even so worthy of extended consideration as the life and character presented by the resolutions before us. I am not willing, however, sir, to allow the occasion to pass without adding a word to what has been already so well said by the gentlemen who have preceded me. Mr. King, whose death we lament, has gone, full of years and honors, to be gathered to his fathers. We knew him as a brother member of our body, and as a gentleman of much general culture, of elevated moral tone and sentiment, of great purity and integrity of character, and of genial temper and manners. Born in the best circle of society, he was blessed in early life with the most favorable circumstances of nurture and education. The world, therefore, had a right to expect of him many of

the virtues which all agree that he possessed in an eminent degree, and he has, in those respects, fulfilled all that could reasonably be expected from opportunities of a high order, well improved in practice. Springing, as he did, from a family occupying the best position in the community, his life has been altogether creditable to his origin. He would have been recreant to duty if he had failed to take a place, in reference to circumstances dependent upon that fact, like the one he did take and occupied through his long and useful life. The characteristic which, under these circumstances, was most attractive, was one which, unhappily for the world, is not always the concomitant of elevated birth and breeding, or of the most finished education. Those circumstances do not insure, and, in the minds of many, are supposed not necessarily to contribute or tend to, a general philanthropy, a catholic comprehensiveness of sympathy and benevolence in practical life. It is often supposed that circumstances like these tend, by elevating the individual above the many, to remove him, in some measure, from a regard for and interest in them; and certain it is that instances are not few or of infrequent occurrence which seem to lend color to this theory. But no such consequences were allowed to follow in the case of our deceased friend. The circumstances to which I have alluded were not allowed to create a distance between him and his fellow-man, however situated in life. With all the virtues so justly attributed to him in the remarks already made, admitted to be his, nothing in his character strikes me with more force than his broad and genial sympathy with

humanity. He was eminently a man of comprehensive benevolence and unfeigned interest in his fellow-man. The humble and lowly found in him a friend always studious of their welfare and anxious for their advancement. The tribute paid to him by a humble neighbor, and alluded to by one of the speakers a few moments since, seems to me to suggest a trait in his character not less attractive or less deserving of notice than any other that has been alluded to. That neighbor, a plain and lowly man, said of him as he followed him mournfully to the grave: "The Governor was a father to me. He was always ready to aid me by his counsel and encouragement, and I can never cease to recollect my obligations to him."

This kind of practical benevolence, Mr. President, to the unpretending and lowly around him, is evidence of the intrinsic goodness of heart to which I would specially direct attention, and which, to my mind, is the most meritorious and amiable trait, and the one on which, on this occasion, we may with most propriety and benefit remark. It gives me more pleasure, sir, to be able to say of him, "He loved and sympathized with mankind generally, including those farthest removed from him by the circumstances of birth, education, and social position, and loved to comfort and encourage them, and support and cheer them on in their efforts and anxieties in life," than to dwell on those other traits more naturally flowing from the elevated station in which he was placed; and these, sir, are especially the traits on which we delight to dwell in contemplating his character now that he has passed from the scenes of time and entered upon those of another

life. How happy for us who respected and loved him, and how much more so for those more nearly allied by ties of family and kindred, that the long life whose termination we deplore has furnished abundance of matter for contemplation of this kind.

MR. JAMES KELLY spoke as follows :

MR. PRESIDENT : I cannot permit this occasion to pass without adding a slight token of respect to the memory of so good a man as the Hon. John A. King. My acquaintance with him was chiefly political. In 1849 I first met that distinguished citizen in Syracuse, attending a Whig State Convention. In a preliminary meeting, held in the attic of the Syracuse House, the night before the meeting of the convention, and quite fully attended, I had taken ground in favor of some of the State officers being selected from the southern tier of counties. This aroused the opposition of many leading Whigs from the canal counties, and a full discussion took place. John A. King arose and took the side of the minority, and with his commanding influence, and the ingenuity displayed in his appeal to the delegates, the minority at this meeting was found to be in the majority when the convention met the next day.

In 1855, when the Whig party met in State Convention on the same day with the Free Soil Democrats, but in a different hall, John A. King being Chairman of the Whig Convention, and Judge Smith Chairman of the Democratic Convention, a joint meeting was proposed and agreed upon ; and I well remember Governor King's proposing Judge Smith for presiding offi-

cer of the joint convention. To Judge Smith's credit, be it said, he arose, thanked the convention for responding to the proposal, but stated it was more fitting that he should name John A. King to wed the old Whig party to the Free Soil Democrats. Then it was that such men as Preston King, Martin Grover, Thurlow Weed, and Horace Greeley, joined hands in the good cause of freedom for all mankind, and from that time forward the Republican party became a mighty power in the land.

I subsequently met Mr. King at various other State and National Conventions, notably at Philadelphia in 1856, and Chicago in 1860, and no man could have been more earnest in the performance of the important duties confided to him. Again I met him in the autumn of 1860, in the electoral college of New York, with Bryant, Wadsworth, and others. Gov. King suggested Wadsworth for president of the college, who declined and nominated Bryant, who also declined. It was plain to me this high-minded man, John A. King, was not thinking of self; the noble and generous elements in his nature always predominated. With the consent of Messrs. Wadsworth and Bryant, I nominated him for this honorable position, and he was unanimously chosen president of the college. Gov. King's high tone and principle ennobled politics, and his course throughout a long and useful life gives our young men an example they may well follow. I deem it an honor to have been associated with such a man, and regret that I cannot express how deeply and sincerely I feel his loss.

The Hon. E. P. COWLES said :

MR. PRESIDENT: At the hazard of being somewhat tedious after the several eloquent tributes to the memory of our deceased friend and brother, to which we have listened with so much interest, I will nevertheless beg your indulgence for a few moments, while I call attention to a single incident, indicating and illustrating his political opinions and action, which occurred on an interesting occasion in the history of the country, and under my own personal observation.

It was my fortune, sir, to be a member, as a delegate from this State, of the last National Convention which was ever held by the old time-honored Whig party. That convention assembled in Baltimore, in June, 1852, and its object was the nomination of candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States in the coming election.

With the close of the deliberations of that convention, and the election thereafter ensuing, ended the career of that great party. From that political death, great and momentous consequences followed. You will remember, sir, that on the occasion of that convention there were before it for nomination for the Presidency, three candidates. They were Millard Fillmore, Daniel Webster, and General Scott. Throughout the proceedings of that convention the main contest among its members—the question of all others which influenced its action—was on the principles which should be assumed in its declared platform upon the question of slavery. Almost the entire delegation from New York, with a large majority of the delegations from the

other Northern States, resolved to resist all attempts to commit the Whig party, in fact or by implication, to any dogma of a pro-slavery character or tendency.

The deliberations of the convention were long and anxious, and the feeling of its members intense. The South was ably represented by representative men. She had sent there delegates of long experience in public life, men of great intellect, of strong convictions, and of stronger rule—men determined to commit the Whig party to Southern views upon that (to them) one absorbing question of slavery. There were present there the imperious and self-willed Toombs, the cool, wily, and astute Jones, of Tennessee, and many others, with national reputations, able in debate, and of large parliamentary experience. On the other hand, there were also there equally able men of the North (among whom I may name Dayton, of New Jersey, Evans, of Maine, and the then youthful Sherman, of Ohio), sturdy lovers of freedom, equally determined that the Whig party, as a national political organization, should not bear a pro-slavery stamp. The Southern delegations, with great unanimity, supported Mr. Fillmore. The delegations of the North generally, though not with equal unanimity, supported General Scott. Some thirty delegates from both sections of the country, holding the balance of power, supported Mr. Webster.

In the long contest over the resolutions of the convention, which preceded the nominations, and in the anxiety to secure votes for their favorite, and affected probably by the earnestness with which Southern men urged their views, some of the Northern delegations

failed to exhibit their early earnestness in support of the generally accepted Northern views on the question of the platform. Throughout the contest, however, all but six or seven of the New York delegation, among the majority of which were Granger, of Onondaga, and Draper, and Talcott, and Raymond, stood firmly to the very last with the majority from Ohio and New Jersey, and with portions of other delegations, in resistance to the platform of principles demanded by the South.

You can well imagine, sir, in the presence of these facts, that the conferences of our Northern friends during that long and eventful week—a week of depressing sultriness and heat, were constant and anxious; and how at times there might be some who would be prone to inquire whether our New York delegation should not compromise on the platform, rather than remain a unit to the end upon the ground it had assumed, to the peril of our favorite nominee. It was here that the particular circumstances occurred to which I desired to call your attention. Our deceased friend was often present at those conferences—occurring during the recess of the convention; and whenever indications of doubt or faltering were exhibited, I well remember how the strong will, and courteous but firm and cheering words of John A. King, tended to reassure the faltering, and confirm the doubting. His constant advice was, no wavering, no compromise—better political defeat than either. Through his personal influence as much, if not more, as I believe, than through that of any other one man, the unity of the large majority of the New York delegation was preserved. And it is my pride and pleasure now to recur to that unbroken

vote, during the three days' discussion upon the resolutions, and to the subsequent three days' ballotings, with the fifty-seven ballots successively thrown for one candidate, General Scott, before his nomination was secured. Not one of those delegates faltered on a single vote throughout, either upon the question of the platform or the candidate.

The effect, sir, of that long and earnest struggle between the Northern and Southern elements of the Whig party, not alone upon the destinies of that party, but upon the future of the nation, has been but partially appreciated. Out of it, not intentionally perhaps—certainly not entirely foreseen by the active participants in that convention—but as a necessity and natural sequence, grew that subsequent political organization which has ultimately carried with it the downfall of slavery in these United States.

The Northern and Southern wings of the old Whig party were at irreconcilable differences on the one subject of slavery. The South in that convention triumphed in the platform, the North in the candidate. All understood, however, the inherent disagreement, and that this disagreement must be perpetual. The North derided the platform. The South deserted the candidate. As a consequence, the sun of the succeeding day of election went down upon one of the greatest political defeats which the country had ever witnessed. The necessary and inevitable result was the dissolution of the Whig party as a political organization, and from the ashes of its Northern wing, the resurrection, in the Republican party, of a new and more loftily inspired political aggregation, based upon resistance to

the further extension of slavery, and its denationalization as a controlling power in our national politics. The successful assumption of that ground by that party was made the occasion of war, and out of war sprang freedom.

I do not intend to be understood as implying, that none but members of the old Whig party were embraced in the Republican ranks on the first formation of that party—for such was not the fact; much less to assert that all those who, in the Baltimore Convention of 1852, resisted the demands of their Southern friends, intended or foresaw the vast public consequences which were to flow from their action; but I do mean to say that the political dissolution of one of the then two great national parties was necessarily, in the destiny of events, to precede any extended or controlling organizations based upon persistent antagonism to the slave power; that to the determined resistance of that power in the Convention of 1852, is to be attributed the breaking up of the Whig party, and the merging of its almost entire Northern element in the Republican ranks; and that no one man exerted, in my judgment, under a conscientious conviction of the right, a more potent personal influence, in combining and keeping up to the end that determined resistance in the Convention of 1852, from which all those vast consequences to which I have alluded so largely flowed, than our deceased friend John A. King, to whose memory we are this evening paying the tribute of our deep respect.

The PRESIDENT spoke as follows :

Before putting the question upon the resolutions, although it would seem unnecessary to add to the tribute which has been so justly and eloquently paid to the memory of our lamented associate, you will allow me, I trust, to say a few words, for you will appreciate my unwillingness to let this occasion pass without a brief expression of my warm appreciation of the character and services of Governor King.

He was one of the few men of high social position in New York whose sympathies and utterances during our long struggle against the unconstitutional encroachments of slavery, were uniformly on the side of freedom; and for this alone we should have felt for him an unusual degree of regard and gratitude. Governor King's love of liberty was an hereditary sentiment. It had nought in common with the false idea of a degenerate democracy which limits freedom to the white race, granting them an unlimited area for slavery, and an unstinted power to buy and sell and flog and work their black countrymen, but it was the true idea of equal liberty, without regard to nationality or race or creed or color.

Rufus King, in 1785, moved a resolution in the Continental Congress, "that there be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the States described in the resolution of Congress of April, 1784, otherwise than in punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been personally guilty; and that this regulation shall be made an article of compact, and remain a fundamental principle of the Constitution between the origi-

nal States and each of the States named in said resolve.”

Governor King lived to see that suggestion of his father, after more than eighty years, made an article of constitutional compact and fundamental principle, not only between the States then alluded to, but between all the States that now compose our continental republic.

I had the opportunity, during many years, of being associated with Governor King. I often met him in the Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Church, which, you remember, after a struggle of nine years, recognized, in the admission of the parish of St. Philip, the equal rights of their colored brethren, an example which the National Government has followed in recognizing the equal rights of our colored countrymen at the South. Again, I was intimately associated with him in the progress of that great national movement which we inaugurated in this city on the 30th of January, 1854, at the meeting of citizens, without respect to party, to protest against the threatened repeal of the Missouri Compromise. That memorable gathering, at which New York gave tone and expression to the deep, loyal sentiment of the country, was followed by others of scarcely inferior importance, and resulted in the call of a State Convention at Saratoga on the following August, and an invitation to citizens of other States to hold similar conventions, with a view to harmonious and united action.

On the assembling of the enthusiastic and determined multitude who met at Saratoga, Governor King was appointed temporary chairman, and by that body was

put forth a declaration of those governmental principles which have since been so gloriously vindicated by the American people. The Saratoga Convention declining to make nominations of its own, adjourned to meet at Auburn the following month, to nominate the candidates of the other parties who should be fully committed to their views ; and when they met again at Syracuse on the 27th September, 1855, the Whig Convention, which had met there on the same day, formally dissolved, and joined the ranks of the Republicans ; so that to Governor King belonged the honor of being one of the fathers of that Republican party which saved our country from the disintegration to which it had been devoted by the slave power of the South, aided and abetted by Democratic leaders at the North, and by an unfriendly aristocracy in Europe.

Governor King maintained with earnest enthusiasm and power the Republican principles of Nationality and Freedom which a pseudo Democracy had fought to emasculate and dwarf by that pitiful theory of petty sovereignties which strikes at the heart of the Constitution, denying the sovereignty of the American people—denying the fact of their nationality, and leaving no place for national pride or national affection.

In the so-called Peace Convention held at Washington, amid the first convulsions of the rebellion, Governor King spoke but twice, and then briefly ; but his plain words and manly dignity, with those of his associates, General Wadsworth and William Curtis Noyes, whom he has now rejoined in a better world, vindicated the sovereignty of the Constitution and the loyalty of New York ; and though on the great question before

the Convention the vote of our State was lost, their testimony and example relieve the darkness of that unpleasant page in our history.

The insolent and domineering tone assumed by men prepared to rush into rebellion, was repelled by Governor King with a spirit that was in strong contrast to the servility exhibited by some of his associates. He said, in reply to W. Wyckliffe :

“ — I am as old as the gentleman from Kentucky. I recognize no right in him to lecture me on my political duties. I revere the Constitution of my country. I was educated to love it. My own father helped to make it. I cannot sit still and hear such declarations as have been hourly repeated here for the last few days. * * The State of New York at all times, in peace or war, has been loyal to the Constitution ; and although some of her representatives here may undertake to make you think differently, she always will be : yes, loyal with all her strength and power ; and as one of her representatives, I shall yield nothing on her part to threats, menaces, or intimidations.”

When the resolution denying the right of secession was under discussion, Governor King said :

“ We do not intend to be driven from our position by threats or intimidation. We believe that it is eminently proper for the Conference to express its decided convictions upon the question of secession. We are told here that secession is a fact. Then let us deal with it as such. I go for the endorsement of the laws passed in pursuance of the Constitution. I will

“never give up the idea that this is a government of
“the people, and possessing within itself the power of
“enforcing its own decrees. * * This Conference
“could perform no nobler act than that of sending to
“the country the announcement that the Union of the
“States under the Constitution is indissoluble, and that
“secession is but another term for rebellion. * * I
“wish to live in peace and harmony with our brethren
“in the Slave States. But I wish to put upon the
“record here, a statement of the fact that this govern-
“ment is a government of the people, and not a com-
“pact of States.”

Governor King hailed with delight the early and stern resolve of this club to maintain that fundamental doctrine of our nationality against the organized efforts of the partisan leaders in our midst, who, after the loudest professions of devotion to the Constitution and the Union, deserted the National Government when assailed by treachery and war, and who, in furtherance of the rebellion, sought to separate the city from the State of New York, and in secret interviews with Lord Lyons invoked British intervention in our American affairs.

No man rejoiced more heartily when, a few months after the murderous riots of July, 1863, we sent forth from this club-house our first colored regiment to assist in saving the National Government, which the Peace Democracy were assisting to destroy; and when, on that occasion, his generous-hearted and eloquent brother, Charles King, the late President of Columbia College, who is now, as we sadly fear, awaiting the last

summons in a foreign land, gave to the black soldiers, on behalf of the club, a hearty greeting and an affectionate God-speed, no breast swelled with deeper emotion than that of our late associate.

His well-spent life was singularly beautiful in its close. On the birthday of the country he had loved and served, while touchingly commending the care of its institutions and the culture of Christian principles to the younger generation that crowded lovingly about him, he received suddenly the announcement that his work was ended.

His countrymen will cherish his memory. History will do honor to his name, and we who have known him so long and so well, will affectionately recall the personal graces that lent to his virtues so bright a charm—the true heart, the kindly, earnest tone, the frank speech, the animated look, the open hand, the graceful courtesy—and, above all, the genial spirit which enabled him, on the verge of eighty years, to blend with the experience of venerable age the warm sympathies and buoyancy of youth.

The question was then put by the President, and the Resolutions were unanimously adopted.



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