

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

INAUGURATION OF THE UNION CLUB,

9 APRIL, 1863,

By EDWARD EVERETT.

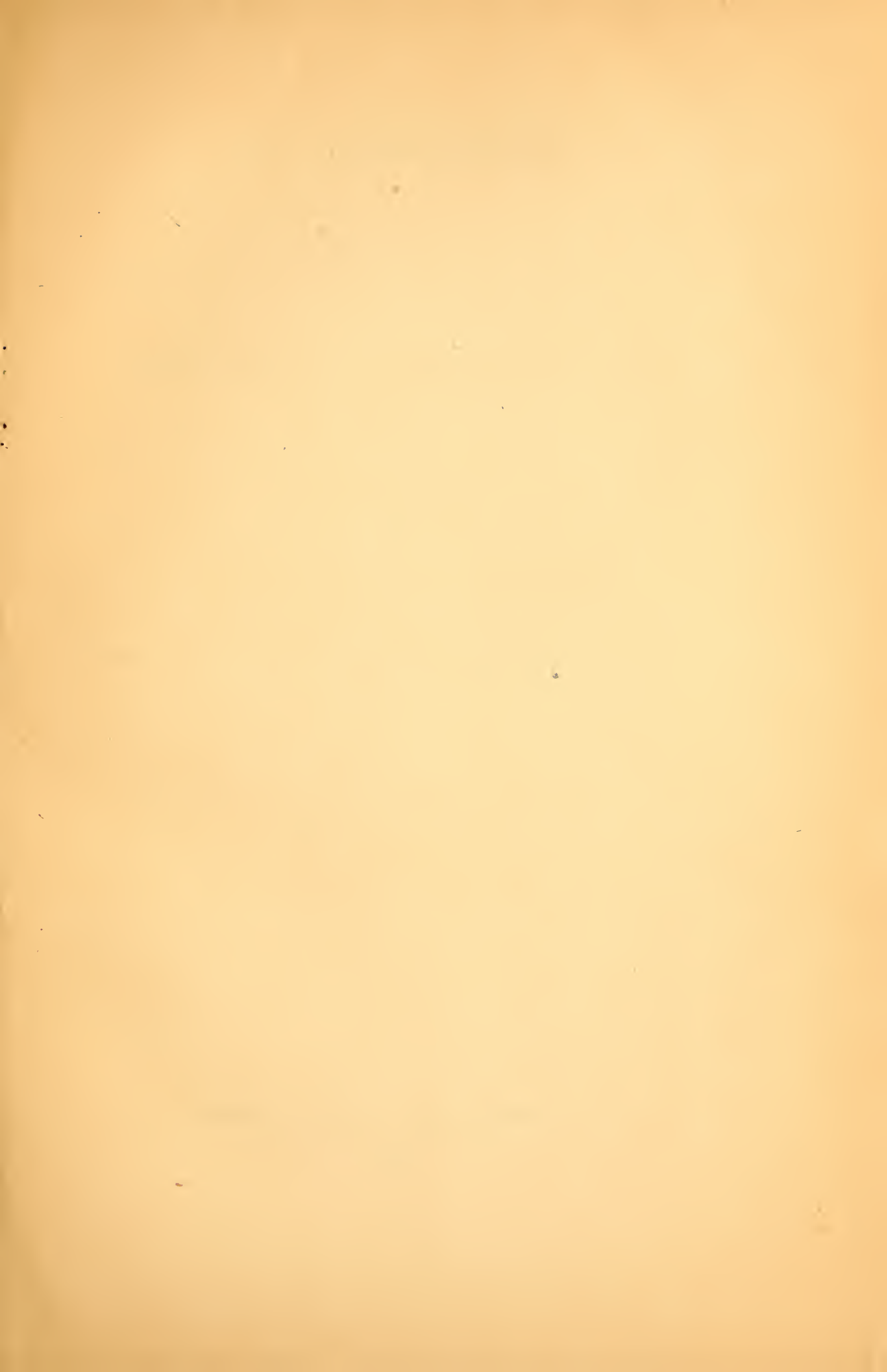
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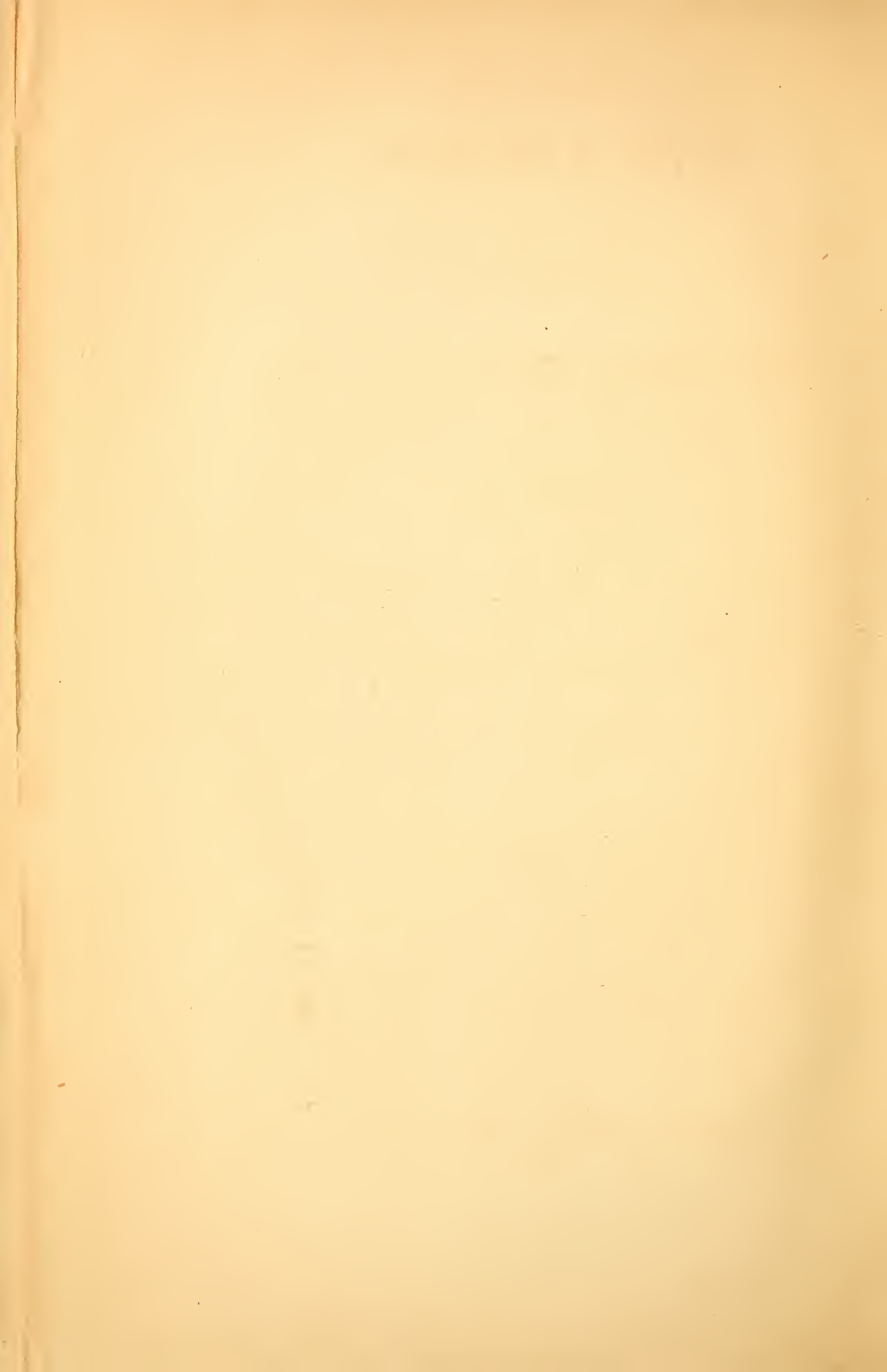
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ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE UNION CLUB:—

As this is the first meeting of our Association, since by your kindness I had the honor to be chosen its President, I avail myself of the opportunity to return you my thanks for this mark of your confidence. I am not greatly versed in "Club Law" of any kind, and I have reason to fear that I shall not be able to render you much active service; but it has afforded me pleasure, indeed, I have felt it to be my duty, by uniting with you in this Association, to express my warm approbation of the principle on which it is founded. That principle is the active and earnest coöperation of all good citizens in the loyal support of the Union, the Constitution, and the Government of the country in the present great crisis of affairs, and the encouragement of each other and of the community at large in the vigorous prosecution of the war, till the rebellion is suppressed, and the integrity of the Nation is restored. We propose no party action; we aim at no party ends, and we invite the fellowship of all good and true men, of whatever political connection, who concur with us in this one great paramount view of Public Duty.

The struggle, in which the government and loyal people of the country have been now for nearly two years engaged, is one, I need scarce say, of almost unexampled magnitude, attended with all the difficulties, the sacrifices, the alternation of success and failure, which are incident to a contest of such stupendous dimensions. Scarce ever have there been arrayed against each other, on a field of action so vast, forces so numerous, at an expense so great, with such profusion of material supplies and financial resources, and, what is infinitely more important, with interests so momentous at stake. The scene of the conflict, coëxtensive as it is with the settlements of the United States this side of the Rocky Mountains, is but little inferior in extent to Europe. The military forces in array and amply supplied with the *matériel* of war are as great as were ever placed in the field in the war of the French Revolution. The sea-coast held in rigid blockade by our Navy is more extensive than that actually blockaded by the Navy of Great Britain, during that war. Our armies and navy, owing to the character of our soldiers and seamen, and the higher standard of comfort in this country, are sustained at greater expense than those of any other service; and the objects of the war are nothing less than to prevent a great and prosperous Union of States, under one constitutional government, from being broken up into wretched fragments; to protect the organic life of a mighty People, in the morning of their national existence, from the murderous and suicidal blow

aimed at it; to rescue the work of our revolutionary and constitutional fathers, the greatest political work of human wisdom, from ignominious ruin; and to hand down this peerless inheritance of public and private blessings unimpaired to our posterity.

Compared with these objects, how insignificant the scene, the operations, the objects of the recent wars in Europe, and how unimportant their results! The late Italian war had for its object, nominally, to drive the foreigner beyond the Alps and to give Italy to the Italians, while its real object was to restore the military and political influence of France in Europe, and, at least as far as Italy is concerned, annul the treaties of Vienna. But all Italy is not equal in extent to New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio; the Austrians still hold Venice and the best half of the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom; France is still intrenched at Rome, the very heart of the Peninsula; and the exiled dynasties are awaiting the next turn of the wheel of political fortune, for those revolutions in empire which shall restore them to their former capitals. I feel all possible sympathy with the cause of Italian nationality. As an ardent friend to that beautiful country, to which the civilized world is under obligations never to be too gratefully repaid, I accept with thankfulness every word or deed from whatever quarter, which can contribute to replace her in the first rank of the nations; it may come from Sardinia, or it may come from France; but much I fear that the deadly spirit of discord, which on

the downfall of the Roman Empire took possession of the Peninsula and parcelled it out into a dozen warring States, — the same unhallowed end which the same evil spirit is aiming to compass in our noble Union, — has poisoned the life of Italian nationality beyond the possibility of recovery.

The next preceding war had its ostensible origin in the struggles of the Greek and Latin churches for ascendancy in the East; its real object was to check the progress of Russia in that quarter; and it arrayed a half a million of men for the destruction or defence of one fortress in the Crimea. The Ate of that contest “came hot from hell and let slip the dogs of war,” to settle the question whether the French or Russian vice-consul should keep the key of the church, built upon the spot where the Prince of Peace was born. The war was fought; a hundred thousand families were clad in mourning; Russia still holds the Crimea; Sebastopol has risen from its ruins; and which vice-consul keeps the key of the church of Bethlehem, few persons in Christendom, outside the three cabinets, know or care.

And then the great war of the French Revolution, which began with the invasion of France by the Prussians in 1792, and ended with the exile of Napoleon to St. Helena in 1815; which more than any contest in modern times resembles, in the vastness of its theatre and the magnitude of the forces in array, the contest in which we are now involved, how insignificant its issues compared with those here at stake! The allies under the

lead of England waged the war to check the progress of the French Revolution and eventually to restore the Bourbons. The Bourbons are still in exile; the French Revolution is enthroned at the Tuileries, and many of its political maxims have passed into the public law of Europe. The French, on their side, strove to overturn the remains of feudalism in Europe, to destroy the political influence and the maritime ascendancy of England, and to subordinate the Continental governments to France. Fierce battles with various fortunes were fought, millions of lives sacrificed, a great deal of old parchment was torn up, a great deal of new parchment written over, and, at the end of twenty-one years, England came out of the contest stronger than ever; the equilibrium of Europe is substantially unchanged; the relations of the Continental powers to France not materially affected, and the great leaders of the Titanic struggle, France and England, united, seemingly at least, in a most beautiful *entente cordiale*. A few territorial and dynastic changes of no vital importance to the sum total have been made in Central Europe; the Holy Roman Empire, long before effete, has been broken up; a few German electors and archdukes are styled kings; Holland and Belgium have been raised to independent monarchies; Genoa has become a Sardinian city, and Venice has become an Austrian city; the nephew of Napoleon and the niece of George IV. exchange friendly visits in their respective capitals; and the territorial and political map of Europe is substantially what it

was when the States-General of France met at Versailles in 1789.

In that year the Federal Constitution went into operation in the United States; the great political consummation of the design of Providence in the discovery and settlement of America; the happy framework of some of the wisest and best men that ever lived, intended to effect the extension of civilization in the shortest possible time over a vast continent lying in a state of nature; to provide a land of refuge for the starving millions of Europe; to prepare the way for the civilization and Christianization of Africa by the return of a portion of her children from the house of bondage; and to combine upon a scale of unprecedented magnitude, the home-bred and fireside blessings of small States and local administrations with the security, influence, and power of a great empire. For seventy years it has been working out these great results; it has conferred upon the rapidly increasing population of the country a degree of general prosperity never equalled; it has welcomed the surplus and suffering multitudes of Europe to the enjoyment of a state of well-being unknown to them at home; and not without the imperfections and the errors, the woes, and I am sorry to add the wrongs, which attend all human things, the incidents neither of republics nor of monarchies, but of our common frail humanity, it has conferred upon more than two generations an amount of good, with an exemption from the sacrifices and trials which have afflicted other States, altogether without a parallel in history.

And now the great question which we have to settle is, Shall this mighty aggregate of prosperity perish, or shall it endure? Shall this imperial heritage of blessings descend unimpaired to our posterity, or shall it be ignominiously, profligately thrown away? Shall the territory of the Union, late so happy under the control and adjustment of the National and State governments, be broken up into miserable fragments, sure to be engaged in constantly recurring border wars, and all lying at the mercy of foreign powers, or shall it preserve its noble integrity under the ægis of the National government? Admit the right of the seceding States to break up the Union at pleasure, nay of each and every State to do so, and allow them to enforce that right by a successful war; deny the authority of the Central government to control its members; and how long will it be, before the new Confederacies created by the first disruption will be resolved into still smaller fragments, and the continent will become a vast theatre of civil war, military license, anarchy, and eventually despotism? Better at whatever cost, by whatever sacrifice, settle the question at once, and settle it forever.

For remember, my friends, that, in this desolating war, the government and loyal people of the country are the party assailed, and that they are clad in the triple armor of a just cause. The pretence is set up by the rebels, that they are contending for the right of self-government, and the unfriendly press of Europe talks of its being a war of revenge and subjugation. Consider what makes

a just war even in the opinion of those who condemn the North. England, a little more than a twelvemonth ago, thought it a just cause of war, that a merchant packet was brought to at sea by a belligerent cruiser, in the exercise of the undoubted right of search, and that four persons were taken from it, as she considered, without warrant in the law of nations, though she in the last general war had taken more than four thousand persons from our neutral vessels, confessedly without warrant in the law of nations. The federal government, in the paralysis of its powers caused by the interregnum between the old and new administrations, submitted with patience to the affront of having two ships, laden with supplies for a fort belonging to the United States, fired upon in profound peace, by a pretended government unacknowledged at that time, even as a belligerent, by any foreign power. It was not till the third act of open organized war, as mean as it was murderous, — the assault on Fort Sumter from eleven batteries manned by eight or ten thousand men, — a fortress belonging to the United States, built by the general government, upon a spot ceded by the State of South Carolina to the United States, and then occupied by one company of seventy men, provisioned but for forty-eight hours; not till the threat had gone forth, on the same day, from the capital of the pretended Confederacy, that in three weeks their flag should float over the dome of the Capitol at Washington, and in due time over Faneuil Hall; not till their emissaries in Lon-

don had claimed that Mr. Adams, the Envoy of the United States, ought not to be received on his arrival, because, before that event, the Confederacy would be installed at Washington, and the United States would have ceased to exist;—it was not till all this had taken place, that the general government drew the sword.

Even supposing Carolina had a constitutional right to secede and to declare herself a foreign State, the war is not the less a war of aggression on her part and that of her associates. She had no right in seceding to carry Sumter along with her. She had formally ceded that spot to the United States. It was ours by a firmer tenure than that by which Gibraltar belongs to England, for that was originally obtained by conquest. Spain notoriously regards the possession of Gibraltar by England as a standing monument of national humiliation; so much so that, in the Peninsular War, although the armies of England were the only hope of the preservation of the independence of Spain, the thought of Gibraltar led her to oppose the occupation of Cadiz by British troops, even under the strongest strategical motives. Suppose, now, Spain, desirous of repossessing Gibraltar, had sent agents to London to treat for its purchase, and that these agents had failed of success; would this give Spain a right to drive the English by force out of Gibraltar? And how long would England slumber over an attack like that of Carolina on Fort Sumter? Would not every English ship of war that could float be put in

commission, and every regiment in the British army, available for the purpose, be moved to the coast, rather than leave Gibraltar in the hands of the Spaniards? Undoubtedly England would spend every pound sterling in her treasury, she would send her last man to the Peninsula, rather than allow such an outrage to succeed; and it would be an insult to the common sense of mankind, to call that a war of aggression on the part of Great Britain.

But again, suppose the Southern States had a right to secede, (which they have as much and no other right to do than the counties south of the Thames and the Severn have to secede from the English crown and set up the old kingdom of Sussex,) is this metaphysical right, doubted even by the ablest of their own leaders,* a right to be maintained at the mouth of the cannon by seven States, if not instantly conceded by all the rest of the Union? Had the majority of the citizens of the cotton-growing States desired to leave the Union, which was notoriously not the case; had they—instead of “being precipitated into the revolution” by ambitious demagogues, whose language I quote — by deliberate legislative acts or conven-

* That Mr. Calhoun did not claim Secession as a constitutional right, is conclusively shown by Hon. Reverdy Johnson in a letter dated 24th June, 1861, and published in the appendix to an oration delivered at New York on the 4th of July following, by the author of this address. Mr. Iverson of Georgia expressed himself as follows in the Senate of the United States, on the 5th December, 1860: “I do not myself place the right of a State to secede from the Union upon constitutional grounds. I admit that the Constitution has not granted that power to a State. It is exceedingly doubtful even, whether the right has been reserved. Certainly it has not been reserved in express terms.”

tions of the people, called after mature public discussion of the question, authentically announced that fact and their willingness to leave to the United States the fortresses necessary to protect the navigation of the Gulf of Mexico and the control of the Mississippi River, I have little doubt, that a requisite majority of the States would have agreed to the amendment of the Constitution necessary to carry such an arrangement into effect;—sure as it was in a few years by its perfect madness to cure itself. But this did not suit the ambitious leaders in the cotton-growing States. They well knew that no such expression of popular opinion could be obtained, for the good reason that no such opinion existed. They knew that a separation thus peaceably brought about would be an experiment as short-lived as suicidal. They knew that the Border States would stand aloof, and that the first revolution in domestic politics, probably the next Presidential election, would consign to political ruin the authors of the movement, and bring back the seceding States to the Union. This they knew, this they felt, this they in effect confessed. They did not wish to be allowed to “go in peace.” All professions to that effect are delusive and hypocritical. It was for the wicked purpose of “firing the Southern heart” by the shedding of blood, thus exciting the Border States to take part with the Cotton States, and what was of equal importance overawing and silencing opposition at home, that Fort Sumter was attacked. If ever the secrets of this conspiracy are disclosed

by the publication of the correspondence that passed between Richmond, Charleston, and Montgomery, in that inauspicious winter of 1860-61, what I now affirm will be found in black and white. In truth, it was substantially avowed in the columns of the Charleston journals and in the speeches of the demagogues who were sent from Virginia to fan the flame of treason.

The blow at length was struck, and but too successfully. With the outbreak of the Rebellion a reign of terror as merciless as that of Robespierre was inaugurated at the South, and every man of eminence but the noble and lamented Petigru quailed before it. Virginia, ensnared in the meshes of her hair-splitting metaphysics, and fearful of being deprived of the wretched privilege of supplying the plantations of Mississippi and Louisiana with the surplus of her slave population, in known opposition to the wish of the majority of her people, was engineered into the contest; and a war not merely of aggression, but of cold-blooded calculation on the part of the South, and of self-defence, of duty, and of necessity, on the part of the North, was inaugurated.

With every month of its prosecution, this aggressive character of the war has been more and more displayed. On the 12th of April, 1861, while the news of the bombardment of Sumter was passing over the wires to Montgomery, and before its little band of heroes had been compelled to yield to the overwhelming force by which they were surrounded, the intention of capturing Washington

was, as we have seen, publicly announced by the Confederate Secretary of War. Washington is the capital of thirty-four States; at the time this insolent threat was uttered, the Confederacy was confined to the seven cotton-growing States. What right could this rebellious group of States, far off on the Gulf of Mexico, with a sum total of a little more than two and one half millions of white inhabitants, have to the metropolis of the Union? Seven days later the pavement of Baltimore was stained with the blood of Massachusetts men, hastening in obedience to lawful authority to the defence of the capital. Events have shown the unshaken loyalty of Maryland. Not a voice was raised in all her borders, in response to the proclamation of the Confederate General, who crossed the Potomac last September with an army of ninety-seven thousand men, "to liberate oppressed Maryland." Western Virginia was next attacked. Mr. Senator Mason, in a published letter, signed by his name, had told the citizens of that part of the State, (who had no more intention than the western counties of Massachusetts to secede from the Union,) that if they presumed even to vote against the ordinance, they must leave the State,—such being that gentleman's understanding of the principle that government must rest on the consent of the governed. In further illustration of the principle, Western Virginia was overrun by the Confederate troops till they were driven out by Rosecrans and McClellan. Kentucky and Missouri were next invaded. There, too, the progress of

events has disclosed, on the part of the masses of the people, an unshaken loyalty to the Union; but they have been overrun, plundered, and devastated by the armies of this pacific confederacy, which asks for nothing but "to be let alone and allowed to go in peace." Though the first act of the Secessionists in Baltimore, after the murderous attack on the Massachusetts troops, was to tear up and burn the bridges on the railroads leading to the North and West, Mr. Benjamin (the humane Secretary of State to the Confederacy) ordered the Union men, charged with bridge-burning in East Tennessee, to be tried by "a drum-head court-martial," if convicted, to be hung, and their bodies to be left on the gibbet near the bridges destroyed;—the mass of the people in East Tennessee being all the time as loyal to the Union as in Western Virginia.* The same is the case, to a considerable extent, in Western North Carolina, in Northern Alabama, in Arkansas, in Louisiana, and in Texas; but confiscation, impressment into the army, the blood-hound, the scourge, and the halter, are the machinery by which this pacific confederacy produces its vaunted unanimity. You may recollect that General Houston, the Governor of Texas, refused to call the Legislature of that State together, to act on the question of Secession. With reference to this refusal, Mr. Iverson of Georgia, on the third day of the session of 1860–61, openly declared in the Senate of the

* How cruelly these orders continue to be enforced sufficiently appears from the recent report of the Judge-Advocate-General.

United States, that "if he did not yield to public sentiment, some Texan Brutus will arise to rid his country of the hoary-headed incubus that stands between the people and their sovereign will."

An attempt I know is made, especially by foreign writers, to assimilate the existing Rebellion at the South with the American Revolution. We might, as against England, accept this view of the subject; for she not only denied the right of the Colonies to assert their independence, but treated the attempt to do so as a rebellion. Although she denies *our* right by a legislative act to close the ports of the rebellious States, she did it herself in the Revolutionary War by 16 George III., c. 5, and two years after the capitulation of Burgoyne and after the independence of the States had been acknowledged by France, she sent Mr. Laurens to the Tower as a traitor. She therefore is, to say the least, as much estopped from recognizing the right of secession as we from denying it.

But the truth is there is not the slightest similarity between the secession of the rebel States and the American Revolution, unless upon the principle that all rebellions are just. Our fathers in 1776 set up no unqualified right of revolution, and it would have come to nothing practically, if they had; for, in any sense in which there is an abstract right, on the part of the people, to revolt, there is a coextensive right, on the part of the government, to suppress the revolution. They claimed no right for a part of a people to throw

off at pleasure the authority of a legitimate or constitutional government, for this would be to strike at the root of all government. What they taught was, that "governments are instituted to secure the inalienable rights of men, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and inasmuch as governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed, *whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and institute another.*" This is the whole of their doctrine on that subject, and it is of course equally true in monarchies and republics, in centralized and confederate governments.

The Declaration of Independence further held, that the inhabitants of the Colonies were "one people," namely, the American people, and that they were connected with "another" people, namely, the English, by a common allegiance to the British Crown, which was bound to govern them through their own assemblies. Not being represented in the British Parliament, they denied its right to bind them in all cases, and, inasmuch as the king, combining with the Parliament, had by a long course of abuses and usurpations, evinced a desire to reduce them to absolute despotism, it was their right and duty to throw off their allegiance, and establish their independence.

In all this, I need not say, there is not the slightest similarity, in principle or fact, with the case of the seceding States. Their inhabitants are not a separate colonial people, but they are an

integral portion of that "one people" which declared their independence, and which, being loosely associated under the old confederation of States, ordained and established the present Constitution, "in order to form a more perfect Union." In the government which they thus took a part in forming, instead of being unrepresented as our fathers were in Parliament, they are represented beyond the numerical proportion of their free population, and for the greater part of the time its administration has been controlled by themselves. This organic law thus formed has been adopted by the people of each of the States, as much as their own State constitutions; and there is a provision in the text of the instrument, that "this Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, . . . shall be the supreme law of the land, and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding." All the powers of the government having for the greater part of the time since its formation been controlled by the people of the seceding States and by those in the other States in political alliance with them, it is impossible, notwithstanding loose assertions and clamors to the contrary, that the seceding States can have found it an oppressive or tyrannical government, which, by the principles of the Declaration and by the law of Nature, they had a right to throw off, or even of which they had any just right to complain. They have, accordingly, so far from wishing

to alter or abolish it, readopted this form of government with no essential alterations, and it was admitted by Mr. Vice-President Stephens (with the exception of Mr. Jefferson Davis the ablest man in the Confederate service) to be the mildest and most beneficent government known in the history of the world. This confession was made after the election of Mr. Lincoln, the immediate pretended justification of the Rebellion. A still more important admission was made, also after that event, by Mr. Davis himself, in one of his last speeches in the Senate of the United States, (10th December, 1860,) a body in which he has never resigned his membership, and of which the oath now rests upon his conscience.

“Our fathers,” said Mr. Davis, “learning wisdom from the experiments of Rome and Greece, the one a consolidated Republic, and the other strictly a Confederacy, and taught by the lessons of our own experiment under the Confederation, came together to form ‘a more perfect Union,’ and in my judgment made *the best government that has ever been instituted by man*. It only requires that it should be carried out in the spirit in which it was made, that the circumstances under which it was made should continue, and no evil can arise under the government, for which it has not an appropriate remedy. Then it is outside of the government, *elsewhere than to its Constitution or to its administration*, that we must look. Men must not creep in the dust of partisan strife and seek to make points against opponents, as the means

of evading or meeting the issues before us. The fault is not in the form of the government, nor does the evil spring from the manner in which it has been administered. Where, then, is it? It is that our fathers formed a government for a union of friendly States; and though *under it the people have been prosperous beyond comparison with any other whose career is recorded in the history of man*, still that union of friendly States had changed its character, and sectional hostility has been substituted for the fraternity in which the government was founded."

In an Italian churchyard there is a monument with an epitaph on a man who, being well, dosed himself to death with unwholesome drugs. *Stavò bene, ma, per star meglio, sto qui.* "I was well; I wanted to be better: and here I am." Mr. Davis was living about two years ago, as he tells us, under the best form of government ever instituted by man; no mean blessing that to begin with, as the world goes. There was no fault to be found with the manner in which it had been administered. Of how few governments can that be said, in ancient or modern times. It would indeed have been ungracious in Mr. Davis to complain of its administration, for it had almost always been controlled by his friends, and he himself had been liberally educated at its expense, had passed most of his life in its service, and was then filling one of its highest trusts. Under the practical working of this perfectly constituted and acceptably administered government, the country he admits has

been prosperous beyond comparison with anything recorded in history. Was not this enough for man or people? Alas, no! Mr. Davis was not content with this exuberant felicity. He needed something more; he desired a "nice and subtle happiness;" he sighed for "Fraternity." To get that precious boon, he dosed himself with the maddening drug of Secession; and now behold him;—the fetlocks of his war-horse wet with the blood of civil war, oozing from the trampled bosoms of friend and of foe, as he rages over the field of death, in search of something better than the best of governments, better than an unexceptionable administration, better than a prosperity without example in the history of the world!

Is this patriotic statesmanship, or is it ambitious frenzy? What! a wanton rebellion like this to be compared with the righteous work of our sainted fathers, of Washington and Franklin, and Jefferson and Adams, the heroes and sages of the Revolution! This gigantic treason to be profanely lauded as the august foundation of a new State; to be fed with foreign gold and nursed with foreign favor! Then let all pretence of distinction between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, be abandoned. Lift up your heads, ye prison-gates, and allow your wronged inmates to go free! Come home from the cannibal islands, ye missionaries, and let the honest savage gorge upon his "strange flesh"! Throw open your doors, O just Bedlam, and send your abused philosophers, princes, and statesmen to their homes! Cease your dull prate,

ye teachers of morals! Burn your Bibles, ministers of the gospel! There is no crime, there is no barbarism, there is no madness. Those who make constitutions, not those who break them, shall henceforward be the traitors. Our legislators and judges shall be the culprits, not felons and thieves. Oaths shall no longer be the link that binds the soul of the creature to the footstool of the Creator, but a base trap baited by knaves to catch the easy consciences of fools; and all this vaunted civilization, founded on institutions, hallowed by religion, buttressed by tribunals, matured by time, accepted by the common sense of mankind, shall be proclaimed, in the face of the Universe, a paltry sham and a wicked lie!

Most true, it certainly is, that for the last thirty years much ill-feeling has sprung up between the North and the South. No one can regret this more than I have done, and nothing within the province of a private individual has been neglected by me, to prevent its growth and avert its consequences. But this ill-feeling has sprung up quite as much by the fault of the South as of the North, and the language of reproach and irritation, in which it has found utterance, has been heard quite as often and quite as loudly in one section of the country as the other. But after all, there has never been, on the part of the masses of the people, North or South, that degree of sectional hostility which Mr. Davis assumes, in order to justify his attempt to overturn the government; there has been nothing, he admits, which has prevented

a satisfactory and prosperous administration of the government; nothing even, he might have added, which has interfered with amicable social intercourse, North and South; nothing which prevented Mr. Davis himself, prior to the last Presidential election, and when he himself was an aspirant to the Presidency, from passing a summer in this greatly reviled and hated New England, much apparently to the mutual satisfaction of himself and friends, everywhere received with cordial hospitality, and repaying, with glowing phrases of compliment, the ovations which everywhere attended his progress. In one year afterwards, in less than three months after pronouncing the eulogium just cited on the Constitution of the United States, and without having resigned his seat as a senator, we find him at the head of a revolution organized to overturn it, and shedding the best blood of the country, North and South, to compass this cruel, this nefarious end. Perhaps if he had succeeded in his canvass for the Presidency, he might have been willing, if administered by himself, that the people should live four years longer under "the best government ever instituted by man." If he had himself reached the White House, he might have consented that his fellow-citizens should continue four years longer to prosper beyond comparison with any other people in history. Well did Mr. Vice-President Stephens observe, on the 14th of November, 1860, that "the disappointment of ambitious aspirants to office had had much to do with bringing on the deplorable state of affairs."

Such is *his* declaration, and if this assertion of the second officer in the Confederacy is well founded ; if this tremendous war has indeed in no small degree been brought upon us for the reason stated by him ; if the country has been called to stagger beneath this daily increasing mountain load of debt ; if our lawful commerce has been surrendered to the rovers of the sea, fitted out with shameless cupidity to prey upon it ; if the influence of our country, which so lately held high its head in the front rank of the family of nations, has for the time being been annihilated, and foreign powers are already treating us with coldness and indifference, watching and waiting to see the noble ship of state go to pieces on the breakers ; if the bones of hundreds and thousands of our brethren are bleaching on the battle-field ; if other hundreds and other thousands are languishing with cruel wounds and the diseases of the camp, mutilated, broken down, prematurely old, creeping from the wards of the hospital to their last bed in the churchyard ; if the flower of our young men North and South has been cut down ; if the bereaved and desolate parent, the heart-broken widow, the mourning sister, the orphan child, have been called to swell this frightful sum of human calamity ; if all these numberless and nameless woes have been brought upon the land, because Mr. Jefferson Davis was not nominated nor Mr. John C. Breckenridge chosen President, then, so sure as Heaven is just, the tears of the bereaved, the pangs of the wounded, the agonies of the dying, will lie heavy

on the souls of the authors of these crimes and woes ; their memories will go down to the execration of the latest posterity ; and their names stand recorded on the page of history by the side of the Benedict Arnolds, the Catilines, the Judas Iscariots of modern and of ancient times !

On the grim and bloody catalogue which history unrolls to teach and to warn us, we read of the merciless wars of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, of the Medes and Persians, which desolated the fairest regions of the earth in the morning of the world ; of the disastrous conflicts of the Confederate States of Greece, in which their short-lived prosperity was blasted, their cities razed, their fighting men massacred by thousands, their women and children sold into slavery, — prototype, as far as the laws of modern warfare permit, of the ruin which awaits our Union, if the poison of secession is admitted into the veins of the body politic ; of the steadily growing ferocity and the murderous struggles of party in the Roman Republic, passing through the bloody gates of proscription and civil war to the dreary calm of a merciless despotism, at whose abominations human nature stands aghast. We read of the contests which shook the world between the Mohammedan and Christian powers in the Middle Ages, of the secular wars of the Italian republics, of the factions which rent the vitals of England for generations, of the wars of the Reformation, of the Thirty Years' Wars in Germany, of the wars of Louis XIV. and the Spanish Succession, of the constantly

renewed struggle for the balance of power in Europe, and finally of the gigantic wars of the French Revolution; but I defy any one to produce in all these bloody pages the record of a war undertaken to overthrow a government admitted to be, by those who levy the war, the most perfect, the best administered, the most productive of prosperity which the world has seen. That madness was reserved for the annals of this rebellion; and I do not scruple to say, that, from the earliest dates of history to the present time, there is not on record a war so unprovoked, so causeless, so unprincipled, so pregnant with bootless suffering to all concerned, so destructive of good, so fertile of crime and woe, as the war now waged by the ambitious oligarchy of the South for the purpose of breaking up this mild and beneficent government.

We often hear it said that measures of compromise, and especially the adoption of the Crittenden Resolutions, would, in the winter of 1860-61, have been accepted by the South, and would have prevented the war, and that similar measures, if now tendered, would restore the Union. I have no belief of either. Never since the war broke out has there been the slightest intimation that the South would treat with the United States, on any other basis than the recognition of the Confederacy and the dismemberment of the Union, — the object which for thirty years has been steadily pursued by a party in the Cotton States. To draw the Border States and especially Virginia into the same policy was the great problem to be solved in the

winter of 1860-61, and with what lamentable success the present state of the country but too plainly attests.

The Crittenden Resolutions, as we all know, were brought forward in the Senate at the commencement of the session of 1860-61. They were intended, by their venerable and patriotic mover, to afford a ground on which the Border Slave States could stand, solid enough to resist the torrent of secession. I must confess I was in favor of them, or of something resembling them; but it was soon apparent that the Secession leaders were determined they should not be adopted. They were opposed at the North by those who deemed no further concessions on the subject of Slavery necessary or expedient; and they were opposed by the senators of the Cotton-growing States, who were not only determined to accept for themselves no terms of compromise, but to prevent, if possible, the adoption of any measures which would satisfy the Border Slave States. These facts form the key to the course pursued in the Senate on the Crittenden Resolutions. When they came up for consideration, Mr. Clark of New Hampshire moved, as a substitute for the entire series, a short resolution to the effect that the provisions of the Constitution itself were adequate to the preservation of the Union, which Mr. Jefferson Davis about the same time had expressly admitted to be the case. The test question was on the adoption of this substitute, and this question was taken on the 16th of January. The senators from South Caro-

lina had not occupied their seats, for any part of the session. Mississippi seceded on the 9th of January, and Florida and Alabama on the 11th; after which time the senators from those States, though remaining in Washington, were absent from their places. Eight votes, which might have been given from the Cotton-growing States, in favor of the Crittenden Resolutions, were lost in this way.

Nor was this the only, nor the most significant, indication of the wish of those States to defeat a compromise. When the question on the adoption of the resolutions was about to be put, a motion was made to postpone their consideration. It was decided in the negative by a vote of twenty-five ayes and thirty noes, all the senators present from the Cotton-growing States voting with the senators from the Border States against the postponement. The test question immediately followed on Mr. Clark's substitute for the Crittenden Resolutions; no other business intervened; nor a word was uttered by any member of the Senate, and yet, to the astonishment of all not in the secret, forty-eight votes only were given, instead of fifty-five, as on the question immediately preceding. Twenty-five votes were cast in favor of the substitute of Mr. Clark, (being the same votes which had been given for the postponement,) and only twenty-three in favor of the Crittenden Resolutions. Seven senators who a moment before had voted with the Border States against the postponement, now omitted to vote at all. Mr. Douglas was one of these, and stated to the Senate, a few moments after-

wards, that having been accidentally called out, he unintentionally lost the opportunity of recording his vote in favor of the Crittenden Resolutions. The other six who withheld their votes were from the Cotton-growing States. Thus much appears from the journal of the Senate. How and why these six votes were withheld shall be told by Governor Johnson, who was a member of the Senate at the time, and took an active and patriotic part in the proceedings. "Who was it," he asks, "that defeated the compromise? There was one Judah Benjamin, who stood right before me in the Senate, and when his name was called refused to vote. Said I to him, 'Why don't you vote?' Turning round rather abruptly, he replied, 'I will not consult you nor any other senator in reference to my vote.' I said, 'Vote and comply with the Constitution and obey the rules of the Senate, and show yourself an honest man.'" Five other senators from the Cotton States, Mr. Slidell among the number, followed Mr. Benjamin's example, and, though remaining in the Senate and not excused from voting, refused to answer when their names were called, and so Mr. Clark's substitute was adopted by a majority of two. As soon as the vote was declared (says Governor Johnson) a telegraphic message was sent by Mr. Benjamin to Louisiana, where the question of Secession was still pending, that the Crittenden Resolutions were lost and the Black Republicans were carrying everything before them. Had those six senators voted as it was their duty under the rules of the Sen-

ate to do, Mr. Clark's substitute for the Crittenden Resolutions would have failed by a majority of four. If the senators from the four seceding States had been in their seats, this majority might have been increased to twelve. Six of them were in Washington, but they chose on the 16th of January not to consider themselves as competent to attend and give their votes in favor of the Crittenden Resolutions. Five days later they did consider themselves members sufficiently to make their appearance in the Senate Chamber, and insult their colleagues by going through a concerted and ostentatious ceremony of withdrawal.

So much for the failure of the Crittenden Resolutions. This was the test vote. It was afterwards reconsidered on the motion of Mr. Cameron, made from personal courtesy to the venerable mover of the resolutions. Earnest debates took place, and various delays were interposed; the resolutions of the Peace Congress were at length brought in, and adopted by Mr. Crittenden in lieu of his own resolutions; the remaining Cotton States had seceded, and all hope of the adoption of an effective compromise was abandoned,—not however without the passage of a resolve, by the requisite majority of two thirds in both houses, proposing an amendment of the Constitution, to the effect that no change should hereafter be made in that instrument adverse to the interests of the South. How little was to be hoped from this or any other measure of peace may be inferred from the remark of a leading member of the Committee of

thirty-three from Alabama, that if the North would tender the South a blank sheet to write her own terms of compromise, the offer would not be accepted.

Such was the feeling of the Cotton States in reference to compromise, when Secession was confined to seven States; while the organization of the Confederacy was only an act of meditated treason; before a gun was fired or a blow was struck. Can any one suppose, that, in the present state of things, when the leaders have

“ in blood
Stept in so far, that, should they wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er,”

those terms of adjustment would be accepted which were rejected with disdain before they had drawn the sword? Let the affected contempt with which the organs of Southern opinion, official and unofficial, allude to the pacific tone that has occasionally found utterance at the North, return an answer to the question.*

No, my friends, there is no alternative but to acknowledge the independence of the Confederacy, or to subdue the rebellion by the strong arm of military power. To suppose that there is hope of any other settlement is the grossest delusion.

Can you then recognize the independence of the Confederacy? Remember that it carries with it acknowledged defeat, in a war of aggression, arrogantly provoked, by an enemy notoriously inferior

* See Appendix.

in numbers, financial means, and all the resources of war; and that a peace made on that basis would be a standing invitation, not only to foreign powers, in all our disputes, to disregard our rights, but to an insolent antagonist, flushed with triumph, to resort, on every future occasion of controversy between the two governments, to menace, insult, and invasion. We must, as showing the character of the antagonist with whom we have to deal, not forget the immediate cause of the present war, which is too apt to be overlooked, in consequence of the vast dimensions to which the contest has swelled. It was simply that Mr. Buchanan refused to enter into a negotiation with a deputation from South Carolina for the cession or the sale of Fort Sumter. Now on the supposition that the demand of Carolina was as legitimate and reasonable as it was groundless and absurd, still to rush at once into a war for such a reason was what might be expected of a tribe of savages, rather than from a community of civilized men. What! in a time of profound peace, and in the face of a disclaimer on the part of the President of any intention to increase the garrison or the armament of the post, then occupied but by a single company, to open upon it without a shadow of provocation, from eleven batteries; to cannonade it with red-hot shot, because the general government did not see fit to evacuate it and surrender the public property, at the first tap of the rebel drum,—why it is the work of madmen, sufficient of itself to justify the reply of Judge Petigru, who, when

asked by a stranger the way to the lunatic asylum, told him he could not go amiss in South Carolina. Can an ignominious peace, at the close of a war thus inaugurated, lead to anything but a renewal of hostilities on the first paltry dispute?

Then, too, we must remember that the recognition of the Confederacy is the prostration of the government, and the dismemberment of the territory of the United States, over which that government is legally and constitutionally established. Such has rarely, if ever, been the case, at least to anything like the same extent, in the revolutions, the civil wars, and the rebellions of Europe. Most of those wars have been dynastic struggles, or contests to maintain the balance of power, or sustain the national influence and honor. Limited changes of jurisdiction have sometimes followed, but never assuredly such a hideous territorial sacrifice as this rebellion demands of the government of the United States. Twice within the last quarter of a century, and while our politics were controlled by the South, we have been on the point of a war with England to maintain our right to a corner of the State of Maine, and to an island on the Pacific coast, which, till the difficulty arose, was not of consequence enough to have been laid down in the maps of the region. We are now expected to give up to a foreign power, (and a bitterly hostile foreign power it will be,) and that under the coercion of a barbarous war waged upon a wretched metaphysical quibble, half this fair territory of the United States; a sea-coast

of near two thousand miles ; some of the best harbors and naval and military stations of the country ; the fortresses that guard our coastwise commerce ; some of the great lines of communication East and West, North and South ; the control of the navigation of the Gulf of Mexico and of the outlet of that great system of internal waters which gives its character to the central basin of the Continent ; to give it up, too, on a principle in virtue of which each and every one of the seceding States may fall into the arms of any European power that chooses to persuade or coerce the surrender. To suppose such a thing possible on the part of the United States, except at the last spasm of national strength, the last sigh of national honor, the last struggle of national agony, would be to apply to the whole country Judge Petigru's conception of the sanity of South Carolina.

Can any man look at a map of the Union and then seriously entertain the opinion that the United States, brought as I have just said to the very verge of a war with Great Britain, after a diplomatic struggle of sixty years, for the possession of a few acres of unsettled land on the banks of the Aroostook, are going to permit a foreign power to entrench itself at the entrance of Chesapeake Bay, and possess itself of all the territory south of a boundary stretching westwardly, wherever it chooses to draw the lines, over the hills, through the central plains, across the Rocky Mountains, to the setting sun ? What ! a foreign power to hold the strait, twelve miles wide, be-

tween Cape Charles and Cape Henry, sure, at the first outbreak of border war with the North, to admit some hostile foreign navy into Chesapeake Bay? Is the route by which Howe's army in the Revolution, moved from New York to the conquest of Philadelphia so soon forgotten? Many of you have crossed the Susquehanna, the noble river which enters that bay at its head. Has it occurred to you, in connection with this recognition of the Southern Confederacy as a foreign power, to ask yourselves where this noble river rises? Not in Maryland, the State in which it enters the bay; not in Pennsylvania, or not mainly in Pennsylvania, whose central valleys it clothes with beauty and abundance; but far up in the northeastern section of Central New York. Many Bostonians frequent Sharon Springs, and while there they visit Cooperstown, the home of our great novelist, and Otsego Lake. Every drop of water which flows from that lake to the ocean enters it between Cape Charles and Cape Henry. Cast another look on the map, and see that magnificent Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the grandest piece of engineering upon the Continent, and the noble Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which reaches the foot of the mountains by its side. Besides the almost boundless travel and transportation from the West, eight hundred thousand tons of coal went from the mines of Cumberland to tide-water, the year before the war, by these two lines of communication. For eighty or ninety miles this magnificent railroad passes over the sacred soil of Virginia;

and the first achievement of the seceding lords of the soil was to burn or blow up the bridges, seize the locomotives, tear up the rails of the road, and break down the dams of the canal, and thus cut off this most important line of communication between the Atlantic coast and the interior. Nor was this merely for military motives; the Richmond press spoke of the railroad as a "nuisance," because it competed with their own tardily advancing works of internal communication. Are Ohio and the other Northwestern States going to hold one of their chief routes to the seaboard by this precarious tenure? Again, look at the map, and consider the position of Key West, of the Tortugas, and of Fort Pickens. It was truly stated by Lieut. Maury, in an official report some years ago, that whoever commands them controls the navigation of the Gulf of Mexico. Are you going to resign these dominant stations to the little foreign State of Florida, whose whole population, white and black, does not equal that of either of the counties of Suffolk, Middlesex, Essex, or Worcester? A puny State, which, if the Confederacy is recognized, is not unlikely in a few years to be recolonized by Spain, by the same process which has been lately gone through at San Domingo. What is to prevent her, if this notable doctrine of secession prevails, from leaving the Southern Confederacy as she has left the United States, and carrying Key West, the Tortugas, and the island of Santa Rosa along with her? Look, finally, at the map and trace the course of the mighty

stream that drains the central basin of the Continent. Follow it from its outlet in the gulf, up the main channel, to the junction with the Ohio, and up that beautiful river to the confluence of the Monongahela and the Alleghany, the one coming down from the northwestern corner of Virginia, the other from the southwestern corner of New York; then up the Mississippi itself a thousand miles above the junction with the Ohio, with seven States upon its banks, to the highlands which divide its waters from those which flow into the Arctic sea; then up the Missouri two thousand miles to the inmost recesses of the Rocky Mountains, forming, with a hundred tributaries, each as large as the Hudson, the grandest system of internal water communication on the face of the globe; its banks occupied even now by twelve loyal States, and ten millions of freemen who own the soil they till, destined in the lapse of another half-century, to say the least, to double their numbers and their resources; make this survey, and then tell me who dares, that the United States, to whom, on the highest considerations of national and international policy, this imperial domain was ceded by the first Napoleon two generations ago, are going to give up its portals to the keeping of a foreign State, whose free population is less than three hundred and sixty thousand, and who, if this wretched quibble of secession is recognized as a part of the Public Law, may, if she chooses, retrocede herself to France to-morrow.

I call it a wretched quibble, and a recent almost

providential disclosure shows that its authors consider it so themselves. A few months since the despatches of the Confederate Government to their agents in Europe fell into the hands of one of our cruisers. From one of them it appeared, that, in the course of the last summer, the French Vice-Consul at Galveston, without the slightest indirection or attempt at concealment, addressed a letter to the Governor of Texas, inquiring whether, in his opinion, it would not promote the prosperity of Texas to establish her separate independence. About the same time, a similar inquiry was addressed by the French Consular Agent at Richmond to one of the Texan senators. This simple inquiry, to which a civil answer was returned by the Governor and Senator of Texas, was denounced by Mr. Secretary Benjamin as an act "of hostility to the Confederacy;" Mr. Slidell was instructed to call the Emperor Louis Napoleon to account for his alleged complicity in this "intrigue;" and the unfortunate vice-consuls were ordered by Mr. Davis "to be expelled from the Confederacy" at twenty-four hours' notice. Steeped to the lips in the blood that he is shedding to vindicate the right of a sovereign State to secede, he expels a couple of foreign consuls from the country, because they inquired of the Governor and a senator of the State of Texas whether it might not be for her interest to exercise that right!

So absurd, so flagrantly insincere, so openly repudiated by its authors, are the pretexts of this unholy war. What remains but that we should stren-

uously and loyally support the government of the country in bringing it to a victorious result? Peace on any other terms will be nothing but a hollow truce, lasting only till fresh causes of controversy arise and the means of renewed aggression and outrage are accumulated. Toward the successful prosecution of the war every good citizen is bound to contribute to the utmost by word and deed, by personal service, if of age to render it, by his counsel, with his purse, if need be with his life. If he can do nothing else, let him at least speak words of patriotic cheer, seeking to inspire the community with confidence, to strengthen the arm of the government in the discharge of its arduous duties, and to animate our brave fellow-citizens so gallantly serving in the armies and navy of the country. What we now want is not so much strength in the field as union at home; or rather till we have cordial union at home, we never shall have overwhelming strength in the field. Do not, for Heaven's sake, let us reënact the fatal blunder that has been committed by free States since the dawn of history. The strength of Philip of Macedon was in the divided counsels of the Greeks. Do not let the strength of the Rebellion be in the want of harmony in the loyal States.

But it may be asked, How can men support the Administration in the conduct of the war, if they do not approve its measures? How, I ask in return, can any free government carry on a war, if every one is to stand aloof, who does not approve all its measures? That the war must be carried on till

the Rebellion is subdued, is the all but unanimous sentiment of the loyal States. It is as much the interest of the South as of the North to hasten this consummation, for she suffers infinitely more than the North by the continuance of the war, and there can be no return to a state of general and permanent prosperity on any other condition. That errors will be committed, errors of judgment certainly, errors of purpose perhaps, on the part of individuals, is sure to happen in all wars. Commanders of armies, members of cabinets, members of Congress, Generals, Secretaries, and Presidents are fallible men, subject to like passions as we are. I do not at all deny, that it is our right and duty to watch and criticise their conduct; but we must not forget that critics, editors, and orators are also fallible. While we sit in quiet and safety by our firesides, and inveigh against those who bear the heat and burden of the day, who carry upon their shoulders the thankless burden of official duty, and the heavy responsibility of results, which often depend on the elements and on casualties beyond human control, we must keep in mind that we also have our interests, our prejudices, and our passions, and that it is much easier to find fault, than to pursue any course of conduct which will escape censure in a fault-finding community. There are two ways of doing everything; and when duty constrains us to find fault with the shortcomings of our rulers and our generals, we should, if possible, do it in such a manner as not to give aid and comfort to the rulers and generals of the enemy.

Among the patriotic inculcations of Washington's Farewell Address, none are more emphatic than those which relate to the evils of party spirit, unavoidable as the existence of party seems to be in free States and in prosperous times. Brief lulls there may be, as in President Monroe's Administration ; but such temporary calms, as in that case, occur only after violent agitations, and are likely to be followed by them. So inseparable from free government is the existence of party felt to be in England, that, while the Ministers are styled Her Majesty's Government, their opponents have been called Her Majesty's Opposition. Every one, however, must feel, that, even in time of peace, the indiscriminate and vehement opposition, which the spirit and the policy of party are sure to make to almost every important measure of the government, is productive of embarrassment and delay, often of more serious evils in the conduct of the public business ; that it makes public life distasteful to many virtuous citizens capable of rendering important service to the country ; and thus tends to throw the management of affairs into the hands of unscrupulous and unprincipled men. All these evils are indefinitely multiplied and aggravated in a state of war, with the additional evil, far exceeding all the rest, that an indiscriminate opposition, in proportion to its vigor and warmth, paralyzes the arm of your own government, and strengthens that of the common enemy.

The existing Administration came into office in the result of a strenuous party contest, and it

was therefore natural that it should be organized on a purely party basis. Could it have been foreseen that in less than six weeks the country would be plunged into a contest which would task to the utmost all its strength and require the employment of all its resources, material and moral, the attempt perhaps would have been made to place the Administration on a broader basis. This, however, could not be foreseen; and the President has not yet found it practicable, or if practicable not expedient, as far as civil affairs are concerned, to assume a position independent of party. Efforts in fact have been made, in the highest quarter, to induce him to organize the Executive on a still narrower party basis. Meantime it must in justice be stated, that the Administration has been as liberally supported by those who did not as by those who did contribute to place it in power, and as formidably assailed by its nominal adherents as by its reputed opponents. I belonged, I need not say, to the latter class; not that I was much of a Bell and Everett man, for if, in Parliamentary phrase, it had been possible to divide the question, I should have voted against the candidate for the Vice-Presidency on that ticket. I did all in my power to prevent his nomination, and to get him excused when it was made. I admit, however, that without being much of a partisan, I belong to the President's opposition. But what then? There is a loyalty of opposition as well as a loyalty of support. Shall I, because I am not a political supporter of the Administration,

sit quietly by and see the government overturned and the country dismembered? Because we did not vote for Mr. Lincoln's Administration, must we hold back from the vigorous prosecution of the war, which is to prevent Mr. Davis from installing himself at Washington? Because we may disapprove of the removal of General McClellan, shall we do what we can to paralyze the arm of his successor? Such has not been the course of General McClellan himself. When he was abruptly relieved from his command, after having, —with an army disheartened by recent reverses, and which he, in the language of the Confederate General Lee, reorganized as with "the enchanter's wand,"—in two nobly fought battles, rescued Washington and Baltimore from menaced capture, and preserved Maryland to the Union, instead of using the language of disaffection or even complaint, he exhorted the army, by which he was idolized, to be as faithful to General Burnside as it had been to him. Because we may doubt the policy of the Proclamations of the 22d September and 1st January, shall we, as far as in us lies, coöperate with the oligarchy of the seceding States in forcing their "peculiar institution" into the unoccupied territory of the Union; in reopening the African slave-trade, for which their diplomacy is already making what it deems astute preparation; in overturning this most admirable Constitution of government, which in the intention of its venerable and patriotic founders, South as well as North, contemplated only the temporary toleration and

gradual disappearance of involuntary servitude ; and in establishing, and that at the cost of a desolating civil war, a new Confederacy on the corner-stone of Slavery ?

But it may be asked, again, How can we support an Administration which adopts measures that we deem unconstitutional ? I should certainly be a very unfaithful pupil of the political school in which I was trained, if I could ever hear the sacred name of the Constitution justly invoked without respect, or yield to it anything less than implicit obedience. It is, however, as great an error to appeal to it where it does not apply, as to disregard it where it does ; and I must say that the study of our political history ought to teach us caution in this respect ; for, from the formation of the government in 1789 to the present day, there has not been an important controverted measure — no, not one — which its party opponents have not denounced as unconstitutional. It is one of the doctrines of the seceding school, that the government of the United States cannot constitutionally wage war against a sovereign State. But how if the sovereign State strikes the first blow, fires on your vessels, bombards and captures your forts, threatens your capital, and invades the loyal members of the Union who refuse to join in the war of aggression ? Few, I suppose, will doubt that the United States may constitutionally wage a war of self-defence, against any enemy, domestic or foreign. But in waging this war of self-defence, we cannot, in the opinion of

some persons with whom I have usually acted, and whose judgment I greatly respect, go beyond the powers specially granted by the Constitution to the general government, for the purposes of ordinary administration in time of peace. This opinion seems to me to rest on a misconception of the authority under which war is waged. The Constitution authorizes Congress to declare war, to raise and support armies, and to provide and maintain a navy; and it clothes the President with the power of Commander-in-chief. It goes no further. It prescribes nothing as to the enemy against whom, the measures by which, nor the ends for which the war may be carried on. It gives no more power to wage war with a foreign State than with a domestic State; and it is as silent on the subject of blockading the ports, as of seizing the cotton or of emancipating the slaves of a district in rebellion. The rights of war belong to the more comprehensive, in some respects the higher code of international law, to which not the government of the United States alone, but all civilized governments are amenable. By that august code, all unjust wars are forbidden, and all unjust modes of waging just wars, no matter who may be the enemy or what the pretext; while by the same code, all just wars, and eminently all wars of self-defence, and all warlike measures sanctioned by our Christian civilization are permitted, unless so far as they may be expressly prohibited by the municipal law of our own country.

Now to say that no just war can be waged

against any but a foreign power is simply begging the question. I cannot conceive a proposition more extravagant than that provocation the most offensive, and acts of aggression the most intolerable, which would in every sane man's judgment authorize instant hostilities against a foreign State, must be tamely borne if committed under the pretended authority of a State associated with others in a federal union. Certainly, if any State connected with the British government, by whatever relation, whether that of constitutional union, as Scotland and Ireland, or responsible colonial government, like the Anglo-American provinces, or some more absolute form of political dependence, had after years of preparation, public and private, the organization and training of troops and the purchase of arms; eventually by more definite military measures, such as the construction and armament of forts and the concentration of soldiers; and finally by overt acts, firing upon provision-ships sent to supply the imperial garrisons, the bombardment of the national forts, and the capture of the troops by which they were held, the seizure of arsenals, mints, custom-houses, navy-yards, and revenue cutters, — levied actual war against the central government, any person who should deny the authority of that government, by every means which the law of nations permits, to wage a war not only till the national property was recovered, but till the outrage was chastised, and effectual security obtained that it would never be repeated, would, in any country but this, be deemed a driveller.

Even if it were true that the Constitution required a different mode of carrying on war in the cases of a foreign and domestic enemy, which it certainly does not, the people of the seceding States not only claim to be foreigners, but we are compelled, by the magnitude of the forces engaged, and by the course of the great maritime powers in recognizing them as belligerents, to regard them ourselves in that light. Instead of punishing them as traitors and rebels when they fall into our hands, as the municipal law of our own and of all other countries, and their practice too, would warrant us in doing, we treat them of necessity as alien enemies. Prisoners are exchanged and paroled, flags of truce sent and received; and they enjoy in all respects the privileges and are subject to all the obligations, which by the Law of Nations pertain to public war. These privileges and these obligations are not defined by the Constitution of the United States, but by the International Code. It is this, and not the municipal law, which authorizes the blockade of the ports, the occupation of the cities, and the invasion of the territory of the seceding States; and it would be a strange inconsequence to hold that the same persons could as citizens of the United States, though in rebellion, demand the privileges guaranteed by the Constitution, while as alien enemies they are exempted from the penalties of treason.

Suppose our misunderstandings with Spain, a few years ago, had culminated in a declaration of war on her part against the United States, and the

sovereign State of Florida, but lately a Spanish colony, in virtue of this wonder-working doctrine of secession, had thought fit to withdraw from the Union, carrying with her Key West, the Tortugas, and Fort Pickens, and had formed an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Spain. Would any one doubt that the United States could, without violating the Constitution, invade Florida in order to recover the public property, — the islands, the forts, and the national establishments thus seized; to repel the enemy; to chastise these acts of hostility to the national government, and to take effectual security that they should not be repeated? Would not the government of the United States, without violating the Constitution, be authorized to do precisely the same things in Florida as in Cuba? Would not, for instance, the arming and the employing of the slaves in this just war, as allies inured to the climate and acquainted with the country, be as legitimate on one side of the Gulf of Florida as on the other; and would not their employment under the authority of the United States and the control and direction of its officers, instead of tending to a servile war and the massacre of the unarmed and defenceless, (at which humanity revolts,) be the surest means of preventing such barbarities, and reducing this frightful element of danger within the limits of Christian warfare? Deprecating as I do beyond the power of words to express the heart-sickening horrors of a servile insurrection, nothing has seemed to me so likely to prevent its occurrence, as to subject

the colored population in those parts of the country where war is carried on and where the danger of such a calamity is greatest, to the restraints of military discipline and the control of responsible authority.

But it is time to draw this discussion to a close. War is justly regarded as *one* of the greatest evils that can befall a nation, though it is not *the* greatest, and of this great evil, civil war is the most deplorable form. Thus far, it is true, we have the satisfaction of reflecting, notwithstanding the barbarities inflicted upon Union men in the seceding States, that the contest has been carried on without the atrocities which have been too apt, in all ages and countries, to mark the progress of civil war. Still it is a dire calamity. I want words to express the sorrow with which from the first I have contemplated, and unceasingly contemplate, the necessity laid upon us, to wage this war for the integrity of the Nation. I recoiled from it to the last. Few persons, I think, have entertained visions more glowing of the amount of blessings stored up for the latest posterity in the perpetual Union of the States. I had seen them already expanded from sixteen States and four million inhabitants, which were the numbers at the time of my birth, to a family of thirty-four States and a population augmented eightfold; and reason and imagination were alike tasked to find a limit to the natural growth of the country. But numbers and space are but the relation of material things. I saw exemplified in this Western world, long hid-

den, and late revealed, the idea of a form of government as nearly perfect as our frail nature admits, — prodigal of blessings to the millions now on the stage, and promising a share in the same rich inheritance to the millions on millions that should follow us. I grew up beneath the shadow of our beautiful flag, and often, when I have seen it floating on distant seas, my heart has melted at the thought of the beloved and happy land whose union was emblazoned on its streaming folds. On a hundred festive and patriotic occasions my voice has dwelt — would it had been more worthily — on the grateful theme; and my prayer to Heaven has been, that it might be hushed in death, rather than it should be compelled to abandon that auspicious strain. Not without deep solicitude I saw the angry clouds gathering in the horizon North and South; and I devoted the declining years of my life, with a kind of religious consecration, to the attempt to freshen the sacred memories that cluster round that dear and venerated name which I need not repeat, — memories which had survived the multiplying causes of alienation, and were so well calculated to strengthen the cords of the Union. To these humble efforts and the time and labor expended upon them, truly a labor of love, I would, as Heaven is my witness, have cheerfully added the sacrifice of my life, if by so doing I could have averted the catastrophe. For that cause, I should have thought a few careworn and weary years cheaply laid on the altar of my country.

But it could not be. A righteous Providence in its wisdom has laid upon us—even upon us—the performance of this great and solemn duty. It is now plain to the dullest perception, that the hour of trial could not be much longer delayed. The leaders of the Rebellion tell us themselves that they had plotted and planned it for an entire generation. It might have been postponed for four years or for eight years, but it was sure in no long time to come; and if, by base compliance, we could have turned the blow from ourselves, it would have fallen with redoubled violence on our children.

Let us, then, meet it like men. It must needs be that offences shall come, but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh. Let us show ourselves equal to the duty imposed upon us, and faithful to the trust to which we are called. The cause in which we are engaged is the cause of the Constitution and the Law, of civilization and freedom, of man and of God. Let us engage in it with a steadiness and fortitude, a courage and a zeal, a patience and a resolution, a hope and a cheer, worthy of the Fathers from whom we are descended, of the country we defend, and of the privileges we inherit. There is a call and a duty, a work and a place for all;—for man and for woman, for rich and for poor, for old and for young, for the stout-hearted and strong-handed, for all who enjoy and all who deserve to enjoy the priceless blessings at stake. Let the venerable forms of the Pilgrim Fathers, the majestic images of our revolutionary sires, and of the sages that

gave us this glorious Union ; let the anxious expectation of the Friends of Liberty abroad, awakened at last to the true cause and the great issues of this contest ; let the hardships and perils of our brethren in the field, and the fresh-made graves of the dear ones who have fallen ; let every memory of the past and every hope of the future ; every thought and every feeling, that can nerve the arm, or fire the heart, or elevate and purify the soul of a patriot,—rouse and guide and cheer and inspire us, to do, and, if need be, to die, for our Country !

APPENDIX.

THE DISUNION POLICY OF THE COTTON STATES, AND THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE CRITTENDEN RESOLUTIONS.

IT will not, I suppose, be expected of me, in this place, to enter at length into controversy on the subject of my Address. I shall, however, briefly reply to the exceptions, which have been taken to two of my statements.

One is, that the dismemberment of the Union is "a policy, which had been steadily pursued by the Cotton States for thirty years." This has been called a sweeping assertion inconsistent with facts, with which we are all familiar. The facts alluded to are the votes, which, during the last thirty years, have been given at the South for candidates, who cannot be suspected of favoring the dismemberment of the Union;—Votes (it is urged) which exhibit "no symptom of unanimity of action for any specific purpose, much less for dismemberment of the Union."

No one, I suppose, would have dissented from my proposition if I had stated it in these words: "The policy of dismemberment has been steadily pursued for thirty years, in the Cotton-growing States, till it has resulted in the accomplishment of that object." This, however, was precisely what I meant. I could not be supposed to be ignorant of facts with which "all are familiar," or in the face of those facts to maintain that the Cotton States had been "unanimous" on the subject of dismemberment or anything else. The existence of a union party in the Cotton-growing States, down even to the outbreak of the rebellion, was distinctly recognized by me in the early part of my Address. The process was necessarily gradual in the individual State, and still more so with reference to

concerted action with other States. In South Carolina the disunion policy did reach the point of organized State action as early as 1832. One of the leaders in the seceding Convention in 1860 said: "We have this day consummated the work of forty years." There was a patriotic minority headed by Poinsett, Petigru, and Grimké, who opposed this mad policy, but that did not make it the less true, that the State was pursuing it, and that up to the very verge of civil war. It was checked at the time by the Force Bill and General Jackson's coercive demonstrations, followed by Mr. Clay's compromise; but the agitation was soon transferred from the Tariff to the Slavery question, both being declared by General Jackson thirty years ago, to be mere "pretexts," while "the real objects were disunion and a Southern Confederacy." The usual machinery was put in motion on this new issue, not only in South Carolina, but throughout the Cotton-growing States. Inflammatory resolutions were passed by State Legislatures; delegates were sent to disunion caucuses held under the name of Commercial Conventions; the elections turned more and more on the doctrine of State-Rights, which, in the vocabulary of the Cotton-growing States, meant the right of secession; members of Congress from those States asserted that right in the most defiant manner, and leading journals assiduously fanned the flames. This line of operation is not only consistent with the existence of a Union party, but was rendered necessary by it. If the Cotton-growing States had been unanimous, as I am supposed to have stated, it would of course not have required thirty years to bring on the crisis; but that the resolution to effect that object was taken in the Cotton States more than thirty years ago, and steadily pursued to its accomplishment, is not only, I conceive, as certain as anything in contemporary political history, but is matter of boast, on the part of some of its most active promoters at the present day. I would request any one who doubts the substantial accuracy of this statement, to read the "Partisan Leader," a political Romance written by Professor Beverly Tucker, of William and Mary College, submitted to Mr. Calhoun in manuscript, and privately printed by General Duff Green, in 1836, with the fictitious date of 1856; and soon suppressed.

Among the facts alleged against my statement, I have been rather reproachfully reminded, that Virginia, in 1860, voted for Bell

and Everett. How this tends to disprove my assertion relative to the disunion policy of the Cotton-growing States, I do not see. I do however see in it an additional reason, why those States, as I alleged, should especially desire to win over Virginia to that policy.

The other statement in my Address, to which exception has been taken and earnestly pressed, relates to the proceedings in the Senate of the United States in 1860-61, on the Crittenden Resolutions. I do not understand that the accuracy of my narrative of facts is questioned, but I am charged with omitting other facts, which entirely change the aspect of the case, relieving the senators from the Cotton-growing States from the responsibility of defeating those resolutions, and placing it on the Republican senators. The facts which I am supposed to have omitted are, that the Republican senators voted against those resolutions, while Messrs. Davis and Toombs, leading senators from the Cotton States had, according to Mr. Douglas, declared that they would be satisfied with them.

The first of these facts was not omitted by me. In my necessarily brief narrative of proceedings, which occupied much of the time of the Senate during the whole session, I stated that the Crittenden Resolutions were opposed by those at the North, who deemed no further concessions on the subject of slavery necessary or expedient, (meaning of course the Republican senators;) that a substitute for them was moved by Mr. Clark, of New Hampshire, well known as a prominent Republican senator,) and I gave the vote on the test question, by which the substitute was carried and the resolutions were rejected. But it is most true, that I made no allusion to the statement of Judge Douglas to the effect, that Messrs. Davis and Toombs had declared, in the committee of thirteen, that they would accept the Crittenden Resolutions, if tendered and sustained by the Republican senators, and consequently that the latter, and not the senators from the Cotton States, were, in his judgment, responsible for their defeat.

Now, on a point of this kind, Judge Douglas was not in a condition to give an impartial opinion. He had just come out of a strenuous political contest for the Presidency, in which he had been unsuccessful. The Republican party charged him, in the progress of that contest, with having pursued a course on the

Kansas-Nebraska affair, which was the immediate cause of the existing crisis; and he now retaliated by throwing on them the responsibility of the defeat of the Crittenden Resolutions. In this I did not and do not concur with him.

With respect to the supposed willingness of Messrs. Davis and Toombs and the other senators from the Cotton-growing States "to accept" the Crittenden Resolutions, it was purely illusory, nor does it appear to have been regarded in any other light on either side of the Senate. I do not find any notice of it, as affording aid to the solution of the question, by any subsequent speaker. It is not, for instance, alluded to by Mr. Crittenden in his earnest appeal to senators to unite in this adjustment. If he had believed that there was anything substantial in it, he would not have failed to urge it as a powerful argument, why the extreme North should be willing to meet the extreme South on his resolutions, as a common ground of settlement.

If Messrs. Davis, Toombs, and their associates from the Cotton-growing States, were willing to accept the Crittenden Resolutions as a final settlement, why did they not vote for them? They could have carried them by a majority of twelve, and there was no reason why they should not vote for them, as well as Messrs. Hunter and Mason and the other senators from the border Slave States. What availed some vague expression of satisfaction with these resolutions, on the part of the senators from the Cotton-growing States, when partly by absenting themselves, and partly by refusing to vote, they allowed them to be defeated?

These resolutions were moved by their venerable author as a compromise. What sort of a compromise is that, to which one of the parties, while vaguely professing a qualified and illusory adhesion, refuses the support of his vote? But even in Mr. Douglas's statement, this is the only adhesion which Messrs. Davis and Toombs promised. They would not and did not themselves vote for these resolutions, but they would "accept" them, not if passed in the usual form of legislative action by the Senate, but if "*tendered and sustained by the Republican members.*" The latter were not to be allowed to do what the seceders actually did a few days after, namely, stand by and leave the resolutions to be adopted on their merits. The seceders would only "accept them as a final

settlement of the controversy, if tendered and sustained by the Republican members.”

The circumstances under which this gracious offer was made necessarily rendered it altogether illusory. The State of Mississippi (Mr. Davis's State) had formally resolved that, if a Republican President were chosen, she would concert with her sister States the measures of resistance to be adopted. South Carolina had actually broken from the Union, had seized the custom-house and post-office, was making military preparations to seize the forts, and a week before the vote on the Crittenden Resolutions was taken, had fired on the “Star of the West,” that is, had levied actual war against the United States. Messrs. Iverson, Benjamin, and Wigfall, had declared in the strongest terms, in the Senate, that their three States would infallibly follow suit, and that it was “too late” for compromise. Mr. Davis, in a carefully prepared speech, had maintained that no legislative measures or amendments of the Constitution would be of any avail, without a change in the temper of the people of the Free States; — a speech manifestly intended, in advance, to preclude the healing effect of any measures of conciliation; and Mr. Toombs, in a speech of singular ferocity and bitterness, had set forth the unalterable determination of Georgia to leave the Union. To expect under these circumstances, that the Republican party, which had just prevailed in a strenuous canvass in which all the States had taken part, would “tender and sustain” a series of resolutions, which (though not so intended by their venerable mover) were regarded by themselves and their seceding opponents as a rebuke of their party and of their platform, and which were to “be accepted” by those who were daily addressing them in the language of scorn and detestation, as a proof of change of heart on the part of themselves and their constituents, is really asking too much of poor human nature. Certainly, I wish that the Republican senators could at least have allowed the resolutions to pass, though that was not what was imperiously demanded of them. It is not my duty to defend them, in anything they did or forbore to do; but I do not believe that any person, not even the patriotic mover of the Resolutions in his most sanguine mood, expected that as a party they would, or thought that they could, “sustain and tender” the resolutions to their scornful

opponents of the Cotton States. The utmost that could have been hoped for was that three or four senators might be found, in the moderate wing of the Republican party, who would unite with the conservative members from the Free States, and the Southern senators generally, thus forming the requisite constitutional number for such of the resolutions as required a vote of two thirds, while the legislative measures would have been carried by a large majority.

When, therefore, Messrs. Davis and Toombs said they would "accept" these resolutions "if tendered and sustained by the Republican party," and accept them as a proof that the hearts of their constituents were changed, they evidently placed their ungracious acquiescence on what they well knew was an impossible condition, and they announced it in a tone of defiance and scorn, which was enough of itself to extinguish all disposition to compromise.

Finally, in order to form a correct and candid judgment on this whole subject, it must be borne in mind, that the excitement at the South on the subject of slavery, has always been on the part of the disunionists, in a great degree factitious, and what General Jackson thirty years ago pronounced a "pretext" for breaking up the Union and establishing a Southern Confederacy. A full demonstration of this proposition would exceed the limits of this note, but the following facts are notorious:—

1st. The leaders of the secession movement would not wait for overt acts of hostility to slavery as existing in the States, because they knew no overt acts would be attempted. One of the Georgia senators said in the Senate, on the 5th of Dec. 1860, "We do not suppose there will be any overt acts on the part of Mr. Lincoln. For one, I do not dread these overt acts, and I do not propose to wait for them. Why, Sir, the power of this Federal government could be so exercised against the institution of slavery in the Southern States, as that, without an overt act, the institution would not last ten years." Their pretended fear was, that, under the influence of the general government, a strong anti-slavery party would rapidly grow up at the South.

2d. The two main alleged grievances of the South were, the non-execution of the fugitive-slave law (which was grossly exaggerated,) and the claim on the part of the North, that Congress had a right to exclude slavery from the territories. Now, with respect

to the first grievance, the clamor was far louder in the remote Cotton States, from which slaves very rarely escaped, than in the border States, in which, if anywhere, the grievance was felt. With respect to the territories, not only had the Supreme Court, in contravention of the whole current of legislation from the foundation of the government, denied the right of Congress to exclude slavery from the territories, not only were three territories admitted this very winter of 1860-61, without any anti-slavery restriction, but in the territory of New Mexico, which had been open to slaveholders ten years, and into which, if anywhere, slavery was to spread westwardly, only twenty-four slaves were found at the last census.

3d. So far from really apprehending danger to their institution from the attacks upon it under a Republican president, the Confederate agents abroad, in their official communications with the French and English governments, have maintained and urged, for the sake of depriving the government of the United States of the benefit of the anti-slavery sentiment of Europe, that the Constitution of the United States was rather less adverse to the reopening of the African slave-trade, than the Constitution of the Confederacy; and that the Slave States contemplate gradual ameliorations of the condition of the slaves, and the abolition of slavery at no distant day.

But I dismiss the painful topic.

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