FOUR QUESTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE, AT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

ADDRESS

OF

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY,

BEFORE THE

PARKER FRATERNITY, AT THE MUSIC HALL,

OCTOBER 20, 1868.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
1868.

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE, AT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

ADDRESS

OF

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY,

BEFORE THE

PARKER FRATERNITY, AT THE MUSIC HALL,

OCTOBER 20, 1868.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
1868.

1881, May 23.
Gift of
John G. Batchelder,
of Cambridge.

ADDRESS.

I have been invited to say something to-night on the great subject which is now agitating the country.

It is certainly the duty of every good citizen to examine for himself the questions at issue, when a conflict like this is shaking half a continent, and is to be decided between the rising and setting of the sun, on a day rapidly approaching. And it seems equally his duty, after having thoroughly satisfied himself upon the merits of the great debate, to do what in him lies for the furtherance of that which he firmly believes the Right.

There have been important elections in this country during the brief three-quarters of a century which comprehends the whole of our national life, —that turbulent, full-throbbing, exultant national life, the like of which the world never knew before, and which has something appalling in its very strength. For if so brief a span has sufficed to

place America in the foremost rank of the great nations of history,—if such is the infancy of the Republic,—what is she to be in the fulness of her power, when the centuries which are to a nation what years are to the individual shall have brought her to maturity? On us, to whom in our generation is committed the representation of all this stupendous vitality during the little hour allotted for the playing of our parts upon this earth, how deep is the responsibility that in our day at least the Republic receive no detriment!

Certainly there have been bitterly contested elections in this country before. Party spirit is always rife, and in such vivid, excitable, disputatious communities as ours are, and I trust always will be, it is the very soul of freedom. To those who reflect upon the means and ends of popular government, nothing seems more stupid than in grand generalities to deprecate party spirit. Why, government by parties and through party machinery is the only possible method by which a free republic can accomplish the purpose of its existence. The old republics of the Past may be said to have fallen, not because of party spirit, but because there was no adequate machinery by which party spirit could develop itself with facility and regularity.

Never before did a representative republic on any considerable scale exist. Popular representation, the election of men to speak each for a hundred thousand or more of their fellow-citizens at some common central point,—familiar as we are with it, so much so that it seems like one of the elemental laws—was entirely unknown to the republics, great and small, of Antiquity or of the Middle Ages. That which makes the democratic republic possible and perfectly convenient on the vast scale of this country was never imagined before. The democratic force in older republics evaporated uselessly or exploded balefully, because no engine had been invented by which Man becomes master of the superhuman strength of men,—of the aggregated thought and will of great multitudes.

And a free government may cease to be free, even although all the forms and appliances for energetic action are present, if the party spirit, the potent expansive vapor which moves all things, is absent or insufficient. The modern kingdon of Italy has the freest constitutional form compatible with limited monarchy, a liberal and expanded representative system, but with the bulk of the people there is a deficiency of the warm popular element, the party spirit, the political steam. I have heard of

representative districts where there were fifteen hundred voters, and where not five thought of going to the polls during what should have been an exciting political canvass. Such is the effect upon a country of centuries of political childhood, of paternal and sacerdotal despotism. The task of the patriot who believes in human progress, in political and human freedom, is harder in that country than in ours, but the brave hearts of Italy know not despair.

And if our republic be true to herself, the future of the human race is assured by our example. No sweep of overwhelming armies, no ponderous treatises on the rights of man, no hymns to liberty, though set to martial music and resounding with the full diapason of a million human throats, can exert so persuasive an influence as does the spectacle of a great republic, occupying a quarter of the civilized globe, and governed quietly and sagely by the People itself.

Well, I believe that there is usually no great deficiency of party spirit with us, no very great lack of democratic steam. Our tendency is perhaps to exaggerate the issues and the stakes, but I doubt whether it be possible to magnify the importance of this presidential election. As citizens of

a free Commonwealth, therefore, whose peculiar privilege it is, alone among great nations, to elect periodically chief magistrates for those functions which in most countries are discharged by rulers appointed over the people according to permanent and ingenious fictions, it is fit for us on this occasion to scan very closely the doctrines, the promises and the characters of the rival parties. Which of the two is most in harmony with that great democratic principle which this republic must obey, if it is not to perish forever?

And I believe that most of us—republicans and democrats—are honestly desirous of arriving at that truth, of obeying that law. I question no man's motives. No man outside a mad-house hopes or wishes, since the war, to upset the American Republic. The thing cannot be done; the Union is indissoluble. So much at least has been proved. And it is worth the precious price we have paid for it, to know that what was once believed by millions in this country, and almost universally outside of it, to be the vainest of delusions, is now an established axiom. Let the world make the most of it and govern itself accordingly. Treason has done its worst, but this government has not fallen, for it was founded on the rock of

equal rights. We can read the Declaration of Independence at last, with its solemn and majestic opening clause, which peals through the world like a choral strain, proclaiming a new birth to the nations—"that this truth is self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," —without a blush or a sneer or a feeble sophism, once the sole response.

There are many topics, interesting and important to all of us, on which I fully understand and rejoice at diversity of opinion, but there are great subjects on which it is difficult to comprehend a radical difference. I could never place myself on the same point of view, moral or political, with those who thought negro slavery other than a misfortune and a sin.

It has always seemed to me, in the words of our great magistrate and martyr, that if slavery be not wrong, nothing is wrong.

It is also very hard for me to understand how any American can wish to degrade this majestic Union, this government of the People by the People, this political scheme of man acting directly upon man, of Law dealing directly with responsible creatures,

into something called a confederacy; into a league of corporations; into a system which proved fatal to the only great republic which has preceded our own in modern times,—that of the United Netherlands; a system which for a time seemed to strike the American People, emerging victorious from its struggle with the British government, with paralysis, out of which our fathers in '89 rescued us by the glorious national constitution; the system which Jefferson Davis and his followers had the madness to think stronger than the American Union, because the spirit of negro slavery had breathed into it the breath of immortal life.

Yet this is really the question still at issue. Some of us thought it settled by the great four years Agony. But when we thought the subtle and dangerous theory forever destroyed, behold it coiling itself, wounded but not killed, and rearing its threatening and venomous head, prepared for a final and fatal spring. Let us deal with it once for all. Let the heel of popular condemnation be set on it, now and forever. We are a nation. We are not a confederacy. This government, which protects and which controls the humblest as well as the most powerful amongst us, the seat of whose august empire is at Washington, deals with every

individual of us directly within its carefully limited sphere. It makes supreme laws which no man dares defy, and there is nothing but chaos whenever we attempt to escape from its all-embracing folds.

One would think that we had heard enough by this time of that sound of woe, now utterly devoid of meaning, State sovereignty. For one, I recognize no sovereign in this country, no sovereignty. It is a feudal, Anglo-Norman phrase, not good English nor good sense as applied to our institutions and habits. We have long since got rid of the thing, and it would be better to have done with the word.

Ever since we, the people of the United States, eighty years ago, laid down the constitution as the basis of our political fabric, up to this hour, there has been no supreme law other than the will of the people as expressed according to the rules therein prescribed.

In this school district, this township, this State, we, as portion of that people, are free to make our laws, to govern ourselves, to organize all the multiform and infinite details which make up the main substance of our political lives, so far as district, town or State has the right to interfere with the business or to trespass on the domain of

the individual; but in all that we do we must submit to that universal law which enwraps us like an atmosphere and which we call the constitution. Any ordinance or statute in violation of that law, whether by the selectmen of a village or by the highest authorities of the proudest State, is null and void, so soon as it is pronounced a violation by the tribunals to which the people have confided the right and responsibility of a decision; while, on the contrary, all laws made by the national legislature in pursuance of the constitution, shall stand until the same tribunals in cases within their competence shall decide that they are not in pursuance of it. All else is rebellion and revolution, pure and simple. And this it is to be governed by the people's law.

All this would seem a string of school-boy truisms, but one sometimes thinks in these later days that every truism has become a paradox.

I am not afraid, I never have been afraid, of being deprived of my State rights. But unless the experience of the last quarter of a century, followed by the most tremendous rebellion against constituted popular authority ever waged, is to go for absolutely nothing, we have all had cause enough to fear the loss of our national rights.

I think with an ever-recurring shudder of the not very distant time when we all awoke one spring morning and found out that we had not a country. The shout of indecent joy with which haters of popular liberty all over the earth hailed the announcement that the brief history of the United States had come to an end, that the bubble democracy had burst, that *Hic Jacet* was already inscribed on the tombstone of the great Republic, that she was no longer to answer to her name on the great roll call of nations; all this is still ringing in our ears. And then it was that we pondered quickly and well the value of those holy words—Nation and Union—without which liberty is an empty phrase.

Yet after all, suppose the Union gone; the United States abolished instead of slavery; still we had our sacred State rights to fall back upon. Massachusetts was "sovereign and independent" still, and Rhode Island or Delaware, each with its own fleets and armies, might defy all the powers of the world. Ah! my friends, the good sense as well as the patriotism of the great majority in all the free States taught them without an argument that the dearest of State rights was the right to defend this Union; to fly to

arms, that not a single column of the majestic peristyle of States should ever be displaced; that this sacred Commonwealth of refuge to the oppressed of all nations should never be destroyed.

I can comprehend the word allegiance, although this also has a feudal, personal twang, not very grateful to my American ear, but I can comprehend it only in its national application. I can swear allegiance, sacred fealty to the great Union of which I have the honor to be a citizen, which oppresses me never, but which is always ready to protect me against a world in arms, but blind fealty to the behests of a State, to a corporation which long ago parted voluntarily and wisely with all the essential attributes of what is called sovereignty in order to help create a higher organism—such allegiance is as incomprehensible to me as allegiance to my school district or to the city ward where I happen to reside.

I find that all the necessary functions of local self-government, legislative, judicial, administrative, have been carefully reserved and kept out of the sphere of the general government; and I know that government to be already so oppressed with national functions which it must discharge,

as to have small leisure for absorbing into itself those local powers which are necessary to the autonomy of the State and the municipality.

Certainly the citizens of no State in this Union have better right to be proud of their State than we have to be proud of Massachusetts. Her very name—that harsh old heathen word, most difficult of utterance they say to all but American tongues—has a familiar music to our ears. It is freighted with the memories of those earnest, God-fearing, hard-praying, hard-fighting pilgrims, who founded a theocracy in a savage wilderness, amid dangers and privations sufficient to appal the stoutest heart; whose descendants have caused that wilderness to blossom like the rose; and out of whose theocracy has grown the most temperate and well-ordered democracy that the world has thus far beheld.

But I will not yield to a natural enthusiasm, nor speak a word more of eulogy on our native State. Moreover, what we have achieved is nothing to the boundless possibilities of the future. If we have succeeded at all it is by setting our feet in the right path. We have found out the way to ascend, but we have hardly begun to scale that ladder which leads ever upwards, like

that beheld in the patriarch's vision, on which the angels of God were ascending and descending. Nothing, absolutely nothing, has been done compared to that which our successors may compass if they follow in the track which has been marked out.

It is only for the sake of pointing the moral of this address that I have called your attention to the fact that if State sovereignties, State pride, State allegiance, State rights are subjects of anxiety, we of Massachusetts have as much interest in the matter as others. Our affections, our devotion, our closest sympathies, our warmest and dearest memories are with the State of our birth or our choice, but our foremost duty as citizens is to that great government without which that which we so proudly call our State could not exist in safety an hour. Look round the world to-day, in any direction, and say whether you think it desirable for yourselves and your children to belong to a petty nation and a feeble government. And we may search history in vain to find any justification for the fear—sincerely entertained, no doubt, by many from whom I differ—that this Union will perish or cease to protect its citizens, because of too much consolidation.

The republics of antiquity offer but little analogy to our system, for they were all developments, small, greater or gigantic, of the municipality—of the City—conquering, it might be, other cities, provinces, kingdoms, nations, but remaining a city still. Rome fell because it was an overgrown city, with eighty millions of subjects, and because human slavery had eaten out its very heart; because forty millions of its heterogeneous population were slaves, bought and sold like other merchandise; because there was no parliamentary representation of the vast multitudes of foreigners whom her legions had subdued, and which she kept in abject servitude, until the slaves rose at last upon the haughty and most wicked city, and tore her to pieces, and the empire with her. Does any man suppose, if her slaves had been emancipated, if a system of popular and equal representation of all the citizens of all races and colors throughout that world-wide domain had existed, —an idea which at least may be conceived of by way of illustration,—and if her army had numbered fifty thousand men instead of being counted by millions, that her liberties would have perished, and she herself ceased to exist, by reason of too much consolidation? The danger would have

been precisely the reverse. The empire, from its very extent, must have fallen to pieces of its own weight; and in truth it is only in modern science —not only in political philosophy but in the application of physical forces—that our security lies against disintegration. Without steam, electricity, labor-saving machinery, and, above all, an equal system of popular representation, such a widely extended republic would be impossible, and it is our duty to guard against the tendencies to decentralization and over-localization by perfecting as far as possible our representative system.

Nor did the vast empire of Charlemagne, when his sceptre stretched over almost all Europe, fall from consolidation, but from exactly the opposite cause: the centrifugal principle. That sceptre broke in the hands of his imbecile successors, because in the state of the world then existing it was impossible to make it felt at a distance, and because society, perhaps,—lacking the modern and invaluable invention of popular representation, beside all the other physical discoveries and improvements,—had need of disintregration before civilization could organize itself locally and in detached groupings.

I can understand the cry against centralization

in such a country as France, where the national territory is less than the area of the single State of Texas, and where the population, energetic, inventive, laborious, thrifty, is nearly as numerous as that of our whole Union; where there is no system of representation, as we understand it,—where public meetings for political discussion, such as we are holding now, are a crime; where a military government, supported by twelve hundred thousand of as courageous, perfectly disciplined and experienced soldiery as ever existed in the world, holds all the legislative, executive, judicial, financial, administrative functions of the nation in the hollow of its hand, and where the press and public speech are under iron control.

But the cry should point to the danger. In the United States,—with universal suffrage; with boundless liberty of the press and of public meetings; with a congress elected every two years, and a president every four; with a standing army, before the rebellion, only equal in number to the army of Hesse-Cassel,—thirteen thousand of them, officers, privates, musicians, pioneers and all,—and not four times that number now; with a dozen stump-speakers in every school district; with a newspaper and a militia-general in every village;

with a domain of three millions of square miles—as large as all Europe—capable of supporting the whole actual population of this globe, if we should be packed as closely as the Belgians at this moment, and now sparsely inhabited by less than forty millions, all wide awake to their rights, whether municipal, State or national, and ready to stand up for them to the crack of doom; I cannot feel that our liberties are in much danger from the National Republican party, and that we are tamely sinking into a consolidated military despotism.

It seems to me—it has always seemed to me—that our perils lie in exactly the opposite direction. There must be fear of disintegration where the surface is so broad, the population relatively so scanty, and the enginery of repression and concentration, except in times of impending catastrophe like those from which we are emerging, so slender. That keen observer and profound thinker, De Tocqueville, whose work upon the United States has been a classic for a generation, was even so much impressed with our dangers in this regard, and by the exaggerated theories of State rights, that he made in reference to the subject one of the few mistakes to be found in his book, but a very grave mistake.

So slight was the power of the general government, he thought, and so feeble the sentiment of nationality, as compared with the strength of the separate States, and with the local attachments of their citizens, that in case of a serious attempt made by any of the States to break up the Union, he expressed the opinion, not only that the central government would have no power to resist such rebellion, but that it would not even make a serious effort to resist it, and to avert the threatened dissolution.

We had known, all along, that slavery was the most potent of dissolvents in all political organisms. It could not but act the same part in our polity, and the great mass of the people, North, South, East and West had for generations long been responsible for the evil and for its continuance.

Many years the baleful poison had been working, until throughout a great section of the country it had eaten out that respect for nationality which is the most noble and vital part of any organized form of associated humanity, and the leading characteristic of the present epoch in the world's history. And at last the outbreak came. The slave power, the most distinctly marked oligarchy ever known to mankind, planted itself

squarely across the track of the great democratic principle to which this Union owes the breath of life.

State sovereignty, from a harmless and bombastic phrase, seemed to become for a time a most formidable fact; for it was under the form of State sovereignty that the oligarchical, anti-republican principle of slavery disguised itself for the struggle so long impending. The attempt to destroy the mild and beneficent Union in order to extend and perpetuate human slavery, was by one of the most terrible mockeries ever conceived of, declared to be an uprising for liberty against tyranny. History has never known such profound irony as this. The spirit of liberty was never so strangely travestied before as when it was made to inspire and to consecrate that confederacy, built according to those awful words which will forever remain historical, upon the corner-stone which the builders rejected, the corner-stone of negro slavery.

The effort to destroy the Union was serious enough, Heaven knows. Never did human beings, in the holiest cause, display more brilliant courage, energy, endurance, patience, fanatical self-sacrifice than the rebels in their mad struggle against the inexorable Law. Had their cause been good, had

the rebellion been just, it would have been impossible to subdue them. But the Union represented the cause of democracy, of nationality, of equal rights to all mankind, the sacred reign of Law. The nobleness of the cause inspired the Union soldiers, and the American people, who all became soldiers, with a valor and a devotion, an inventive genius, a reckless and amazing generosity of treasure and of blood, never surpassed in the history of mankind.

The world has found out at last whether this is a nation or not; whether the central government can protect itself or not against a serious effort to destroy it; whether the American People will acquiesce or not in their political dissolution; whether the great Republic will lie down to die like a lamb, as soon as the knife is flourished at its throat. Perhaps it needed this spasm, this sudden apparition of political death, to reveal to the People the depth of their national sentiment, the strength of their attachment to the Union.

No effort more serious than the great rebellion is likely to be made again to destroy the central government; yet the very qualities which our late misguided enemies, soon to become our fellow-citizens, have manifested in the cause of slavery,

give us the right to hope for a prouder and more prosperous future than has ever been granted to any political community. The growth of great empires, whether republics or monarchies, is slow. Years are much to the individual mortal, but Man is the master of time. If not in our generation, assuredly at no very distant epoch, the race which has been foremost to destroy this Union will be eager to defend it, should it ever be unjustly assailed. So long as it is true to its natal principle and to the law of its being—that all men are created free and equal, and endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights—so long will this Union protect itself. It is almost omnipotent in the cause of Right. A cause of Wrong would "sit upon its arm and make it powerless." It cannot oppress, so long as the general diffusion of education and intelligence among the people insures a constant and jealous scrutiny of all its proceedings.

Nor do I deprecate the cry of danger from consolidation—although I have no sympathy with it—from absorption of power by this or that branch of the general government. "Eternal vigilance," said Jefferson, "is the price of liberty." Let us continue to watch carefully the course of the general government. We have all of us eyes and voices

and votes, and if the administration becomes really tyrannical in its tendencies, let us choose a better one.

And now let us look at the pretensions and principles of the two parties and their candidates, in favor of one or the other of which our votes are to be cast so soon. What are the issues of this presidential election?

We are called on to decide—

I. Whether the will of the American People, constitutionally expressed, is the law of the land?

II. Whether, in the United States, all men are endowed with equal rights?

III. Whether it is just and reasonable to pay our debts, or to repudiate them?

IV. Whether economy and constitutional purity of administration will, on the whole, be best secured by the election of Mr. Seymour or of General Grant?

I. and II. Now we know that there stand on the statute book certain acts, familiarly called the reconstruction laws. For anything in my knowledge, they are as binding laws, in as full force over the good people of the country, from the president down to the humblest day-laborer, as any other laws on the statute book, whether passed at the

beginning of last year or at the end of last century.

We are all of us more or less familiar with the genesis of those statutes, and know that they have been the cause of fierce dispute between the executive and legislative branches of the general government, and that they were enacted by extraordinary majorities of both houses over the president's veto.

But at any rate they are the law of the land by the will of a majority of the American people. I know no way of learning that will, or of discovering whether there has been a change in that will, except through the votes of this congress or its successor. Meantime they have been passed according to constitutional forms, and have not yet been repealed.

But we are informed, on the high authority of a convention chosen by a very large portion of the voters of this country, that these laws are unconstitutional, revolutionary and void, and that they proceed from a flagrant usurpation of a power which can find no warrant in the constitution.

We can all read the constitution. We can all read the statute book, and I for one have done my

best to understand why those laws are in violation of the constitution.

Most certainly the constitution prescribes that members of the national house of representatives shall be elected in the several States by those qualified to vote for members of the most numerous branch of the State legislature. But the denouncers of the reconstruction laws, the stern defenders of the constitution, seem to have forgotten one little fact—a mere trifle which has naturally slipped their memory—namely, that there has been a war—that the States, now so cruelly oppressed, as it is charged, were four years long in armed rebellion, which it has cost half a million of lives and exactly four thousand millions of dollars to subdue, and that it is the special attribute of the national legislature, now that the rebellion has desisted from organized hostilities, to lay down the terms of peace.

Because that legislature, in its discretion, wishes to take what it believes to be necessary security for the future, in order that all this bloody and expensive work be not renewed at some convenient opportunity, it is said to be guilty of unparalleled oppression, of having established mili-

tary despotism together with a curious kind of institution called negro supremacy.

Now if the national legislature had no right to prescribe the conditions on which the States lately in rebellion should be permitted to resume those practical relations with the Union which they had so scornfully, broken off, as they intended forever—whence was the power derived by which the suppression of the rebellion has been carried on to its conclusion?

It was said, authoritatively if not wisely, at the outbreak of the rebellion, that the right of coercion by the central government did not exist, and that nothing was more strictly according to law than for a sovereign and independent State to secede from this Union, according to pleasure. It is now claimed that it has the right to come back again at its pleasure.

Well, the people of the United States found in the constitution all that was necessary to give a practical refutation of the doctrine of secession; and democrats and republicans, individually and collectively, by speech, by vote, and on the battle-field, stood shoulder to shoulder, proving in the most decided way by which men can prove their convictions—by dying for them—that they

believed this Union to be a government; that it had derived from its fundamental law laid down in 1789 by the people—the only legitimate source of government—all the powers necessary for its existence and to protect itself when assailed. When this nation was born, when it expanded, by force of that constitution, from the chrysalis of a confederacy into an organized commonwealth—a nation among the nations—it stepped at once into the full fruition of all the necessary functions of a nation. The right and the means were found in the constitution to raise great armies, to levy enormous sums, to suspend the action of the laws when deemed necessary by those to whom authority was freely delegated, to set up military governments in rebel territory as fast as occupied, to make laws for the whole country through a body in which there were many permanently vacant seats.

We know that by the act of those who hated the Union and the constitution, and were doing their best to make both go down in blood, we had all been placed in an abnormal condition. To suppose that in such extraordinary times the regular action of government could go on as in time of profound peace, was a doctrine believed in by few who were not at heart with the rebellion. This extra-

ordinary machinery—much of it very hateful, no doubt—was necessary for the national existence. The constitution secures to the Republic the rights of war and peace and all the incidents thereof. The laws of nature and of nations underlie all written codes and constitutions, and are the common property of mankind. That great law of civilization—the safety of the people is the supreme law—*salus populi suprema lex*—a maxim most salutary, most liable to abuse, yet never less abused than in its application during this rebellion—belongs to our body of laws as much as if it had been formally enacted and bound up in the statute book. It is part of our constitution, and of every constitution, and can be no more taken from us than a living man's heart can be taken from his body.

If the legislation in regard to the securities taken from the seceding States previous to the resumption of their ancient relations with the Union, be unconstitutional and usurpatory, I cannot understand how we are to justify most of the proceedings by which the rebellion was put down and without which the Union must have succumbed. It was not necessary to go outside the constitution to repress insurrection, nor is it necessary to go

outside it to find the right to take proper guarantees against its renewal.

Until a force sufficient to overthrow the government has been exerted, the right and the power of the nation to exist remain, and it is itself sole judge of the means to make that right valid. The legal continuity of the ancient relations between the seceding States and the Union has been broken by their revolt. As they have not triumphed in the struggle, it is not for them, but for the nation, speaking through a majority of its legislature, to prescribe the terms of renewal.

Upon the general principle that the government may suppress insurrection, it may prevent the danger of its reappearance, after its military power has been broken in the field; the re-establishment of something much resembling slavery by means of vagrant laws and the denial to freedmen of civil rights, and the repudiation of the national debt by the assistance of those by whose rebellion it has been created.

Not to do this would be puerile lenity, dereliction of duty to the generations yet unborn, as well as a criminal injustice towards the freedmen, for which we should deserve signal punishment. To listen, on the other hand, to an ignoble desire of vengeance

upon those who have fought so bravely in defence of a cause so bad, would be a disgrace to the American name.

We shall be all Americans again at some future day, and the citizens of the lately rebellious States will, in the next generation perhaps, be inspired by the same haughty but legitimate pride of nationality which now swells the breasts of those who dwell in the free and loyal States, and the same energy which has done its best to destroy may help to preserve the life of the Republic. I for one would not relinquish the glorious hope of a free, united and fraternal population over the whole surface of these United States, for the most golden visions of any separate empire.

But even if the reconstruction laws are constitutional, are they expedient?

We are told that the seceding States are treated with cruelty; that in time of profound peace they are subjected to military despotism and negro supremacy. The party now in power is arraigned for its career of unparalleled oppression and tyranny during and since the rebellion.

Unparalleled tyranny! Will you search the records of all the civil wars ever waged upon this planet and find me one solitary, remote parallel to

the extraordinary lenity manifested by the conquerors in this civil war?

Will you go back to republican Rome and tell me of the career of alternately dominating parties in her civil wars? Will you read of the wholesale massacres of Marius, when his party was uppermost, the blood-dripping edicts of the triumphant Sylla, in his turn dooming the men of the vanquished party to death—soldiers, citizens, and all—faster than he could remember their names, killing them by hundreds and thousands first and recording judgment against them afterwards, as fast as he could recall them, or get them recalled to his memory? Will you remember how the triumvirs, dividing the world's empire, met together over a table, and in one evening sentenced twenty-three hundred Roman citizens to death, and on the following days murdered ten times the number? Think of the head of the mangled Cicero, exposed in the Forum, which had so often rung to his impassioned oratory, with his amputated hands placed in hideous mockery of rhetorical gesture beneath, and with Fulvia's needle thrust through that tongue which even now after nineteen centuries still enthrals the civilized world with its eloquence!

Turn to the civil and religious wars which desolated France for nearly the whole of the sixteenth century, and count the thousand and ten thousand cold-blooded massacres, executions, confiscations, proscriptions, which reduced the country to a wilderness, and the population to pauperism, from generation to generation.

Look at the blood-stained soil of the Netherlands during their civil wars and rebellions, with the hangings, beheadings, drownings, burnings alive and buryings alive by whole townfuls—often eight hundred and a thousand daily victims authentically recorded—to the deliberate sentence to death of the whole population of the country by the dominant party; to the confiscation not of an estate, here and there, of the rebels, but of whole provinces at a swoop.

Recall that hideous civil war which converted Germany—then the most civilized region of Europe—into a Pandemonium for thirty miserable years; when deeds of fiendish oppression and cruelty such as the human mind can scarcely conceive of except in delirium, were of almost daily occurrence, as one party or the other gained the ascendancy.

Remember the wars of the Roses in England,

annihilating races, decimating counties over and over again with their massacres, their proscriptions and executions, their attainders of the blood, incriminating and impoverishing generations yet unborn. Think of Jeffries' bloody assize! Pause upon the Thames beneath the Traitor's Gate, and listen to the groans still sounding through the black past from the "Tower of Julius, England's lasting shame." Think of the grinning skulls once decorating Temple Bar in Fleet Street and the Tolbooth in Edinburgh. Listen to the eternal sighs from the famous bridge in the full throng of what was once the most powerful Republic in the world. Or if you think these days too distant, and imagine the world grown too merciful to offer a parallel to republican tyranny and oppression here, cast a glance at the deeds of revolutionary France, and shudder at hideous images of massacre and murder in every imaginable shape, of confiscation and desolation to more than conceivable extent.

Recall the oppression which marked the career of the British India Company in the East; the tyranny and extortion by which vast populations were goaded almost daily into rebellion against their foreign conquerors, and the frightful proscription and robberies when those rebellions were sup-

pressed; think of whole kingdoms of great extent, ancient civilization, enormous wealth, literally put up at public auction and knocked down for a song to a few needy adventurers,—a proscription so gigantic and so universal that, in the words of England's greatest orator, it stands forever "as a monument to astonish the imagination and confound the reason of mankind."

Sup full of horrors like these with which the history of civil war in every age and land is crammed, and then turn to this country, still heaving with the convulsions of war, disbanding its million soldiers as soon as the rebel sword was sheathed; look in vain for a single execution, for confiscations or attainders; behold the very head and front of the rebellion, Jefferson Davis himself, generously released upon bail bond, and now the guest of nobles in England; look at the generalissimo of the rebel armies peacefully engaged in the instruction of youth in the academic shades of Virginia, and hailed by a Union general and ambassador as "a representative man in reverence and regard for the Union, the constitution and the welfare of the country."

I, for one, am prouder as an American, of the instantaneous disbanding of our victorious hosts

when their work was done, than I was of their assembling with such unexampled patriotism when the Union was assailed. More than all is it gratifying to every patriot heart that there has been no imitation here of that foul vengeance upon the vanquished which has stained the conclusion of every civil war, except our own, with the indelible marks of useless bloodshed. The word universal amnesty is trembling on every lip throughout the country, and must soon be spoken; but prudence, honor, justice require that with that beneficent word should be coupled impartial suffrage and irrevocable guarantees of equal rights.

This is not the time to examine the question of suffrage from an *a priori* point of view. The right to cast a vote should entail upon its possessor the corresponding duty of understanding the subject voted upon, and an educational suffrage for a whole population, whatever its colors, would perhaps be the most reasonable condition. But I doubt whether in present circumstances any better way of protecting the freedman in his civil rights can be found than by giving him the vote. The end justifies the means. To refuse the franchise to a man, not because he is ignorant, but because

he is black, seems to me as preposterous as to deny it to him because he is not six feet high.

As to what is called negro supremacy, I confess this to be a subject beyond my comprehension. I suspect that the consummate politicians of the seceding States will find even less difficulty in manipulating the negro vote of the South than they did for thirty years or more in controlling the majority of white voters in the North. Negro supremacy may be a good phrase to conjure with in these regions, but I doubt whether the white citizens of the slave States are much appalled by the sound.

We are told that "the Southern people are not hostile to the negroes and would not oppress them if they had the power to do so; that they have grown up among the whites who have been accustomed to look upon them with kindness." So much the better. Now that kindness to the negro is to be manifested in some better ways than by holding him in perpetual slavery, by selling his wife and children before his eyes, by tracking his fugitive steps with bloodhounds, by refusing his testimony in courts of justice, by depriving him of every right of a human creature; it is perfectly possible that better relations between employer and

laborer may ere long be established. But I doubt whether any one seriously expects that the negro will obtain political or intellectual supremacy in any part of this continent; or that the Caucasian race anywhere needs discriminating legislation in its favor to prevent it from lapsing into subjection to the African. If we can protect these unfortunates, who have ever trusted us, and whose hopes of deliverance have ever pointed to the north star, against the possibility of falling into some kind of bondage and disability again; if we can give the means of self-protection by putting the ballot in their hand, it is as much as we can expect at present.

But beyond that unequivocal expression of the democratic dogma in regard to the reconstruction laws, we learn on highest authority the practical purpose of that party, should they succeed at the election. This purpose, so far as I can understand the English language, seems to be a renewal of the war.

The democratic candidate for the vice-presidency is a distinguished leader in the Union armies. His name is indelibly associated with some of the most illustrious campaigns, hardest fought battles, triumphant marches of the war. Throughout the

picturesque and brilliant manœuvres and desperate assaults of the memorable siege of Vicksburg, on the world-famous march of Sherman to the sea, the name of General Blair is conspicuous and historical. No man in this country, whose government he has helped maintain against armed rebellion, would pluck a single leaf from his laurels. But he is a candidate for the second office, and may if elected succeed to the first.

And how does this eminent citizen expound to us the duties of the next president? He tells us that his foremost duty will be to mutilate the statute book, to defy the law of the land, to trample into the dust the reconstruction laws. As the senate in any event must remain republican, and therefore opposed to the repeal of these laws, that repeal must be effected, in spite of the senate, by executive authority. The army is to be "compelled" to undo its usurpations. The senate is to be "compelled," by the co-operation of the president, to submit once more to the obligations of the constitution. The president, being sworn to maintain the constitution, will, it is declared, fail of his duty if he allows that constitution to perish under a series of congressional enactments which are in palpable violation of its fundamental principles.

And has it really come to this? These United States of America, after suppressing a gigantic rebellion against the law, are not a government of laws after all, but a government of force. The army is to be "compelled," the senate is to be "compelled," and the acts of Congress are to be "trampled into the dust." By whom? By the democratic president, should we be so unfortunate as to elect him. The president is sworn to maintain the constitution, but he is also sworn faithfully to execute the office of president, foremost among the functions of which are to take care that the laws be faithfully executed. Those laws, I suppose, are as binding upon him as upon you and me, and I can find it nowhere written in the constitution that the president is to annul the laws, if in his wisdom he thinks them not made in pursuance of the constitution; that he is to be both executive and judge, and that every law is to be enforced or trampled upon according to his discretion.

And how if the senate will not be compelled? How if the army will not be compelled? Can compulsion mean anything but force, sure to be met by a much greater force? Is that anything but civil war again, and a bloodier one than before?

Vae victis!—woe to the vanquished!—that most vulgar of sentiments, has no place in American bosoms; but the immense good nature manifested by the people since the rebellion surrendered, is not to be mistaken for a stupid indifference to the security of the Union and the law.

Until the citizens of New England, or New York, or Pennsylvania, white, black or yellow, are entitled to the privileges and immunities of citizens in Alabama, or Texas, or any other State, North or South, the constitution of the United States is a pompous falsehood. The people intend it to be a reality.

We are told every day that we are unjust to the seceding States because we exact guarantees, when they have given all guarantees that could be reasonably expected. They have abolished slavery; they have repealed the ordinances of secession. What would we have more? Abolished slavery! repealed the ordinances of secession! Why, the first gun fired against Fort Sumter abolished slavery, the proclamation of Lincoln registered the abolition, and the surrender of the rebel armies confirmed it. To submit to the abolition of slavery now is like submitting to the precession

of the equinoxes, or solemnly adhering to the law of gravitation.

As for annulling the ordinances of secession, we thought them already pronounced null by a tribunal which is even higher than the supreme court—by that dread arbitrament to which kings and commonwealths must make their last appeal. A formal repeal of these statutes, since the war annulled them, seems superfluous enough.

III. There is another great question to be decided in this election:

Shall the United States pay or repudiate their debts?

I confess myself, at the outset, almost hopelessly embarrassed in approaching this question.

It is an awful thing that this should be a question at all. I should doubt whether any honest man, who has ever really reflected on its dread portent, could palter one moment with the vile thing, Repudiation. For the thing is ever there, however we may shirk the phrase.

There are axioms, one would think, in morals as in mathematics. It is geometrically certain, for example, that a straight line is the shortest between two points, although a long demonstration may be attempted in favor of a crooked one. And just so

certainly is the straight line not only the shortest, but the only one between debt and payment, if we would avoid the crooked path of national bankruptcy and national dishonor.

Now we are instructed from the democratic platform of July 7, that "the credit of the government and the currency must be made good." A wholesome sentiment, which there are few to dispute!

And by way of arriving at this blessed result, we are advised that "where the obligations of the government do not expressly state upon their face, or the law under which they were issued does not provide that they shall be paid in coin, they ought in right and justice to be paid in the lawful money of the United States."

This sentiment, according to the associated press report, was received with "thunders of applause."

As a further means of making good the credit of the government, we are informed that government bonds and other public securities must be taxed. This dogma, too, as we are informed, was received with "renewed cheering, and cries of 'read it again!'"

Now we are all agreed, it seems, that the national credit is to be made good. It certainly stands in.

great need of repair, as I shall presently show. But there is a remarkable difference among American citizens as to the true method of re-establishing that credit. Some of us believe in paying our debts when due, as a good way of accomplishing that end. Others believe in giving an indefinite promise to pay instead of payment.

What is a five-twenty bond? It is a promise by the United States to pay the holder one thousand or five hundred *dollars*, as the case may be, within twenty years from date; and a stipulation that the holder shall he obliged to accept payment, if government choose, at the end of five years.

What is a dollar? Now when we are in doubt as to the meaning of an English word the best way is to look it out in the English Lexicon. Let us turn to that excellent work, Worcester's Dictionary. A dollar I find to be "a silver coin,—that of the United States being equal to 100 cents, or four shillings and twopence sterling." Sterling shillings mean genuine shillings.

The meaning of the word silver is pretty well understood from ancient traditions, although we are seldom indulged nowadays with an ocular demonstration of its form or color in the way of currency. It is also well known that by statute of the

United States, gold as well as silver is a standard of value, and there are even dim remembrances of gold dollars lingering in the minds of ancient men in these regions. We shall have no right to complain, then, if government insists on our accepting payment in gold, five years after date, but must submit with the best grace we can.

A dollar means, therefore, in English and other civilized languages, "a coin."

What is a "coin?" Let us again dip in the pure well of Worcester Unabridged. A coin we shall find to be "a piece of metal bearing a legal stamp and made current as money." It is "metallic or hard money, as gold or silver."

Now if language be not invented to conceal thought, the United States government, when it sold these bonds, promised to pay the holder, in five or twenty years, one thousand or five hundred pieces of stamped metal, gold or silver, each of them being equal to four genuine shillings and twopence. I beg pardon for being tedious, but it is hard to prove an axiom. Instead of these pieces of metal it now appears from the New York platform that government has the right to force upon the holder, within five years from date

of its obligation, a new promise to pay such coins at an indefinite period, without interest.

And this is payment in full! Really, it is difficult to speak seriously or respectfully of such financiering; for what right has any man or any body of men to place this great United States government, which we all honor and obey, upon the same level with the immortal Mr. Micawber?

"The amount of my obligation," said that great financier, on a memorable occasion, "was £23 4*s.* 9½*d.*; of the second, £18 6*s.* 2*d.* These sums united make a total, if my calculation is correct, amounting to £41 10*s.* 11½*d.*

"To leave my friend Mr. T. Traddles (the holder of the note,) without acquitting myself of this pecuniary obligation, would weigh upon my mind to an insupportable extent. I have therefore prepared for my friend Mr. Traddles, and I now hold in my hand a document which accomplishes the desired object. I beg to hand to my friend Mr. Traddles my I O U for £41 10*s.* 11½*d.*, and I am happy to recover my moral dignity and to know that I can once more walk erect before my fellow-men."

"I am persuaded," continues the biographer of that remarkable man, "not only that this was

quite the same to Mr. Micawber as paying the money, but that Traddles himself hardly knew the difference until he had time to think about it."

To behold a great, prosperous, powerful government like the American Union evading its obligations, and exchanging one promise to pay for another promise to pay, and expecting thus to recover its moral dignity, and to walk erect among other governments; to hear the national creditor bemoaning himself as the melancholy Hamlet,—"like the chameleon, promise crammed, promise crammed,—you cannot stuff capons so," —is not refreshing to those of us who believe in democracy.

But the party to which we are opposed maintain that if the word coin is not nominated in the bond or in the law issuing the bonds, they shall be paid in the lawful money of the United States. I leave to the supreme court the responsibility of deciding whether congress had the right to make anything but gold and silver a legal tender for any debts. I am not a constitutional lawyer or judge; but this I do know, that the only justification of that proceeding, in the forum of conscience, was necessity, and that government has no moral right whatever, and never

could have, to pay its own debts in its own failed paper.

It is one thing to palter with the right, because of necessity; quite another thing for convenience, for our personal commodity. Necessity is a fury who knows no law, but to violate law at the instance of "that smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity," is not the way to make the national credit good.

At the outbreak of the war, the country was flooded with the failed paper of more than a thousand banks, and it was held impossible to carry on the war on a specie basis. Whether that were so or not, whether the national credit was really better by reason of a currency which described our bonds as at par or above it, in our own markets, at times when they were notoriously selling in Amsterdam, Frankfort, all the world over, at thirty-five or forty, is not for us now to discuss. But this much is certain, that if we add millions to that currency now, for the sake of paying our bonds with it; if we compel the creditor to take his payment in paper, which, in such case, will soon be worth less than twenty cents on the dollar, we shall perpetrate a gigantic injustice on those who trusted to our honor, and shall be met

with a peal of derisive laughter at home or abroad, should we ever wish to negotiate another loan on such terms as upright governments command. If this be the way to make our credit good—to force payment in depreciated paper twelve or fifteen years before the debt is due,—I should like to know what course can make it bad.

It was expressly stated that the interest on the bonds should be paid in gold, and the inference is therefore made that the principal is to be paid in paper. This is the most amazing logic ever employed by reasonable beings. Practically we know, that as greenbacks had become legal-tender, it was thought well to make assurance double sure that government would pay interest in coin; although, as before observed, it could pay nothing else—except by express stipulation—without trampling on the dictionary. As the bonds were not due for twenty years from date, and as nobody imagined that we should be wallowing in an inconvertible paper currency for a quarter of a century, it was thought superfluous to say that the principal would fare as well as the interest.

At this moment, the paper promise to pay a dollar is worth seventy cents. During the darkest period of the war it was worth about thirty-

five cents; or, in the preposterous jargon of the exchange, gold was worth two hundred and eighty per cent. Gold was worth then exactly what it is at this moment; but United States promises to pay were worth just half what they are to-day. So much of improvement there has been since the war was over; since the iron claw of Necessity was removed from our throats; so much of revived confidence exists that the United States government will not make itself bankrupt because it thinks it convenient. But should this threatened madness really afflict our people, we shall see the paper dollar descend again with fearful rapidity, till it soon ceases to circulate at all, and the poor dupe who trusted to our honor, and who bought our bonds when we needed money sorely, will be left with a piece of paper in his hand, whether nominally for five hundred dollars or five thousand, of just as much value as a withered leaf. We should thus return to specie payments by a short cut enough; for there would then be no other currency possible, but the cut would be through the very heart of the national prosperity and the national honor.

I believe that there are many honest people really imposed upon by the mock logic of the

repudiators, who are in earnest when they join in the thunders of applause which greet the sentiment that the bonds are justly to be paid in paper when the word coin does not appear upon their face. But surely they know, or are bound to know, that every secretary or high official of the treasury; every dispenser, by authority, of the bonds; every congressman, or committee-man having authority to speak for government, has uniformly, on all occasions, officially and privately, declared that when these bonds were paid at all, they would, as a matter of course, be paid in specie or its equivalent. If the government now turns round and thrusts irredeemable paper in the creditor's face instead of specie, tell me, if you can, by what mild expression the transaction can be described. We know how we deal with individuals who obtain money on false pretences. I feel the most profound respect for the American people; I have entire faith in their public virtue—the only possible foundation of republican governments;—and I know that they will not be guilty of this fraud.

I pass over as quite irrelevant the pretext for repudiation now and then advanced, that the holders of these bonds sometimes obtained them at low

prices; that they took advantage of the distress of government, and are now clamorous for a payment from which they will derive large profit. Bonds of our government, or of any government or corporation, are worth exactly what they will bring in the markets of the world. If they are depressed, it is from doubt of ability or good faith; if they are high, it is because of general confidence in both. And the best judge of the conditions makes the best bargains. But I am not aware that a government, any more than an individual, has the right to inquire at what price a *bona fide* holder obtained its paper. The honest man looks at his obligations, not into the private account-book of his creditor.

Nor is it easy to allude seriously to that other appeal sometimes addressed to the lower instincts of mankind by those who show their respect for the American People by insulting them. The phantom of a bloated, bond-holding aristocracy, which is grinding the bones and drinking the blood of the hard-working people is evoked. Now if the bond-holders be ever so bloated and ever so aristocratic, it is difficult to see how the American People is to honor itself by plundering or defrauding them. This may be a good argument to address to burglars, but the American People will never defraud

the bondholder of his own simply because he is bloated.

As a matter of fact we know that hundreds of millions of these bonds are held by trust companies, banks, savings institutions, corporations of various kinds, the stockholders and depositors in which are legion, and especially as regards the savings banks throughout the land, belong to the hardest working and humbler classes of the community. Clerks, mechanics, sempstresses, day-laborers, domestic servants, char-women, washer-women, factory girls—these make up a large proportion of these oppressive, bloated bondholders, who are feeding fat on our misery, and who are solemnly warned that there is to be but one currency for them and for something or other which is facetiously called the people.

In Massachusetts alone there are 348,593 depositors in the savings banks—more than a quarter of the whole population—and one-half of those deposits is in national securities. But you will not pardon me if I longer dwell on so sordid an argument.

One would think it equally superfluous to deny the moral right of that form of repudiation which consists of taxation by government of its own

bonds. A government is bound by the same moral law which controls the individual. Unfortunately, sometimes, a government, which is the aggregate strength of all the individuals, possesses a power denied to the individual. If John Stokes or Richard Roe borrow money of me at six per cent. and then deducts five per cent. or twenty per cent., of that interest, because he finds it convenient to take that little sum out of my pocket, I shall turn him over to the courts, who will have something to say concerning the violation of contracts. But if government takes off a tenth or a fifth of what it promised to pay me, I have no redress but to get rid of its bonds at the best price I can get; for assuredly, if government has the right to take off ten per cent. it has the right to take off one hundred per cent., and I may one day whistle for either interest or principal. To say that because government imposes a general tax upon property or income, levied proportionately upon all the citizens, it has the right to deduct a portion or the whole of a sum which it has bound itself annually to pay, seems to be an almost hopeless confusion of ideas against which human reason must struggle in vain.

I do not believe that the American People mean to adopt any form of repudiation. I use the word

Repudiation purposely, and as often as I can. If we are to have the thing let us get familiar with the phrase. Repudiation means refusal to pay—whether a part or the whole of our just debts—and it means nothing else in its pecuniary application.

An individual cannot repudiate if he lives under a government of law. But a nation may take a vile advantage of its strength. There is but one excuse for the individual repudiator—inability, insolvency—and then he must give up his all to his creditors. And there is that excuse only for national repudiation. Is the great American Republic prepared to go into bankruptcy and to divide its little all honestly among its creditors? Nay more; are we ready to precipitate the catastrophe by declaring our insolvency twelve or fifteen years before it is necessary?

Why, there exists no nation in the world so capable of paying its debts as this nation. The American Union is the richest commonwealth in the world—a proposition easy of proof, into the details of which it is not necessary on this occasion to enter. It is the richest community that ever existed, and it is as absurd for us to pretend inability to pay as it would be for the richest man in town

to repudiate his monthly milk bill or grocery book because of inability.

How much do we owe? $2,500,000,000. How many of us are there? I suppose something less than 40,000,000. We owe on an average perhaps $63 a head, at this moment. When the debt is due, say twelve or fifteen years hence, there will be at least 60,000,000 of us—say about $40 apiece to pay, supposing the debt not to have disappeared altogether, by that time, which it may easily be made to do. Nine dollars a year a head, and we are paying that now, would extinguish the whole debt, interest and principal, before fifteen years are gone. If the foul word repudiation had never been breathed, our difficulties would be over already, and the capitalists of the world would be glad to take our securities at as low a rate as the most favored nations enjoy.

This is the richest country in the world. The accumulated capital of the British empire may be one-third larger, although it is probable that the results of the United States census of 1870 will make surprising revelations; but the annual product of the United States is now far greater than that of the British empire, while the untouched

resources of this nation are of almost fabulous extent.

It will be much within limits to assume a yearly product, at this moment, of $4,000,000,000, gold. But that which makes our financial strength not only encouraging, but astounding, is the tremendous ratio at which our wealth and population increase. Arithmetic, statistics become poetical when they deal with the American future. The head swims when the possibilities of this fortunate land are contemplated. If I dwell for a moment upon the enormous power and wealth of this country, it is not for the ignoble purpose of pandering to individual or national glorification, but in order that we all may take shame if we admit for an instant our inability to pay our honest debts.

On the most moderate calculation, our population doubles every twenty-three years. Our wealth doubles at least every ten years. In the decade immediately preceding the civil war, the ascertained value of private property in the country increased more than 128 per cent.; doubling, therefore, in less than eight years. At a moderate estimate, the population, fourteen years hence, will be 60,000,000, and the valuation of property, after

making allowance for the cost and consequences of the war throughout the whole country, will be $60,000,000,000. The debt, even if not reduced a dollar before that time, will then amount to about four per cent. of the accumulated capital of the nation. What individual in this country wishes to-day to repudiate his personal debts, maturing twelve and fifteen years hence, because they are likely to amount to a twenty-fifth part of his assets?

Why, the State of Massachusetts created in the year 1866, the first year after the war, five hundred and seventeen millions of dollars, according to the interesting and admirable address of His Excellency Governor Bullock. During the preceding ten years the increase of production was seventy-two per cent., although the yearly increase of population was but three per cent., much below the national average. Were the whole country as industrious, the annual product would at this moment be $16,000,000,000, instead of $4,000,000,000, according to the moderate basis which we have taken.

And there is no good reason why the whole country should not be as productive as our State. Heaven knows that we are not burdened with

natural advantages of soil and climate. The surplus of our population is annually poured, and our capital is annually poured into the West and North-West. Can you even faintly imagine at some future day, when it shall be safe for Northern men and Northern capital to emigrate to the South and South-West, how vast will be the wealth created in those semi-tropical regions by that magic caduceus, that golden three-leaved wand of free labor, equal rights and peace, which has caused the great North-West to prosper as no community of men ever prospered before?

When the blight and the traditions and the superstitions of slavery have passed away, is it to be supposed that the fairest and most prolific regions of the world, the great South-West, extensive as European empires, will lie fallow as at present, with less than one per cent. of their surface under cultivation? If there is a cotton crop at this moment of three million bales—three-fifths of the old maximum—will you venture to predict its amount fifteen years hence, if it should be fairly open to free labor, and the circulation of capital and of ideas?

To talk of the inability of the United States to pay their debts in coin, is an insult to human

reason. Industry, honesty, and, above all, peace—peace which the great soldier, to whom more than to any one man we owe our victory, so earnestly invokes—will make the debt disappear, almost before we have time to fund it; and in these circumstances the capitalists of the world will have to get up early, if they wish our bonds at four and one-half per cent.

We borrow now at about seven and one-half per cent. In the dark days of the war we paid about seventeen per cent. Those were the times when Confederate stock sold for par in Europe, and United States securities for thirty-five. There has been at least some progress since then.

When the war was over and our whole outstanding liabilities had been figured up, the total of the debt, on 1st August, was found to be ($3,287,733,329,) a little less than three thousand three hundred million dollars.

On the 1st August 1868, it was $2,485,000,000. During three years, therefore, we had reduced the debt just one-quarter, say eight hundred millions.

It is almost superfluous to say that I am at this moment following the masterly and luminous address of Mr. Atkinson of Brookline, for I trust that this invaluable document is in the hands of

every man of either party who wishes to know the state of the national finances.

It is impossible to array statistics in a more convincing shape, and I, for one, believe his facts and his inferences to be quite beyond dispute. Those who have studied his statements, as well as the speeches of Sumner, Boutwell, Fessenden and other eminent republican authorities on this vital question, may defend the republican policy in financial matters against all assailants.

In round numbers, $1,650,000,000 currency have been contributed by the people between April 1, 1865, and June 30, 1868, to the support of government. Of that enormous amount—more than $507,000,000 a year—by far the greater part has been spent for the civil war and the interest on the debt which the rebellion caused us to create, over and above our vast yearly contributions during that war.

In those three and a quarter years, our ordinary expenses over and above war debt and war interest paid, as Mr. Atkinson has proved, were less than $92,000,000 of currency, say $65,000,000 in gold, each year.

I doubt whether the history of nations has anything like this to show; a reduction, in a little more

than three years, of one-quarter of a great debt and a diminution of the annual expenses of a vast republic like ours to so small a sum.* Add the interest of the debt at six per cent., say $120,000,000, and you have less than $200,000,000, gold, as our yearly budget. The annual expenses of Great Britain, with its debt funded at three per cent., are $350,000,000; those of France are, at the very least, $400,000,000.

Each power is spending at this moment about twice as much as we spend, while the principal of the French debt is quite as large as ours and that of the English 60 per cent. larger. Yet the English three per cents. are at 94, the French three per cents. at 69¼, while our six per cents. are hardly 75.

Is not this the very essence of unreason? Compare for example the respective position of those two great countries, the French Empire and the American Union. I shall say not a word of the comparative value of their institutions or their schemes of national life.

Look only at financial facts.

* By the official statement of the current year, we learn "that it is absolutely certain that the expenditures," including interest on the debt and whatever may be disbursed for war debt and war interest "will *be much less than* $303,000,000;" which sum in gold is about $212,000,000.

France has a somewhat less numerous population than that of this Union—say thirty-eight millions.

The latest and most trustworthy statisticians compute the yearly product of the empire at twenty milliards of francs—say $4,000,000,000, or exactly what was the estimate of our production a few years ago. The sum total of her debt is just equal to ours. Her yearly budget is more than double our own.

How are these four hundred annual millions of dollars spent?

Thanks to the superior credit enjoyed by the Empire over that of the Union, the interest of her debt is but $68,000,000, gold. This leaves her $333,000,000.

And how does she spend these $333,000,000? The army and navy take each year in time of peace—the iron-clad peace, which is all Europe ever knows—about $140,000,000.

The estimates for the current year of the United States government for army and navy together are $57,000,000 in currency; equal to $40,000,000 in gold, or $100,000,000 less than those of France.

Let me not fatigue your patience with more details. We perceive that France with a less

numerous population than our own, and the same amount of debt and annual production, spends in time of peace twice as much as we do; that her army and navy expenses are three and a half times as large as our own; that she has at this moment, ready to respond to the first cannon-shot in Europe, one million two hundred thousand soldiers, equal to any the world ever knew, one-fifth more than the whole number we disbanded as soon as the armed rebellion was overthrown.

Remember too that her production seems almost to have reached its limit; that her population is nearly stationary, having scarcely doubled in 170 years; that her expenses have been annually increasing with dizzy speed; that her debt is rapidly augmenting, having doubled in the last fifteen years; and then remember that our population doubles in little more than twenty years, our annual production every dozen years, our accumulated capital every eight years, while our debt has been decreased twenty-five per cent. in three and a quarter years—and then behold France borrowing money with perfect ease at 4½ per cent. while we are talking of repudiation, bond taxing and national bankruptcy!

Why, it was but yesterday that we all saw the imperial minister of finance put a three per cent. loan on the market, which was so greedily taken at 69¼, that he had offers of money about equal to the whole of our national debt at its maximum, although he asked for less than one hundred million dollars. There were 781,292 persons, who subscribed for more than six hundred and sixty million francs of annual "rentes," representing a capital of fifteen thousand millions, and thirty-four times as much as M. Magne asked for. Within one week, six hundred million francs in coin were deposited as guarantee.

Well may that warlike nation—from their point of view, which is not ours—be proud of their mighty armaments and their apparently unlimited credit. Well may we hang our heads at the humiliation of our national credit. Is it even conceivable, if the prudent and masterly financial policy which the republican party has been pursuing be persisted in, and which is not yet fully appreciated at home, and entirely unknown elsewhere, that we are to see our six per cents. hawked about at seventy-five, while other great empires, not more wealthy, vastly more expensive and much less progressive, place their funds at 3½ and 4½ interest?

The American people had confidence enough in themselves during the war. Republican and war democrat together bore arms cheerfully against the common foe, and went into the death struggle as if it were a festival. Whence comes this abject fear, or this affectation of fear, this despair of our destiny, when the national future was never so radiant as now? Let us resolve to return to specie payments, which can be done as well next year as next century; let us get rid of this irredeemable paper currency, which converts us all, whether we like it or not, into a nest of gamblers; let us, in the words of the Chicago platform, spurn all forms of repudiation, "partial or total, open or covert, as a national crime;" let us refuse to follow that financial *ignis fatuus* which, by way of showing us some other way to clear ourselves of debt except by paying it when due, is sure to lead us into the Slough of Despond; let us remember that to us is confided in trust, for those who are to come after us, that most precious of national possessions, the national honor; let us cease to go about moping and mumping of national ruin when the road to national prosperity lies straight before us; let us elect that man president who says, "Let us have peace," and who means to execute the laws of the

land, not to trample them in the dust, and we shall soon see the spectres which have haunted us going back to the limbo of departed spirits.

Who is that man?

My friends, there have been times in our history when it was necessary for men to ask each other, who is Mr. So-and-so, just nominated by this or that party as a candidate for the presidency of the United States? But has it ever occurred to any child throughout the land, above the age of six years, to ask, this summer, Who is General Grant?

There are but few among the sons of men whose history is identical with the history of their country. But the record of this republic during the most eventful years of its existence, is the record of the candidate whom we hope to see elected.

But suppose the question had been asked ten years ago. Haply some swain from the far West might have told us of a retired captain of infantry, some thirty-six years of age, who had served through the Mexican war, after graduating at West Point, had subsequently retired to a farm near St. Louis, but who, just before the outbreak of the rebellion, had gone into the leather business at Galena—a plain man in his manner, who was sometimes seen driving an ox-team, but never "a balky

one," into the streets of St. Louis, but who never told his neighbors that he had been in every battle of the Mexican war, save Buena Vista, and that he had been promoted twice on the field for gallantry. These things being matters of course in our brave little army, the leather dealer saw small cause for taking airs thereupon, and if he nourished any ambition, as he seems to have let out in a moment of weakness, he had visions of a sidewalk, to be built from his own modest mansion to the railway station at Galena.

Suppose the question asked a century hence. Will there be many persons so ignorant of history as to falter in their reply.

It is doubtful whether he has even yet been thoroughly appreciated. When the living man becomes suddenly before our eyes an historic personage, it is difficult, perhaps, to judge him as carefully as we may the heroes of the past. I am no hero-worshipper, and it has always seemed to me that the true hero of this most important epoch in our history is the American People. Whatever was greatest and best throughout the war, was done by the people. And it is exactly because General Grant is a singular embodiment of many of the most prominent characteristics and best vir-

tues of that people, that he seems the fittest man to be chosen our chief magistrate.

I believe that from the time our generalissimo received the surrender of the rebel armies up to the period when he became the candidate of a distinct party organization, it was rare enough to find any disposition to detract from his fame. For one, I confess that the sentiment I find most necessary to guard against when contemplating his wondrous career, and the strange simplicity and repose of his character, is a tendency to over-enthusiasm. Through the misty atmosphere which belongs to the past, conspicuous personages are apt to dilate into more than mortal proportions, while we are, not unreasonably, inclined to scan very closely the defects and the pretensions of contemporary greatness. In truth, the very simplicity of General Grant's character makes the great things which he did seem simple too. There can be no surer test of power than the ease with which it accomplishes Herculean tasks; yet the spectator, deceived by symmetry itself, often mistakes the colossal for the common-place.

We all seem afraid of uttering that one word in regard to this shy, tranquil, unobtrusive man, which really characterizes him—the word genius.

The very modesty of the man himself seems to rebuke all tendency to exaggeration. Yet, after all, this is exactly what General Sherman says in his famous and beautiful letter, while avoiding the phrase: "My only point of doubt was in your knowledge of grand strategy and of books of science and history; but I confess your common sense seems to have supplied all these." And what is that common sense which supplies strategy, science, history, but genius?

In the little affair of Belmont, where he first showed his incapacity to accept defeat; at Donelson, where he converted impending rout into victory, by ordering the famous charge of Smith; on the dark and bloody April afternoon, when he told Sherman at Pittsburg Landing how Donelson was won, and organized out of apparent panic and ruin that magnificent triumph of the following morning; from Vicksburg to Chattanooga, from the Wilderness to Richmond, he pursued the rebellion to its doom—never a footstep backward—untiring, unimpassioned, tranquil, relentless as destiny.

I have no pretension to be a judge of military affairs, but to my humble apprehension, the campaigns of General Grant, especially those of

Vicksburg, of Chattanooga and of Richmond, will—the more closely they are studied—the more decidedly reveal a capacity of the highest order in the man who conducted them. That they prove perfect firmness, tenacity and self-devotion, is beyond dispute. To be a great soldier necessarily implies many of the highest intellectual faculties. No man can be a great soldier without being a thinker, and this is the very reason why successful soldiers are apt to be dangerous in a republic:

"They think too much, such men are dangerous."

Not because he is a great soldier—deep as the debt of gratitude is which the nation owes him—but because during the whole of his career he has manifested those civic virtues which inspire confidence, do we wish him for our chief magistrate. Cheerfulness and prophetic hope when danger and disaster were thickest; self-command in the hour of immense success; patience and self-forgetfulness under unmerited obloquy—these qualities are as striking in him as his utter indifference to a fame which might well dazzle and lead astray the strongest intellect. He seems utterly without ambition, and this is the reason

why he is one of the few successful soldiers of history whom it will seem safe for the people to have trusted. From the hour when he was surprised to find in the newspapers that he had been appointed brigadier-general of volunteers, down to the moment when a higher grade than ever known in our armies was created for him, he never felt the least anxiety for promotion. But self-control under unmerited and preposterous disgrace, however temporary, seems to prove more than any of his deeds, the greatness of his character.

Remember that immediately after the famous victory of Fort Donelson, in which he had presented 15,000 prisoners, 17,600 small arms and 65 cannon to the United States, he was most unjustly and causelessly threatened with arrest and deprived of his command, and that he did his best, while claiming justice from his commanding officer before he would withdraw his resignation, to further that expedition, in the command of which he had been superseded. "No one," he said to the veteran Smith, "can feel more pleasure than myself at your richly deserved promotion. Anything you may require, send back transports for, and if within my power, you shall have it."

And at Milliken's Bend, when preparing that last magnificent movement against Vicksburg, through which he saw his final triumph assured; when the country, weary of delays and aghast at his boldness, was clamoring for his removal; when our enemies all over the world were shouting, As well pluck the stars from the sky as attempt the capture of Vicksburg; when even his friends turned from him; but when one plain man, who sat in the White House, said, "I rather like the man: I think we'll try him a little longer," how could a soldier prove greater claims upon the confidence of the country than he did at that moment of almost universal despondency?

Seeing already in his mind's eye what no other eye could see, that quickly coming procession of victories, that twenty days' campaign, the passage of the great river, the five battles in which, throwing himself between Johnson and Pemberton, he destroyed one army, and drove the other into the citadel soon to surrender to him thirty-two thousand strong; even when at that moment of anticipated triumph he heard the loud cry for his removal, he was incapable of any thought save for the good of the country.

There are very few persons in this Union, I sup-

pose, who have not read the letter, written precisely at that moment, which he charges his father to destroy, or at least to show to no one; and I do not envy the man who is not touched by its simple grandeur.

"Were it not for the natural desire of proving myself equal to anything expected of me, I would gladly accept a less responsible position. * * * I will do my part towards putting down the rebellion in the shortest possible time, without expecting or desiring any other recognition than a quiet approval of my course."

As long as the republic breeds such citizens, her destiny is safe. Such soldiers are not dangerous. Certainly, he did his part towards putting down the rebellion, but the approval of his course has been a little less quiet than he desired.

But I forbear. His career is a history in itself, and has already engaged the labor of brilliant and able writers: some of them the partners of his toil and of his fame;* but I have thought it not amiss to call your attention to those manifestations of his

* It would be impossible, except in an extended bibliographical notice, to indicate the many valuable and important works already published on the life and services of General Grant.

Without disparagement to other admirable works familiar to the public, the "Military History of General Grant by General Adam Badeau," may

qualities as a citizen which entitle him to the post of our chief magistrate.

With such a man for the first office, and with our kindly, high-minded, experienced, patriotic and sagacious Speaker of the House, Schuyler Colfax, whose very name is so suggestive of revolutionary memories,—a man, who, placed four years long on a pedestal where defects as well as virtues are closely scanned, has never made an enemy or lost a friend,—with such a genuine Republican for the vice-presidency, it is impossible to admit a doubt of our success.

We have only to remember the device of the clan of Grant, to which—whether belonging to it or not—he has himself been ever faithful: "Stand fast and stand sure. Craig Ellachie."

be mentioned, in the first volume of which—the only one thus far published—the author has displayed great powers of description, generalization, portraiture of character and many other high qualities as an historian. His book, while conscientious in details derived from original sources, is as interesting as a romance.