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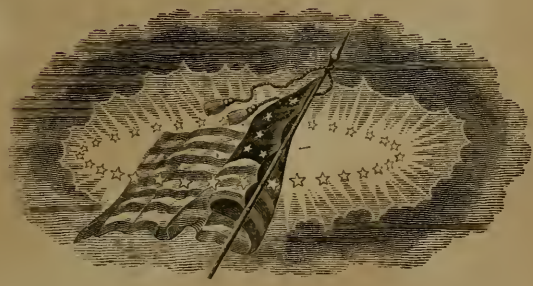
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NO PARTY NOW,

BUT

ALL FOR OUR COUNTRY.



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1863.

ADDRESS

BY

FRANCIS LIEBER,

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON ADDRESSES.

*Read at the Meeting of the Loyal National League, by their request, in
Union Square, New York, on the 11th of April, 1863.*

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It is just and wise that men engaged in a great and arduous cause should profess anew, from time to time, their faith, and pledge themselves to one another, to stand by their cause to the last extremity, even at the sacrifice of all they have and all that God has given them—their wealth, their blood, and their children's blood. We solemnly pledge all this to our cause, for it is the cause of our Country and her noble history, of freedom, and justice, and truth—it is the cause of all we hold dearest on this earth: we profess and pledge this—plainly, broadly, openly in the cheering time of success, and most fervently in the day of trial and reverses.

We recollect how, two years ago, when reckless arrogance attacked Fort Sumter, the response to that boom of treasonable cannon was read, in our city, in the flag of our country—waving from every steeple and School-house, from City Hall and Court House, from every shop window and market-stall, and fluttering in the hand of every child, and on the head-gear of every horse in the busy street.

Two years have passed; uncounted sacrifices have been made—sacrifices of wealth, of blood, and limb, and life—of friendship and brotherhood, of endeared and hallowed pursuits and sacred ties—and still the civil war is raging in bitterness and heart-burning—still we make the same profession, and still we pledge ourselves firmly to hold on to our cause, and persevere in the struggle into which unrighteous men, bewildered by pride, and stimulated by bitter hatred, have plunged us.

We profess ourselves to be loyal citizens of these United States; and by loyalty we mean a candid and loving devotion to the object to which a loyal man—a loyal husband, a loyal friend, a loyal citizen—devotes himself. We eschew the attenuated argument derived by trifling scholars from meagre etymology. We take the core and substance of this weighty word, and pledge ourselves that we will loyally—not merely outwardly and formally, according to the letter, but fervently and according to the spirit—adhere to our country, to her institutions, to freedom and her power, and to that great institution called the government of our country, founded by our fathers, and loved by their sons, and by all right-minded men who have become citizens of this land by choice and not by birth—who have wedded this country in the maturity of their age as verily their own. We pledge ourselves as National men, devoted to the Nationality of this great people. No government can wholly dispense with loyalty, except the fiercest despotism ruling by naked intimidation; but a republic stands in greater need of it than any other government, and most of all a republic beset by open rebellion and insidious treason. Loyalty is pre-eminently a civic virtue in a free country. It is patriotism cast in the graceful mould of candid devotion to the harmless government of an unshackled nation.

In pledging ourselves thus, we know of no party. Parties are unavoidable in free countries, and may be useful if they acknowledge the country far above themselves, and remain within the sanctity of the fundamental law which protects the enjoyment of liberty prepared for all within its sacred domain. But Party has no meaning in far the greater number of the highest and the common relations of human life. When we are ailing, we do not take medicine

by party prescription. We do not build ships by party measurement; we do not pray for our daily bread by party distinctions; we do not take our chosen ones to our bosoms by party demarcations, nor do we eat or drink, sleep or wake, as partisans. We do not enjoy the flowers of spring, nor do we harvest the grain, by party lines. We do not incur punishments for infractions of the commandments according to party creeds; and we do not, we must not, love and defend our country and our liberty, dear to us as part and portion of our very selves, according to party rules and divisions. Woe to him who does. When a house is on fire, and a mother with her child cries for help at the window above, shall the firemen at the engine be allowed to trifle away the precious time in party bickerings, or is then the only word—"Water! pump away; up with the ladder!"

Let us not be like the Byzantines, those wretches who quarreled about contemptible party refinements, theological though they were, while the truculent Mussulman was steadily drawing nearer—nay, some of whom would even go to the lord of the crescent, and with a craven heart would beg for a pittance of the spoil, so that they would be spared, and could vent their party hatred against their kin in blood, and fellows in religion.

We know of no party in our present troubles; the word is here an empty word. The only line which divides the people of the North, runs between the mass of loyal men who stand by their country, no matter to what place of political meeting they were used to resort, or with what accent they utter the language of the land, or what religion they profess, or what sentiments they may have uttered in the excitement of former discussions, on the one hand, and those on the other hand, who keep outside of that line—traitors to their country in the hour of need—or those who allow themselves to be misled by shallow names, and by reminiscences which cling around those names from by-gone days, finding no application in a time which asks for things more sterling than names, theories, or platforms.

If an alien enemy were to land his hosts on your shores, would you fly to your arms and ring the tocsin because your country is in

danger, or would you meditatively look at your sword and gun, and spend your time in pondering whether the administration in power, which must and can alone direct the defence of your hearths, has a right to be styled by this or that party name, or whether it came into power with your assistance, and will appoint some of your party to posts of honor or comfortable emoluments? And will any one now lose his time and fair name as an honest and brave citizen, when no foreigner, indeed, threatens your country, at least not directly, but far more, when a heedless host of law-defying men, heaping upon you the vilest vituperation that men who do not leave behind them the ingenuity of civilization when they relapse into barbarism, can invent—when this host threatens to sunder your country and cleave your very history in twain, to deprive you of your rivers which God has given you, to extinguish your Nationality, to break down your liberty, and to make that land, which the Distributor of our sphere's geography has placed between the old and older world as the greatest link of that civilization which is destined to encircle the globe—to make that land the hot-bed of angry, petty powers, sinking deeper and deeper as they quarrel and fight, and quarreling and fighting more angrily as they sink deeper? It is the very thing your foreign enemies desire, and have long desired. When nullification threatened to bring about secession—and the term secession was used at that early period—foreign journals stated in distinct words that England was deeply interested in the contest; for nullification might bring on secession, and secession would cause a general disruption—an occurrence which would redound to the essential benefit of Great Britain.

But the traitors of the North, who have been so aptly called adders or copperheads—striking as these reptiles do more secretly and deadly even than the rattlesnake, which has some chivalry, at least in its tail—believe, or pretend to believe, that no fragmentary disruption would follow a division of our country into North and South, and advocate a compromise, by which they pretend to believe that the two portions may possibly be reunited after a provisional division, as our peddlers putty some broken china cup.

As to the first, that we might pleasantly divide into two comfort-

able portions, we prefer being guided by the experience of all history, to following the traitors in their teachings. We will not hear of it. We live in an age when the word is Nationalization, not Denationalization; when fair Italy has risen, like a new-born goddess, out of the foaming waves of the Mediterranean. All destruction is quick and easy; all growth and formation slow and toilsome. Nations break up, like splendid mirrors dashed to the ground. They do not break into a number of well-shaped, neatly framed little looking-glasses. But a far more solemn truth even than this comes here into play. It is with nations as with families and with individuals. Those destined by nature to live in the bonds of friendship and mutual kindness, become the bitterest and most irreconcilable enemies, when once fairly separated in angry enmity; in precisely the same degree in which affection and good-will were intended to subsist between them. We must have back the South; or else those who will not reunite with us must leave the country; we must have the country at any price. If, however, a plain division between the North and the South could take place, who will deny that those very traitors would instantly begin to manœuvre for a gradual annexation of the North to the South? It is known to be so. Some of them, void of all shame, have avowed it. They are ready to petition on their knees for annexation to the South, and to let the condescending grantor, "holding awhile his nose," introduce slavery, that blessed "corner stone of" the newest "civilization," into the North, which has been happily purged from this evil. Let us put the heel on this adder, and bruise all treason out of its head.

As to the compromise which they propose, we know of no compromise with crime that is not criminal itself, and senseless in addition to its being wicked. New guarantees, indeed, may be asked for at the proper time, but it is now our turn to ask for them. They will be guarantees of peace, of the undisturbed integrity of our country, of law, and liberty, and security, asked for and insisted upon by the Union men, who now pledge themselves not to listen to the words compromise, new guarantees for the South, armistice, or convention of delegates from the South and North—as long as

this war shall last, until the North is victorious, and shall have established again the national authority over the length and breadth of the country as it was; over the United States dominion as it was before the breaking out of the crime which is now ruining our fair land—ruining it in point of wealth, but, with God's help, elevating it in character, strength, and dignity.

We believe that the question of the issue, which must attend the present contest, according to the character it has ~~now~~ acquired, is reduced to these simple words—Either the North conquers the South, or the South conquers the North. Make up your minds for this alternative. Either the North conquers the South and re-establishes law, freedom, and the integrity of our country, or the South conquers the North by arms, or by treason at home, and covers our portion of the country with disgrace and slavery.

Let us not shrink from facts or mince the truth, but rather plainly present to our minds the essential character of the struggle in which hundreds of thousands, that ought to be brothers, are now engaged. What has brought us to these grave straits?

Are we two different races, as the new ethnologists of the South, with profound knowledge of history and of their own skins, names, and language, proclaim? Have they produced the names which Europe mentions when American literature is spoken of? Have they produced our Crawfords? Have they advanced science? Have they the great schools of the age? Do they speak the choice idiom of the cultivated man? Have the thinkers and inventors of the age their homes in that region? Is their standard of comfort exalted above that of ours? What has this wondrous race produced? What new idea has it added to the great stock of civilization? It has produced cotton, and added the idea that slavery is divine. Does this establish a superior race?

There is no fact or movement of greater significance in all history of the human race, than the settlement of this great continent by European people at a period when, in their portion of the globe, great nations had been formed, and the National polity had finally become the normal type of government; and it is a fact equally pregnant with momentous results, that the Northern portion of this

hemisphere came to be colonized chiefly by men who brought along with them the seeds of self-government, and a living common law, instinct with the principles of manly self-dependence and civil freedom.

The charters under which they settled, and which divided the American territory into colonies, were of little more importance than the vessels and their names in which the settlers crossed the Atlantic; nor had the origin of these charters a deep meaning, nor was their source always pure. The people in this country always felt themselves to be one people, and unitedly they proclaimed and achieved their independence. The country as a whole was called by Washington and his compeers America, for want of a more individual name. Still, there was no outward and legal bond between the colonies, except the crown of England; and when our people abjured their allegiance to that crown, each colony stood formally for itself. The Articles of Confederation were adopted, by which our forefathers attempted to establish a confederacy, uniting all that felt themselves to be of one nation, but were not one by outward legal form. It was the best united government our forefathers could think of, or of which, perhaps, the combination of circumstances admitted. Each colony came gradually to be called a State, and called itself sovereign, although none of them had ever exercised any of the highest attributes of sovereignty; nor did ever after the States do so.

Whenever political societies are leagued together, be it by the frail bonds of a pure confederacy, or by the consciousness of the people that they are intrinsically one people, and form one nation, without, however, a positive National Government, then the most powerful of these ill-united portions needs must rule; and, as always more than one portion wishes to be the leader, intestine struggles ensue in all such incoherent governments. It has been so in antiquity; it has been so in the middle ages; it has been so, and is so in modern times. Those of our forefathers who later became the framers of our Constitution, saw this approaching evil, and they observed many other ills which had already overtaken the confederacy. Even Washington, the strong and tenacious patriot, was

brought to the brink of despondency. It was a dark period in our history; and it was then that our fathers most boldly, yet most considerately, performed the greatest act that our annals record—they engrafted a national, complete, and representative government on our halting confederacy; a government in which the Senate, though still representing the States as States, became Nationalized in a great measure, and in which the House of Representatives became exclusively National. Virginia, which, under the Articles of Confederation, was approaching the leadership over all (in the actual assumption of which she would have been resisted by other rapidly growing States, which would inevitably have led to our Peloponnesian war)—Virginia was now represented according to her population, like every other portion of the country; not as Virginia, not as a unit, but by a number of representatives who voted, and were bound to vote individually, according to their consciences and best light, as National men. The danger of internal struggle and provincial bitterness had passed, and our country now fairly entered as an equal among the leading nations in the course, where nations, like Olympic chariot-horses, draw abreast the car of civilization. We advanced rapidly; the task assigned to us by Providence was performed with a rapidity which had not been known before; for we had a National Government commensurate to our land and our destiny.

But while thus united and freed from provincial retardation and entanglements, a new portent appeared.

Slavery, which had been planted here in the colonial times, and which had been increased in this country by the parent government against the urgent protestations of the colonists, and especially the Virginians, existed in all the colonies at the time when they declared themselves independent. It was felt by all to be an evil, which must be dealt with as best it might be, and the gradual extinction of which must be wisely yet surely provided for. Even Mr. Calhoun, in his earlier days, called slavery a scaffolding erected to rear the mansion of civilization, which must be taken down when the fabric is finished.

This institution gave way gradually as civilization advanced. It

has done so in all periods of history, and especially of Christian history. Slavery melts away like snow before the rays of rising civilization. The South envied the North for getting rid of slavery so easily, and often expressed her envy. But a combination of untoward circumstances led the South to change her mind. First, it was maintained that if slavery is an evil, it was their affair, and no one else had a right to discuss it or interfere with it; then it came to be maintained that it was no evil; then slavery came to be declared an important national element, which required its own distinct representation and especial protection; then it was said—we feel ashamed to mention it—that slavery is a divine institution. To use the words of the great South Carolinian, whose death we deeply mourn—of James Louis Petigru—they placed, like the templars, Christ and Mahomet on the same altar. But, though slavery were divine, they choked the wells of common knowledge with sand and stones, and enacted perpetual ignorance for the slave. Then the renewal of that traffic, the record of which fills far the darkest pages of European history, and which the most strenuous and protracted efforts of civilized nations have not yet wholly succeeded in abolishing, was loudly called for; and our national laws, making that unhallowed trade piracy, were declared unconstitutional. Yet still another step was to be taken. It was proclaimed that slavery is a necessary element of a new and glorious civilization; and those who called themselves conservatives, plunged recklessly into a new-fangled theory of politics and civilization.

Thus slavery came to group again the different portions of our country, outside of, and indeed in hostility to, the National Government and the National Constitution. The struggle for the leadership was upon us. The South declared openly that it must rule; we, in the meantime, declaring that the Nation must rule, and if an issue is forced upon us, between the South and the North, then, indeed, the North must rule and shall rule. *This* is the war in which we are now engaged—in which, at the moment this is read to you, the precious blood of our sons, and brothers, and fathers, is flowing.

Whenever men are led, in the downward course of error and passion, ultimately to declare themselves, with immoral courage, in favor of a thing or principle which for centuries and thousands of years their own race has declared, by a united voice, an evil or a crime, the mischief does not stop with this single declaration. It naturally, and by a well-established law, unhinges the whole morality of the man; it warps his intellect, and inflames his soul with bewildering passions, with defiance to the simplest truth and plainest fact, and with vindictive hatred toward those who cannot agree with him. It is a fearful thing to become the defiant idolater of wrong. Slavery, and the consequent separation from the rest of men, begot pride in the leading men of the South—absurdly even pretending to be of a different and better race. Pride begot bitter and venomous hatred, and this bitter hatred, coupled with the love of owning men as things, begot at last a hatred of that which distinguishes the race to which we belong more than aught else—the striving for and love of liberty.

There is no room, then, for pacifying arguments with such men in arms against us, against their duty, their country, their civilization. All that remains for the present is the question, who shall be the victor?

It is for all these reasons which have been stated, that we pledge ourselves anew, in unwavering loyalty, to stand by and support the Government in all its efforts to suppress the rebellion, and to spare no endeavor to maintain, unimpaired, the national unity, both in principle and territorial boundary.

We will support the Government, and call on it with a united voice to use greater and greater energy, as the contest may seem to draw to a close; so that whatever advantages we may gain, we may pursue them with increasing efficiency, and bring every one in the military or civil service, that may be slow in the performance of his duty, to a quick and efficient account.

We approve of the Conscription Act, and will give our loyal aid in its being carried out, whenever the Government shall consider the increase of our army necessary; and we believe that the energy of

the Government should be plainly shown by retaliatory measures, in checking the savage brutalities committed by the enemy against our men in arms, or unarmed citizens, when they fall into their hands.

We declare that slavery, the poisonous root of this war, ought to be compressed within its narrowest feasible limits, with a view to its speedy extinction.

We declare that this is no question of politics, but one of patriotism; and we hold every one to be a traitor to his country, that works or speaks in favor of our criminal enemies, directly or indirectly, whether his offence be such that the law can overtake him or not.

We declare our inmost abhorrence of the secret societies which exist among us in favor of the rebellious enemy, and that we will denounce every participator in these nefarious societies, whenever known to us. We believe publicity the very basis of liberty.

We pledge our fullest support to the Government in every measure which it shall deem fit to adopt against unfriendly and mischievous neutrality; and we call upon it, as citizens that have the right and duty to call for protection on their own Government, to adopt the speediest possible measure to that important end.

We loyally support our Government in its declarations and measures against all and every attempt of mediation, and armed or unarmed interference in our civil war.

We solemnly declare that we will resist every partition of any portion of our country to the last extremity, whether this partition should be brought about by rebellious or treasonable citizens of our own, or by foreign powers, in the way that Poland was torn to pieces.

We pronounce every foreign minister accredited to our Government, who tampers with our enemies, and holds covert intercourse with disloyal men among us, as failing in his duty toward us and toward his own people, and we await with attention the action of our Government regarding the recent and surprising breach of this duty..



And we call upon every American, be he such by birth or choice, to join the loyal movement of these National Leagues, which is naught else than to join and follow our beckoning flag, and to adopt for his device—

OUR COUNTRY.

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