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WHY THE NORTH

CANNOT ACCEPT OF SEPARATION.

BY

EDOUARD LABOULAYE,

PROFESSOR IN THE COLLEGE OF FRANCE, ADVOCATE AT THE IMPERIAL COURT OF PARIS,
MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE.

NEW YORK:
CHARLES B. RICHARDSON,
264 CANAL STREET.
1863.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

1714

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following article was contributed by its distinguished author to the *Revue Nationale*, of Paris, where it appeared in December last. It immediately attracted marked attention and was transferred entire to the columns of *L'Opinion Nationale*, one of the most liberal representatives of the present French press, and a consistent supporter of the cause of unity in this country. Portions of it have appeared in *Galignani* and elsewhere in both English and French, but this is the first complete translation of it that has been given.

Of its author, MONS. LABOULAYE, a few words should be said, especially as his name is not yet so familiar to Americans as that of his illustrious friend and compeer, *Gasparin*. Nevertheless he is not in any essential behind that noble advocate of our cause. While the latter saw with deepest emotion this country retracing its steps from the very brink of self-destruction, shaking off its almost fatal lethargy and bracing itself for the struggle forced upon it, while he leaped manfully to the work of setting us right in the sight of Europe, LABOULAYE has been a not less faithful friend and ally. For years, he too has been watching with interest the course of this country in its more important tendencies, and particularly as related to slavery. In the year 1853 he reviewed the cause of education here; in 1854 the travels of Fredrika Bremer and Dr. Grandpierre came under his critical observation; in 1855 he intro-

duced Channing's Writings on Slavery to the attention of his countrymen, and published the first volume of his "Political History of the United States, from 1620 to 1789," and in 1856 he analysed the President's message on Kansas Affairs. Since the war broke out, taking Gasparin's volumes as his text, he has contributed several articles to the *Journal des Débats*, on the principles involved in the struggle now going on in this country, which for keenness of penetration, breadth of view, and elevation of thought, warrant the encomium pronounced upon him by the Rev. Dr. McClintock, American chaplain in Paris, himself one of the ablest of metaphysicians, that Mons. Laboulaye "has studied our Institutions more carefully, perhaps, than any other public man of Europe."

We had thought of mentioning Mons. Laboulaye's other literary and political labors, and of showing the regard in which he is held in his own country, but want of space forbids. Readers of the *American Presbyterian and Theological Review* for the present month will find a succinct narrative of his life and writings, to which we can commend them. As for the rest let his own words speak.

M. L. A.

NEW YORK, January, 1863.

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THE civil war which for two years past has divided and desolated the United States has had its echo in Europe. The cotton famine has caused great sufferings. The working people of Rouen and Mulhouse have felt it not less than the spinners and weavers of Lancashire. Entire communities are reduced to idleness by it; and in order to survive the winter they have no other resource and no other hope than private charities or help from government. In so cruel a crisis, in the midst of distress so little deserved, it is natural that public opinion in Europe should grow uneasy, and that it should accuse the parties who prolong this fratricidal war of ambition. Peace in America, peace at any price, is the necessity, is the cry of thousands of men among us, who are pressed by hunger—innocent victims of the passion and fury which deluges the United States with blood.

These complaints are but too just. The whole world is at present bound together by common ties; peace is a condition of existence for modern nations who live by trade and commerce; but, unfortunately, if it is easy to point out the remedy it is nearly impossible to apply it. Up to this time, it is from the war alone that we must look for the conclusion of the war.

To throw ourselves with armed forces between the combatants, to demand a truce, would be an enterprise in which Europe would exhaust her powers, and for what result? As Mr. Cobden has justly said, "it would be cheaper to feed the workmen who are ruined by the American crisis with game and champagne." To offer an amicable intervention at this time is to expose ourselves to a refusal, if not to exasperate one of the parties and to push it to violent measures. Such a step would diminish the chances of our mediation being accepted when the favorable moment should arrive. We are therefore reduced to the position of spectators of a deplorable war, which causes us infinite evils; we are compelled simply to offer up our prayers that exhaustion and misfortune may wear out the bitterness of the parties, and oblige them to accept reunion or separation. A sad position, in truth, but one that has been in all time that of neutrals, and from which we cannot extricate ourselves without exposing ourselves to unknown perils. If we have no right to intervene, we have at least that of making our complaints known, and of searching out the truly guilty in this war, the effects of which are reflected upon us. The opinion of Europe is of some value. It has a power of precipitating events stronger even than the force of arms. Unfortunately, for two years this opinion has gone astray; in ranging itself on the wrong side it has prolonged resistance instead of arresting it.

In England and in France the South has found numerous and skilful advocates, who have presented its cause as that of justice and liberty. They have proclaimed the right of separation; they have not shrunk from apologies for slavery. To-day these arguments are beginning to wear out. Thanks to public men who do not make terms with humanity—thanks, above all others, to M. de Gasparin—the light begins to appear, and we know where to find the origin and the character of the rebellion.

For any observer of good faith it is evident that the South has all the wrong on its side. It is not necessary to be a Mon-

tesquieu to understand that a party which is not threatened by any danger, and which, through ambition or through pride, breaks the national unity and tears the country into two parts, has no right to the sympathy of the French nation. As to the canonization of slavery, that must be left to southern preachers; all the intellect in the world cannot revive that lost cause. If the confederates have a thousand causes of complaint and of revolt, there will always remain an ineffaceable stain upon their rebellion; never can a Christian, never can a man of liberal views, interest himself in a people who, in the full light of the nineteenth century, audaciously proclaim their desire to perpetuate and extend slavery. It may be permitted to the planters to listen to theories which have intoxicated and ruined them; never will such sophisms cross the ocean. The advocates of the South have rendered it a fatal service; they have made it believe that Europe, enlightened or seduced, would range itself on its side, and that some day the European powers would throw into the balance something more than sterile good wishes. This illusion has kept up, and still keeps, the resistance of the South; it prolongs the war and the sufferings of our own people.

If from the first, as the North had the right to expect, the friends of liberty had pronounced themselves boldly against the policy of slavery; if the partisans of maritime peace, if the defenders of the rights of neutrals, had spoken in favor of the Union, and rejected the idea of a separation which could only benefit England, it is probable that the South would have entered upon a path without outlet with less temerity. If, in spite of the courage and devotion of its soldiers; if, in spite of the skill of its generals, the South fails in an enterprise which, in my opinion, cannot be too much reprobated, let them impute the fault to those who have held Europe in so poor esteem as to imagine that it could lend itself to a policy against which patriotism protests, and which is condemned by the Gospel and by humanity.

Admit, as it is said, that the South is entirely in the wrong—

but it wished to separate itself, it could no longer live with the people of the North. The war itself, whatever may have been its origin, is a new cause for disunion. By what right can twenty millions compel ten millions of their countrymen to continue in a detested alliance*—to respect a contract which they wish to break at any price? Is it possible to imagine that, after two or three years of battles and distresses, the conquerors and the conquered can be made to live together? Is it possible to reduce a country three or four times as large as France? Will there not be bad blood between the parties? "Separation is a misfortune, but at present that misfortune is irreparable." Grant that the North may have in its favor legality, the letter and spirit of the Constitution—there remains always an indisputable point. The South wants to be master at home. You have not the right to crush a people who resist so valiantly. Be resigned.

If we were less enervated by the ease of modern life and by the sloth of a long peace; if we had in our hearts any remains of the patriotism which in 1792 sent our fathers to the borders of the Rhine, the reply would be easy. I fear that to-day this is no longer understood. If to-morrow the South of France revolted and demanded a separation; if Alsace and Lorraine wished to isolate themselves, what would be not only our right but our duty? Would we count the voices to find whether a third or a half of the French nation wished to destroy the national unity, to annihilate France, to break in pieces the glorious heritage which our fathers have acquired with their blood? No, we would shoulder our guns and march. Woe be to that man who does not feel that his country is sacred, and that it is glorious to defend it even at the price of every misfortune and every danger!

America is not France; it is a confederation; it is not a nation. Who says that? It is the South, to justify its fault.

* Of these ten millions, four millions are slaves, whose wishes are not consulted.

The North says the contrary, and for two years, with innumerable sacrifices, it affirms that the Americans are the same people, and that their country shall not be cut in two. This is beautiful! it is grand! and what astonishes me is that France remains insensible to this patriotism. Is love of country no longer a virtue of the French?

What then is the South, and whence comes this right of separation that they proclaim so loudly? Is it a conquered people who reclaim their independence? Is it a distinct race which will not continue an oppressive alliance? No! It is a colony established on the territory of the Union, and which revolts from no other reason than from ambition. Look at a map of the United States; if we except Virginia, the two Carolinas, and Georgia, which are old English colonies, all the rest of the South is composed of lands bought and paid for by the Union; that is to say, the North has sustained the greatest part of the expense. What was called Louisiana was sold to the Americans in 1804 by the First Consul at the price of 75,000,000f. (\$15,000,000.) Florida was bought from Spain in 1825 for 25,000,000f. (\$5,000,000.) Texas cost the war with Mexico, with an expenditure of a billion of money (\$200,000,000) and of cruel losses of life. In a few words, take all the rich country which borders the Mississippi and the Missouri, from their sources to their outlets, and there is not a single inch of ground which has not been paid for by the Union, and which does not belong to it. It is the Union which has driven away or indemnified the Indians. It is the Union which has established forts, constructed arsenals and lighthouses; which has given value to deserts, and rendered colonization possible. The men of the North as well as those of the South have cleared and planted these lands, and have transformed these wildernesses into flourishing states. In old Europe, in which unity has everywhere originated in conquest, show me a title as sacred—a country which is more the common work of a whole people.

And now, will it be permitted to a minority to seize upon a territory which belongs equally to all, and to claim for itself

the best portion. This would be to permit a minority to destroy the Union, and to put in peril those who have been its chief benefactors, and without whom it could not exist. If this is not an impious revolt, we can only say that the caprice of a people makes their right.

Political reasons are not the only ones which oppose themselves to a separation. Geography, the situation of the country, obliges the United States to form a single nation. Strabo, in contemplating this vast country, which is now called France, said with the assurance of genius, that in contemplating the nature of the territory and its water-courses it was visible that the forests of Gaul, then inhabited by a scanty population, would become one day the abode of a great people. Nature disposed our territory to become the theatre of a great civilization. This is not less true of America. It is only, so to say, a double valley with a single point of union and two great water-courses, the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi. No lofty mountains which separate and isolate its people, no natural barriers like the Alps and Pyrenees. The West cannot live without the Mississippi; to possess the outlets of this stream it is for the farmers of the West a question of life and death.

The United States have felt this from the earliest period of their existence. When the Ohio and the Mississippi were only streams lost in the woods, when the first planters were only a handful of men scattered through the desert, even then the Americans knew that New Orleans was *the key of the house*. They were unwilling to leave it either to Spain or France. Napoleon understood this; he held in his hands the future grandeur of the United States. It did not displease him to cede to America this vast territory, with the intention, he said, of giving a maritime rival to England, who sooner or later would lower the pride of our enemies.* He might then have given up only the left bank of the river, and with this the United States

* See my Pamphlet entitled "The United States and France," and the "History of Louisiana," by Barbé-Marbois.

would have been satisfied, as they at that time asked no more; he did more (and in this I think he was decidedly wrong), he ceded, by a stroke of his pen, a country as vast as the half of Europe, and renounced the last remaining rights to the magnificent river which we had discovered. Sixty years have rapidly passed away since this cession. The States of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, and Oregon, the territories of Nebraska, Dacotah, Jefferson, and Washington, which will soon become States, have been established upon this immense domain abandoned by Napoleon. Without counting the slaveholding population, which wishes to break the Union, there are ten millions of free citizens between Pittsburg and Fort Union who claim the course and the mouth of the Mississippi as having been ceded to them by France. It is from us that they hold their title and possessions. They have a right of sixty years' standing, a right consecrated by labor and culture, a right which they hold by contract, and, better still, from nature and from God. And they are reproached for defending this right; they are usurpers and tyrants because they do not wish to put themselves at the mercy of an ambitious minority. What would we say, if, to-morrow, Normandy in revolt should pretend to keep for itself Rouen and Havre? And pray what is the course of the Seine compared with that of the Mississippi, which has a length of two thousand two hundred and fifty miles, and which receives all the waters of the West? To possess New Orleans is to command a valley which comprises two-thirds of the United States. "We will make the river a neutral stream." We all know what promises are worth. We have seen what Russia has done with the mouths of the Danube. The war of the Crimea was necessary to give back to Germany the free uses of its own river. If to-morrow a war were to break out between Austria and Russia, we may be sure that the possession of the Danube would be the chief aim of the conflict. It cannot be otherwise in America from the day when for a length of more than a hundred leagues the Mississippi shall flow between two

hostile shores. Already the effect of the war has been to stop exportations of wheat and Indian corn, which are the riches of the West. In 1861 it was necessary to burn the useless crops to the great prejudice of European interests. The South itself feels so strongly the force of its position that its ambition is to separate the valley of the Mississippi from the Eastern States and unite itself to the West, leaving the Yankees of New England in an isolation which will ruin them. It is with the allurements of the Mississippi that the Confederates hope to re-establish to their profit—that is to say, to the profit of slavery—the Union which they have broken through the fear of liberty.*

We see, therefore, what is to be thought of the pretended tyranny of the North, and whether there is any truth in the assertion that it wishes to oppress and enslave the South. On the contrary, the North only defends itself. In maintaining the Union, it is *its right, its life*, it wishes to save.

Hitherto I have spoken only in the name of justice, and of material interests, which, founded upon solemn titles, constitute a sacred right; but if we examine the interests of morals and politics, interests of a higher character, we shall still better comprehend *why* the North cannot yield without involving self-destruction.

The United States form a Republic, of which the government is more free, and at the same time more mild and happy than any that the world has ever seen. To what is this prosperity owing? To the fact that one single government sways an immense territory, and has never been obliged to concentrate its powers and to enfeeble its liberty, in order to resist the ambition and the jealousy of neighbors. The United States have had no standing army, no *military* navy. The immense sums which we expend in order to direct or to sustain war, the Americans employ in opening schools, and in giving to all

* This point has been clearly set forth by one of America's most learned citizens, Edward Everett, in his "Questions of the Day," New York, 1861.

their citizens, both poor and rich, that education which forms the moral greatness and the true wealth of a nation.

Their foreign policy has been based upon a single maxim, "Never to meddle in the quarrels of Europe, on the condition that Europe does not interfere in their affairs, and respects the liberty of the seas."

Thanks to the wise principles which Washington, in his immortal testament, bequeathed to them, the United States have enjoyed during eighty years a peace which has been unbroken, save by the war of 1812, when it became necessary to resist England, and to sustain the rights of neutrals. We are compelled to compute by billions the sums that, for seventy years past, we have employed in maintaining our liberties or our superiority, in Europe: these billions the United States have expended in bettering their condition in every way.

Suppose now that separation was accomplished, and that the new Confederacy comprised all the slave states. The North would lose in a day both her power and her institutions, and the Republic be smitten to the heart. In America two rival nations would be brought face to face, each ready to attack the other. Peace would be unable to destroy their enmity; it could not efface the memory of their past greatness, and of the destroyed Union.

The conquering South undoubtedly would be neither less friendly to slavery, nor less desirous of domination than now. The enemies of slavery, masters of their politics, will certainly not be mollified by separation.

What would the Southern Confederacy accomplish for the North? A foreign power established in America, with a frontier of fifteen hundred miles open on all sides, and consequently always either menacing or menaced. That power hostile even from her vicinity, and still more so from her institution, will possess some of the most considerable portions of the New World. She will have half of the coasts of the Union. She will command the Gulf of Mexico, an interior sea, which is equal to the third part of the Mediterranean;

she would be able at her pleasure to ruin the population of the West. It would then be necessary that the remnants of the old Union be always ready to defend themselves against their rivals. Questions of duties, of frontiers, rivalries, jealousies, in short all the scourges of ancient Europe would at once overwhelm America. Duties would be required at a distance of five hundred leagues; it would be necessary to construct and garrison forts upon the common frontier, to maintain standing armies and military navies—in a word, it would become necessary to renounce the old Constitution, to weaken municipal independence, and to concentrate power.

Farewell to the ancient and glorious liberty. Farewell to those institutions which made America the common country of all those who gasped for freer air in Europe. The work of Washington would be destroyed; the people would find themselves in a situation full of difficulties and perils. That such an event would rejoice those who cannot pardon America her prosperity and her greatness, I can comprehend. History is full of these mournful jealousies. That a people accustomed to liberty should risk its last man and its last dollar for liberty's sake, I can understand still better, and I can approve. What I cannot understand is, that in Europe there should be men believing themselves liberals, who can reproach the North for her noble resistance, and counsel her to a shameful abdication. War is a frightful evil, but from war a durable peace may issue; the South may weary herself in an exhausting struggle; the ancient Union may recover herself—may in the future perhaps be saved. But what can arise from a separation, but endless war and misery? This rending of the country is a forfeiture without remedy.

Heretofore I have reasoned on the hypothesis that the South would remain an independent power, that the West would not join herself to the Confederacy, and that the Union would not establish herself against New England. The Confederacy might be able to endure some years, but in ten or twenty, when the West shall have doubled or trebled her

free population, what would the Confederacy become? Enfeebled by servile culture; in the vicinity of thirty millions of men who inclose her on two sides. In order to resist successfully the South must depend on Europe; it cannot live except under the protection of a great maritime power. England alone is in a state to insure her protection.

This would be a new source of alarm both for free America and for Europe. The South has no navy, and never will have, with slavery. It is England who will monopolize cotton, and furnish the South with capital and ships. In a word, the triumph of the South, is England reinstated on the continent whence the policy of Louis XVI and of Napoleon have driven her; Neutrals rendered unsafe, France mingled anew in all the questions of the liberty of the seas, which have cost us two centuries of struggles and of suffering.

The American Union, in defending her own rights, had insured the independence of the ocean. The Union destroyed, England's supremacy would be re-established immediately.

Thus peace is exiled from the world, and a policy re-established which heretofore has only served our rivals. This is what Napoleon felt, but alas! to-day it is forgotten. It would seem that history is nothing more than a good collection of tales for the amusement of the young.

No one cares to comprehend the lessons of the past. If the experience of our fathers were not lost upon our ignorance we should see that *we* are as much interested in maintaining National Unity as are those who defend the North.

All our prayers should be with our old and faithful friends.

The weakening of the United States Government would enfeeble ourselves; at the first quarrel with England, we should regret when too late, having abandoned a policy which for forty years has formed our security.

In writing these pages I do not count upon the conversion of men who entertain an innate love for human slavery. I write for those honest hearts who are influenced by the sound-

ing words of national independence, by which their tempters endeavor to deceive them.

The South has never been threatened; even to-day she might re-enter the Union, with all her slaves. All that is asked of her is not to break off the National Unity and not to destroy liberty.

The North, it cannot be too often repeated, is not an aggressor; it only defends what every true citizen defends, the national compact, the integrity of the country. It is very sad that she has found so little support in Europe, above all in France. It is upon us that they counted, in us they hoped; we have abandoned them as if those sacred words of patriotism and of liberty had no echo in our hearts.

What is become of the time when entire France applauded the youthful Lafayette, when he placed his sword at the disposal of the Americans? Who has imitated him? Who has recalled this glorious memory?

What will be the issue of the war it is impossible to foresee. The South may succeed; the North may be divided, and exhaust itself in intestine strife. The Union is perhaps even now only a sublime memory. But whatever be her future, and whatever be her fortune, there is a duty for men to perform, which will not allow them to be carried away by the success of the present hour; and that is to sustain and encourage the North until the last moment, and to condemn those whose ambition threatens the most beautiful and the most patriotic work which humanity has ever beheld; it is to remain faithful to the end of the war, and even after defeat, to those who up to the last moment shall have fought for right and Liberty.

EDOUARD LABOULAYE.

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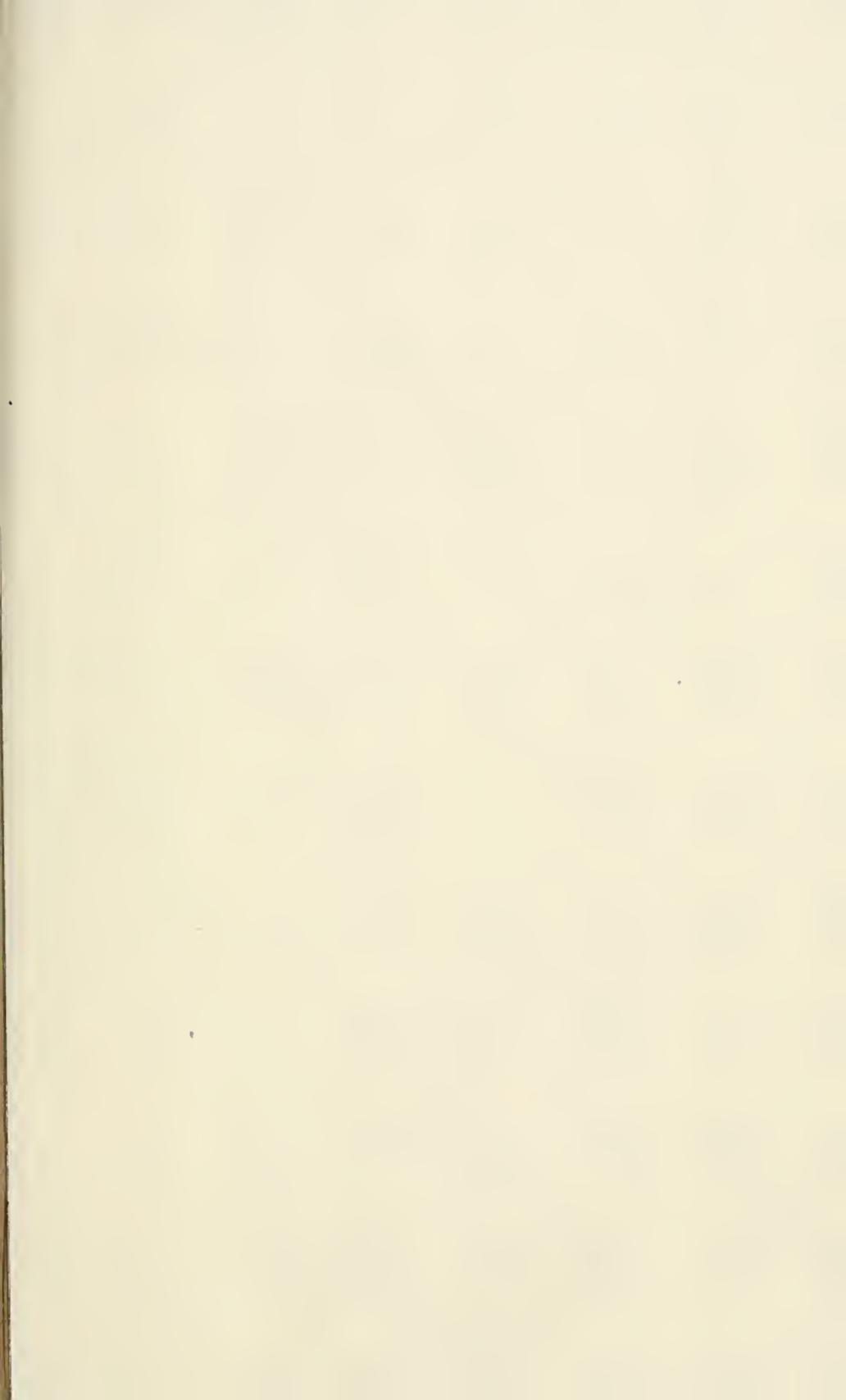
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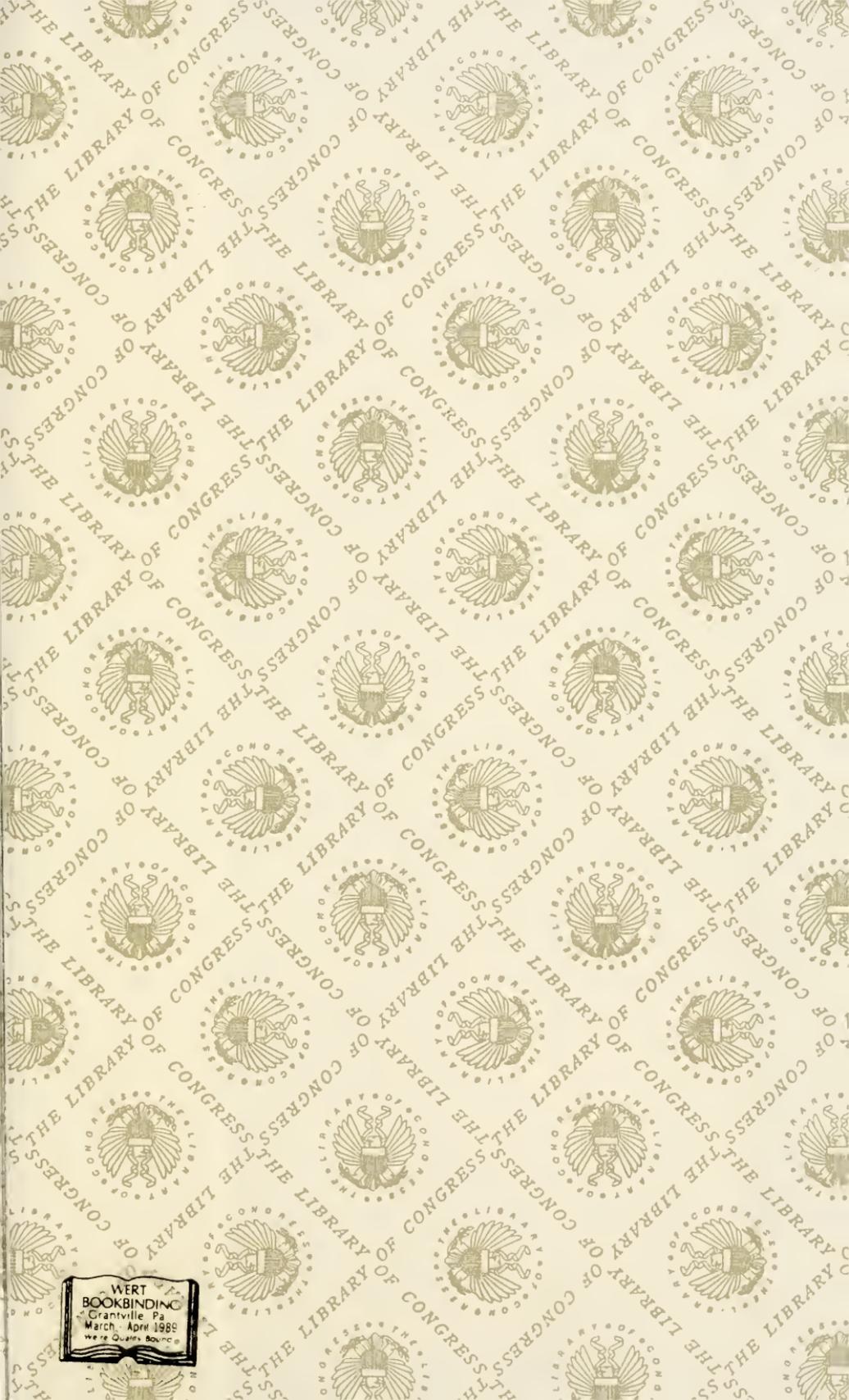
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