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SPEECH  
OF  
HON. W. S. OLDHAM,  
OF TEXAS,

*On the Resolutions of the State of Texas, concerning Peace, Reconstruction and Independence.*

IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES SENATE, JANUARY 30, 1865.

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The following resolutions having been read to the Senate—

*Resolutions of the State of Texas, concerning Peace, Reconstruction and Independence.*

WHEREAS, among the political parties of the United States the question of a reunion of those States with those of the Confederacy is being agitated, and, in order to promote such reunion, it is urged that delegates be chosen from each of the States in the Confederacy and in the Union, to meet in convention to reform the constitution of the United States, which proposition is coupled with the *quasi* pledge that such amendment shall be made to the constitution as will forever guarantee the institution of African slavery in the States in this Confederacy; And whereas, it is possible that the political party in the United States advocating that proposition may prevail at the approaching election in choosing the Executive of that Government, and that consequently the foregoing proposition may be attempted to be made to the States of the Confederacy; Now, we of the State of Texas, believing that it is proper to meet such proposition in advance, have resolved as follows:

*Resolution 1st.* Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Texas, That neither the above proposition, nor any other, can be made to the people of this State, by the United States or any other foreign people, the Government of the Confederate States being the only organ of the States in the Confederacy, for the transaction of business with foreign nations, and such proposition, if made at all, must be made to the Government of the Confederate States, and, if made to the government of this State, will not be entertained.

*Resolution 2d.* That we recognize in that proposition no good faith, but merely an insidious policy to "divide and conquer;" a policy through which it is hoped to detach some of the States from the Confederacy, thereby to weaken and demoralize the rest. To accomplish this, an appeal is made to our love of property, which, as it is the all-prevailing motive to the actions of the people of the North, they supposed would control our conduct.

*Resolution 3d.* That it will be well for the people of the North to understand, even at this late day, that the southern States did not secede from the Union upon any question such as the mere preservation of the slave property of their citizens. But, that being free and sovereign States, they were resolved to preserve their freedom and their sovereignty. They were free to govern themselves as they, and not others, saw fit. They were free to change their government, to erect a new one, and to make whatever alliances they should choose. And, after nearly four years of arduous war, these States are still unwavering in their resolution to preserve their freedom and their sovereignty, without which all else is valueless.

*Resolution 4th.* That could the present war and all its horrors be blotted out of our memories, our past experience while in the Union would warn us from any reunion with the people of the North. A written constitution, adopted by our ancestors and theirs, which contained

plainly-worded guarantees of the rights of all, was by them, and their sworn representatives, deliberately and persistently violated to our injury; and finally, after years of discussion when the question was understandingly before the people at large, they elected a Chief Magistrate with the purpose that he should destroy our liberties, in disregard of the constitution which he had sworn to support, thus exhibiting an instance of radical and wide-spread national depravity, to the honor of human nature, never exhibited in the world before.

*Resolution 5th.* But we could not, if we would, banish from our memory the inhumanities of this war. Our enemies have repudiated every principle of civilized warfare. They have withdrawn their felons from jails and penitentiaries, have recruited from the scum of Europe, and armed our own slaves, in order to procure an army sufficiently atrocious for their purpose; and this army has been launched upon us with the declared object of our extermination. Poisoned weapons have been manufactured and used. Exchange of prisoners has been refused until the success of our armies extorted a cartel, and the terms of this have been violated by them whenever the varying fortunes of the field made it apparently advantageous to do so. Our countrymen, when captured, have been removed to rigorous climes, and subjected to every hardship, that thus they might be destroyed. Non-combatants have been murdered. Indiscriminate onslaught has been made upon tottering age and tender youth. Our chaste and defenseless women have been submitted to outrage worse than death. Peaceful villages have been bombarded, and happy homes plundered and burnt. Whole populations have been removed and bondaged to northern masters. Desolation has marched with their armies. Religious services have been prohibited; ministers of the gospel of peace have been incarcerated and silenced, and sacrilegious hands have been laid upon our sacred altars. Lying to themselves, and pretending to the rest of the world that they are fighting the battle of freedom for four millions of happy and contented negroes, they are attempting the enslavement of eight millions of freemen. With devilish mockery of philanthropy, they have deluded and dragged these negroes from their comfortable homes to use them as screens from our weapons in the day of battle, and they have sent them by thousands to painful death by neglect, exposure, and starvation. Words cannot express the malignity in their hearts or the atrocity of their deeds, exceeding, as they do, all that was ever conceived by men from the Scythian down to the Comanche. Nor has this been the conduct of an unbridled soldiery merely. Those officers of their army who have surpassed the rest of the infamous, in infamy, have been rewarded with promotion by their Government. Nor has their Government been alone in identifying itself with these crimes. The people of the North have never failed, when the opportunity was presented, to render ovations to the most transcendent among the criminals, while their press has been constant in its laudation and their orators and preachers have cried out "well done." Army, government and people, have united to make the name of Yankee, suggestive as it was before of fraud, now the synonym of *barbarism* and *baseness*.

*Resolution 6th.* By the just pride of the manhood and the virtue which we claim as individuals and as a people; by the divine command which warns us not to walk in the way with the wicked; by the memory of our murdered dead; by the sight of the bereaved mothers, widows, sisters, daughters and orphans of our land; by the heart-brokenness of trampled virtue; and by our desolated hearths, we are forbidden to admit a thought of further association with the people of the North. Our heroic soldiers, the living, and martyred dead, forbid it; and our trust in God forbids it.

*Resolution 7th.* We declare that we are earnestly desirous of peace, but we say no less distinctly that it must be coupled with our independence. And if the people of the United States be really disposed to terminate the war, they will best prove that disposition by making their propositions to the Government of the Confederate States, which alone can entertain it.

*Resolution 8th.* That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to the President of the Confederate States, to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and to the Governor of each State in the Confederacy.

Approved November 12, 1864.

STATE OF TEXAS,  
Department of State. }

I, Robert J. Townes, Secretary of State of the State of Texas, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original, now on file in my Department. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto signed my name and caused the Seal of my Department to be affixed, at Austin, this 15th day of November, A. D., 1864.

R. J. TOWNES

MR. OLDHAM said :

Mr. President, it is with both pride and pleasure that I present to the Senate the resolutions just read, expressing the unanimous sentiments of the Legislature of my State. Those resolutions are not the mere vain and idle boastings of blustering civilians. Many of the members of our Legislature were battle-

scarred veterans, who were temporarily called by the people from the field to guide the counsels of legislation, and have again returned to their standards. Nor are they the excited ebullitions of a party faction, but the cool, calm, and deliberate determination of an intelligent people. It is true that the desolation of war has not been visited upon the people of Texas; but I attribute our exemption, under Providence, to the wisdom of her counsels, producing unanimity among her people, to her promptitude in taking possession of the public property and arms, and expelling the United States troops, which were in her limits at the time of her secession from the old Union, and to the gallantry with which every attempted invasion has been met and repelled. Our people have not remained idle spectators of the contest. Our whole arms-bearing population are in the field. Our sons have not waited for the enemy to invade our soil, but have hastened to the distant fields, where the contest was the fiercest and the battle raged hottest. They have shed their blood upon every battle-field, and their bones repose beneath the soil or whiten the surface from the plains of Arizona to the eastern shores of Virginia.

I do not refer to these facts in the spirit of boasting, but as affording evidence, in confirmation of the resolves of her Legislature, that Texas is prepared "to take no step backwards;" that she will do her whole duty and will share with her sister States any and every fate but that of submission and re-union; and that should any of the States, in an hour of adversity, desert the common cause, which pride, manhood, and honor forbid, or should all desert her, she will, single-handed, maintain the contest and continue "to tread the wine-press alone," and never cease it while there is an arm to strike a blow of resistance; never, until the bright, smiling prairie homes of her people shall be made desolate wastes, and her last son lie an immolated martyr upon her soil.

Texas has been, at all times, well advised of the magnitude of our great contest, and aware that we must succeed through the united efforts of all the people of all the States, through bloody battles, with the vicissitudes of victory and defeat, of triumph and disaster, and through years of toil, privation and suffering. Hence our people have never manifested undue elation over our victories, but their hearts have been filled with gratitude, too deep for utterance, to the God of battles; nor have they been unduly depressed or despondent under reverses, but have maintained an abiding faith in the justice of that "God who doeth all things well."

Our people are not, as many imagine, a peculiar people, unlike those of other States; they are but emigrants, representatives from the older States, every one of which has contributed to our population, who, in turn, send the sons of South Carolina and Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama and Mississippi, to speak their voice and represent their interests in the two Houses of this Congress. The resolutions just read, are but the concentrated sentiments of the people of Texas, conveying the words of determination, confidence, and support to their fathers, brothers and friends in the old States "at home," assuring them that while they are "earnestly desirous of peace," they also declare that it "must be coupled with our independence."

The resolutions were adopted about the time of the recent presidential election in the United States, but before the result was known in Texas, and, although the party against whose insidious policy they were directed was defeated, yet, in view of the sentiments prevailing in the minds of many patriotic men in our Confederacy, I feel that the consideration of the truths asserted by them, will not be regarded at the present as ill-timed and inappropriate.

The first resolution asserts a constitutional truth which none will deny, "that the Government of the Confederate States is the only organ of the States, in

the Confederacy, for the transaction of business with foreign nations ;" and it gives the pledge in advance that no proposition to negotiate for peace will be entertained by my State, but that it must be made to the Government of the Confederate States. The converse is implied that the State will make no such proposition.

The second resolution expresses a well-grounded want of confidence in the good faith of a proposition so made ; but regards it as the dictate of an insidious policy on the part of our enemy to "divide and conquer." In the sentiments of both resolutions I fully concur.

As commissioners have been appointed by our Government to meet others who may be appointed on the part of the Government of the United States to arrange preliminaries for the negotiation of a treaty of peace, the discussion of the subject of the two resolutions referred to may be regarded as unnecessary. I have no idea, not the faintest hope, that any treaty of peace will result from any negotiations under existing circumstances. Our enemy is not yet prepared to grant us peace with independence, and we are not prepared to accept it, coupled with reunion. Our people should not let their hopes become unduly excited, by allowing themselves to be deceived upon the subject. If they do, I am confident they will be doomed to disappointment. The appointment of commissioners will have the good effect of undeceiving many as to the disposition of the President in regard to peace, and of silencing those who use it for the unpatriotic purpose of irritating the public mind, and dividing and distracting the people, in regard to the proper measures and efforts demanded by our condition. It will satisfy them that the question of peace is in the hands of our enemies and not in ours—and, if the war is to be prolonged, it is their fault and not ours.

Upon the failure of negotiation, honest men and patriots will be satisfied with the good faith of our Government, as well as of the purposes of the enemy; but the subject of a convention of the States, or other irresponsible treaty agents, will again be raised, to divide and distract the country and to aid the enemy. In that view the questions become important.

No man more ardently desires peace than I do. None would do more to stay the hand of this desolating war, to stop the stream of flowing blood, this carnival of death, than I would, consistent with patriotism and honor. I have given to the subject of negotiation, through the instrumentality of a convention of the States, or through State or other commissioners, whether formal or informal, irresponsible to the treaty-making power provided by the constitution, much earnest and anxious thought, and have been unable to bring my mind to any other conclusion than that in every phase, shape and form, it would not only violate the constitution, but would result in consequences exceedingly pernicious, and mischievous.

There is one conclusive answer to the proposition of a convention of the States ; it is impracticable. All the States of the Confederacy could not send delegates to such a convention. Who would represent the States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana ? Those adhering to us or those adhering to the enemy ? A majority of the remaining States would not send commissioners. My State has spoken upon that subject. If other States of the Confederacy should consent to go into such a convention, and attempt to treat alone, and thus violate their pledge contained in the constitution, to stand by their sister States until peace can be obtained for all through the common agent appointed by all, the circumstances would stamp the act as one of the grossest breaches of good faith, of treachery, well calculated to damn to perpetual infamy the State or people guilty of it.

It is said that by offering to negotiate we will strengthen the peace party at the North. If made through the proper channel such may be the case, in regard to those who are willing to grant us peace with independence; but if made through State conventions, or other instrumentalities irresponsible to the Confederate Government, such proposals may also strengthen the peace party at the North—but which peace party? There is a party there in favor of peace upon the basis of “submission, amnesty and emancipation.” There is a party there in favor of peace upon the basis “of a restoration of the Union with additional constitutional guarantees to the South;” but I know of no party there in favor of peace upon the basis of our independence. If there is such a party there I would do any and everything to confirm and strengthen it. What effect would such proposals have upon those respective parties at this time—upon the heels of Sherman’s march through Georgia and capture of Savannah; of Hood’s defeat and retreat from Tennessee, and of the fall of Fort Fisher? It could only strengthen the party in favor of peace upon the basis of “submission, amnesty and emancipation.” Triumphant in the late presidential election, nothing has since transpired to cause that party to recede from its arrogant demands, or to weaken it in point of numbers. Such an act on our part will only tend to confirm their long entertained delusion “that the rebellion is about crushed out,” and that we are at last ready to submit and bow our necks to the yoke.

The head of that party, their President, has declared again and again, that he will not treat with our Government, because he will thereby acknowledge that it is a Government, but that he will only treat with us as States in rebellion or individual insurgents. I venture the prediction that it is upon that point present efforts to negotiate will fail. Would he be likely to recede from that position, and concede our independence in consequence of our having discarded the Confederate Government as our treaty-making agency, and substituting the agencies dictated by him? Would he not take the fact, that we had adopted the only channel through which he will allow us to approach him, or through which he will vouchsafe to us mercy and clemency, as conclusive evidence that we are ready and eager to submit and obtain peace and pardon, upon whatever terms he may be disposed to grant them? Will any other conclusion be drawn at the North, or by any party, or by any unprejudiced and impartial mind anywhere? We may deny the inference as stubbornly as we please, and aver that the agency was substituted because of the obstinacy of the President, or of any other reason, still the fact of Lincoln’s declaration and reasons, and our compliance by the substitution of the agency dictated by him, will stand out in bold relief. Regardless of the reason we may give for it, the act will be regarded at the North as a concession yielded to the demands of Lincoln. Would he and his party lessen their demands under the influence of such a conviction? Would the peace party upon the basis of “a restoration of the Union, with additional constitutional guarantees to the South” be inclined, under such an impression, to acknowledge our independence, which they have never proposed to offer us heretofore? Would not the real peace party, which we desire to strengthen, in favor of peace upon the basis of our independence, (if there is such a party there,) become dumb-founded and silent?

If there is really any party at the North, who are in heart our friends and desire our success, because they believe that we are fighting their battles as well as our own, the battles of liberty against despotism, which we are, but who conceal their sentiments from policy, we cannot strengthen that party, and induce them to avow their real sentiments, by yielding to the demands of their and our enemy. If there is any party there willing to grant us peace, with independence, it is because they believe we will never accept peace upon any

other terms—and, if we desire to strengthen that party, we must do no act, utter no sentiment, calculated to shake or weaken their faith in that opinion.

Mr. President, the proposition to treat through State conventions or individual agencies, is a two-edged sword and may wound the hands of those who wield it. While we may believe there is a peace party at the North, our enemies believe there is a submission or reunion party at the South—and, although small indeed, I believe such to be the fact, composed of men who have suppressed their real sentiments from policy, but will avow them whenever they can do so with impunity. Will not this party be more likely to grow and strengthen at the South, than the peace party at the North under such influences? Should we adopt such agencies as a means of obtaining peace, and this party should obtain the control of a single State, and decide to treat upon its own account and accept Lincoln's terms, the consequences can be easily foreseen and foretold. Such a party would give to such a State anything but the peace they covet. She would thereby become an ally of the enemy, would be surrounded by hostile States, whom she had basely and treacherously deserted. Patriots in the army and at home would never submit to such a treaty made by traitors. Under such circumstances, for her there would be no peace.

It may be said that no State would do such an act. If reunionists and submissionists were to obtain control it would. Individuals are constantly making their escape, and obtaining peace and amnesty at the hands of Lincoln. If such men had the power they would obtain the same for their State.

How do the people of the North regard this clamor for negotiation through State conventions or otherwise, and for peace? They receive and use it as conclusive evidence that we are yielding from our position—giving way. Their papers are publishing exaggerated accounts of it, to prove that “the rebellion is on its last legs, and is about crushed out.” It is confirming their Government and uniting their people upon the determination to prosecute the war against us still longer—it is recruiting their army and can bring nothing but prolonged evil upon our country and upon us. Here, it can do no good, but much harm. It is calculated to produce a morbid desire for peace in the minds of our people, to excite discontent and division amongst them, to weaken their spirit of resistance, and to prepare them finally to submit to the yoke of the oppressor without conditions.

Mr. President, we must avoid these consequences—we must keep our people united in their determination to be free. We must do nothing, by act or omission, that will divide them, or that will weaken their resolution never to submit to our enemies. I know of no better mode of accomplishing this, than by keeping constantly and prominently before their minds, the issue so clearly made up between us and our enemies. If ever a people upon earth, had evidence to convince them of a fact, we have the evidence to convince us, beyond all doubt, that the Government of the United States will not treat with us except upon the basis of submission or reunion, which amounts to the same thing. Never was an issue more clearly or distinctly made up. We fight for independence—they fight for our subjugation.

They have shown no signs of yielding—we cannot yield; to do so, is certain destruction; we staked our all upon the issue, and if we fail all is lost. We must fight still longer. We must fight for peace, and continue to fight as the only alternative left us. We must prove by our arms, what we never can do by argument or negotiation, that our enemy cannot conquer us. Until we shall do that, we can never obtain any peace but that of subjugation. Then let us cease all contention and drive away all unmanly despondency and go to work to arouse the energies and revive the spirit of resistance and enthusiasm of the people. If unwise

counsels have prevailed, we but weaken ourselves by quarreling about it now; if errors have been committed in the field, we cannot repair them by warring upon those who committed them; if we have met with disaster and defeat, we cannot rise above them by unmanly discontent and despondency.

Our safety in this great struggle depends upon the harmonious and faithful union of the States of the Confederacy. We should avoid everything that tends in the slightest degree to disintegration. I believe that we can keep them united, and bring to the support of the country all the strength and energy of the people, only by adhering to the constitution in letter and spirit, which all have agreed to as the bond of union. Discard that instrument, either in regard to the agencies created by it or the powers conferred, and you will open the flood-gates of discord and anarchy, of division and conflict. I believe that most, if not all, the dissension and distrust that exist among the people have resulted from such departures. Impressed with the belief that such would be the case, I have invariably resisted every measure, which I believed conflicted with that instrument. It is not a party majority that we need, but the harmonious and unanimous support of the people and the States.

I do not, in the slightest degree, call in question the patriotism of those who favor and advocate other diplomatic agencies than those provided by the constitution. I know that they sincerely believe that, by such means, we will strengthen our cause at the North, and so far promote the ends of peace, and I as sincerely believe that at this time they will weaken our cause, both there and at home, and thereby prolong the war and intensify its barbarism. There is but one mode of strengthening our cause with the people of North, and that is, to convince those who are opposed to our independence that we will never accept peace without it. The greater the disaster, the darker the hour, the more firmly and stubbornly should we assert that resolve; the more determined and defiant should be our tone; the more energetically should we set to work to gather up our strength for the renewal of the combat. The clear, cheerful, ringing tone of confident defiance, that we are determined "to die freemen, rather than live slaves," sent out from the two Houses of this Congress, would cheer the hearts of our people; would renew the courage, revive the energies, confirm the endurance and nerve the arms of our brave and gallant soldier boys in the army, who for nearly four years, have patriotically endured and heroically battled for our cause. They would repeat the shout from rank to rank, from regiment to regiment, from brigade to brigade, from division to division, from corps to corps, and from army to army. It would be caught up by the old grey-haired fathers and mothers at home, by our sisters, wives, and daughters, and even by the little children, until its echos would be heard from valley to mountain, and from mountain to valley, and would reverberate from one end of the Confederacy to the other. Then, indeed, would we strengthen the peace party at the North, by showing them that we are not to be overcome by disaster nor dismayed by defeat, or that we can be induced to abate one iota of our just demands by reason of them; and by convincing our enemies that we cannot be subjugated by them. Thus our fathers, in the revolution of 1776, strengthened the peace party of Great Britain by refusing to negotiate while an invading army was upon their soil, and by convincing the monarch and the ministry that subjugation was impossible. Let not the lesson of wisdom, taught us by that example, be lost upon us. We may make up our minds to the fact that our enemies will never grant us peace, with independence, as long as they believe, from any cause, they can conquer us, and whenever that delusion is dispelled, peace will follow as naturally as day follows the night. The night may be dark, but the day of our deliverance will come, if we but remain true to ourselves.

It may be nearer than we imagine; but whether it is or not, it will be all the brighter by reason of the darkness that precedes the dawn.

I do not deny that there is depression of spirit amongst many of our people, nor that there is cause for it, but that it results from any well-grounded apprehension or distrust of our final success, I do deny. It results from over sanguine hopes, excited and intensified suddenly and cruelly blighted,

“Like Dead Sea fruits,  
Which turn to ashes on the lips.”

We all remember how confidently it was asserted, twelve months ago, that the campaign then approaching would be the last of the war; we all remember how our hopes of peace were strengthened and confirmed by a series of brilliant and rapidly following victories. Banks' army was driven, with slaughter and in consternation, from the trans-Mississippi department. Grant's army of the Potomac was rapidly cut down to one-third of its original number, and held at bay in front of Richmond and Petersburg. All believed that the dawn of peace was approaching, and that nothing was wanting to ensure it but the destruction or capture of Sherman's army, and that that was in a position from which it could not escape. All those fond hopes were suddenly dispelled by Sherman's being allowed to convert an actual retreat into a march of triumph through Georgia, closing with the capture of Savannah, and Hood's defeat near Nashville and retreat from Tennessee. These events produced a revulsion, a sudden rushing of the blood back to the heart.

Although the unlooked-for conclusion of the campaign was calculated to produce the greatest disappointment and depression, it is in no respect calculated to justify any doubt of our success. Why should any man doubt upon that subject? Sum up the results of the last campaign, and it will be found that the loss of the enemy was five to our one. We beat them in ten battles to where we lost one. One of their main armies was almost annihilated; that of the Potomac has suffered beyond that of almost any army in history, and is now occupying a position which it could have taken last Spring without the loss of a man. While the loss of the third has been twice or thrice as great as that opposed to it. Sherman's march from Atlanta was actually a retreat; he could neither stay there nor return by the way he came. He availed himself of the only road of escape, on which there was no army to oppose him, and on which he could, with impunity, forage upon a country filled with supplies for the support of his army. By the capture of Savannah, he has been enabled to convert an actual retreat into the semblance of a march of victory and triumph.

Upon a calm review, it will be found that the results of the last campaign, furnish nothing to inspire the enemy with hope, or us with despondency. It is like one of Pyrrhus' victories over the Romans, “another such” a campaign “and they are ruined.”

What though Sherman has been allowed to escape from Atlanta, and Hood has been driven out of Tennessee; what though Savannah and Fort Fisher have been lost, “all is not lost, honor is not lost,” liberty and independence are not lost, while we have the spirit to defend them. Should the enemy capture all our seaport towns and drive us from Richmond, they would weaken themselves to the amount of force required to hold them, and strengthen us, by enabling us to concentrate our whole force, now divided, to defend those places, and make our blows the more effective. They have not, as yet, touched the “vital point” of the Confederacy. It has none; but is “vital in every part, and can ut by annihilation die.”

It has recently been my duty, as Senators know, to look into the military resources of our country, and I unhesitatingly declare, that they are ample to enable us to maintain ourselves indefinitely against any force the enemy can send against us. We have men, arms, ammunition, and provisions, and the means necessary to keep up the supply. To-day our army is nearer to an equality with that of the enemy, in point of numbers, than at any past period of the war. For four campaigns, we have sustained ourselves in the unequal struggle, with a spirit, vigor and bravery, that has astonished both ourselves and the world. Our enemy can never conquer us; but we may conquer ourselves. If we stand firm to our position, he must yield. Could we but look into his resources, and test the spirit of his people, we would, doubtless, discover much to encourage us. The gigantic scale upon which he has prosecuted the war, has, no doubt, greatly impaired his resources and shaken the confidence of his people in the successful accomplishment of the work of our subjugation. His financial system cannot much longer sustain the immense superstructure erected upon it. The crash must come, under the influence of which, (if not before,) and the continued destruction inflicted upon his armies, the war spirit of his people must eventually quail and succumb.

The third resolution asserts a fact, which our enemies seem not to understand, and many of us seem to have ignored. We are not engaged in a war for the preservation of slave property, but to preserve the freedom and sovereignty of the States, to maintain and vindicate our right of self-government in regard to our domestic affairs and local institutions. The slavery question, in the manner in which it stands in this contest between the North and the South, involves an issue vastly more important than any mere question of property. It involves the question of State sovereignty; the power of the Federal Government, to prescribe the domestic institutions of a State, as well as the constitutional power of that government, by arms, to coerce a State into obedience to its mandates. Six of the States of this Confederacy refused to secede from the United States upon the abstract question of slavery, as presented in the Chicago convention and endorsed by Lincoln's election, nor did they do so until war was made upon the seven States which had seceded, to force them back into the Union. This simple fact ought to be sufficient to satisfy our enemy, our own people, and the world, that we are not fighting upon a mere issue of property, but "to preserve our freedom and sovereignty, without which, all else is valueless."

The remainder of the series of resolutions set forth, in cogent terms, the reasons why we should never reunite with the people of the North. In a rapid summary, they sketch and portray in vivid colors, alas! too true, the many acts of violated faith and disregard, of plainly-worded constitutional guarantees on their part, while living in union with us; of inhumanity in making war upon us, and of the manner in which they have conducted that war.

For a period of more than seventy years, we lived in union with that people, under a written constitution, containing guarantees, intended to secure to them and to us, and to our posterity, the blessings of liberty and free government. From the first moment that union was formed, the northern statesmen set themselves to work to convert a confederacy of sovereign States, united by the constitution, into one grand consolidated government, over one consolidated political society. Their whole political conduct consisted in persistent efforts, to pervert the common government from one to preserve, protect and perpetuate the several sovereign political communities, composing the confederacy, into a government having the power to regulate and control the internal domestic affairs and local institutions of those several communities. They endeavored to administer the government upon a policy which fostered and promoted the domestic and indi-

vidual pursuits of the people of their section, at the expense, and to the prejudice of the people of the South. By a revenue system, they, in a great degree, exempted the people of the North from contributing their portions of the taxes for the support of the common government, and imposed an undue proportion upon the people of the South, at the same time enlarging the profits of capital invested in the North, and lessening those upon capital in the South. By the same system they forced capital and trade from their natural channels, made northern cities the depositaries and entrepôts, for almost the entire capital engaged in southern trade, and for the exports from the South, and imports for southern consumption. They sought, by a system of unnecessary and burthen-some taxation, unequally levied, to collect a large surplus revenue, and by unconstitutional appropriations to expend that surplus upon local objects amongst themselves—for the advancement and promotion of their own local and individual pecuniary interests.

Being the stronger section, in order to control the Government and carry out their policy, by concentrating their superior numerical strength, they organized a political party upon a marked geographical and sectional principle, based upon prejudice against, and in opposition to the local and domestic institutions of, the southern States. To give strength to the party so organized, they assailed us with the vilest and most offensive epithets; they invented and published the most unmitigated and atrocious slanders against us; they held us up to the indignation and execration of the civilized world, in regard to the domestic institution of African slavery, for the existence of which amongst us they and the civilized world are responsible.

To deceive and inflame the sentiments of their own people against us, they availed themselves of every avenue to the mind—of the nursery, the domestic fire-side, the school-room, the college, the professor's desk, the lecture-room, and, above all, of the pulpit, intended to be the medium of the glad tidings of salvation to a dying world, and “of peace on earth and good will to men.” They perverted the sacred desk from its holy purpose and desecrated it to the vilest object, into an instrument of reckless defamation, slander, and inflammatory declamation to excite horror against our institutions and hatred against us. The press, religious and secular, literary and scientific newspapers and periodicals, school-books and books of science, history, and literature, their religious tracts and theological works, all, all, reeked with slanders, vile and unmitigated. From the hustings, in every village and hamlet, town and city of the North, resounded anathemas against us, and the halls of their State legislatures echoed them back again. Men were elected and sent to Congress as senators and representatives solely because they hated us and our institutions, and for years our senators and representatives sat in council with them, and were daily insulted by the vile slanders that were heaped upon them and their constituents. They sent emissaries amongst us to steal our negroes and to excite them to servile insurrection. They avowed their contempt for, and disregarded the clear constitutional mandate to them, and guaranty of right to us, requiring fugitive slaves to be returned to their owners, and, by fraud and force, by unconstitutional State legislation, by perjury and murder, they refused to perform their duty in that behalf. They declared they were governed by a “higher law” than the constitution, which they denounced as a “league with death and a covenant with hell.”

Finally, they succeeded in organizing and concentrating their sectional strength, and took possession of the Government, under the forms of the constitution, with the avowed determination to administer it against us, upon principles in direct violation and destructive of that instrument. By the dan-

gers that threatened us, and by the wrongs and insults of more than forty years, we were forced to the only alternative, as a means of self-preservation, to exercise a sovereign right—and without which we were not sovereign—the right to secede from a union so dangerous, and to “establish a new government, laying its foundations upon such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to us seemed best calculated to secure our safety and happiness.”

Who has the faith strong enough to remove the mountains of conviction piled up by years of treachery and wrong, that can now be brought to believe that we could live in peace and safety with a people so faithless, could we be so insane as to allow them “to woo and win us back again?” Who can believe that the northern people would regard any treaty pledges or constitutional obligations, since they have proven themselves so regardless of those of the past? We want no new constitutional guarantees. We were satisfied with the old constitution and its guarantees. It was the faithless disregard of those guarantees that caused us to separate from the people and States of the North. It was from them, and not from the constitution, that we seceded.

With the long catalogue of past acts of treachery and faithlessness fresh in our memories, affording the most conclusive evidence that we can rely upon no guaranty of safety in a future union with the people of the North, can any man but a conquered coward consent to reunite with them? Can any man but a traitor at heart to his country, to her institutions and the liberty of her people advocate such a reunion? It matters not as to the form or manner of our reunion with the North, we go back as a conquered people. When we seceded, we declared our separation to be final and forever. We have reiterated that declaration in every possible form and shape. We have a thousand times more cause to repel a reunion now than we had to drive us to separation. Were we to reunite with them, it would be because they have made war against us and to induce them to stop the war. The act would be prompted by compulsion and fear. For the future they would regard us a conquered people and treat us accordingly. They would neither regard our feelings nor respect our rights, and we would never have the spirit again to assert our rights, nor manhood enough to dare vindicate and defend them. By such a reunion we will lose all, property, liberty, and honor. It would be worse than subjugation, for, in that event, we would, at least, save our honor and excite the admiration and sympathy of the world.

But could we forget the past with all its wrongs; forget the union of affection that was destroyed and that of hate that was substituted in its stead—can we forget this cruel and inhuman war they have made upon us to compel us to submit to a union of force after having driven us from that of consent? A war that has destroyed the influence of our republican system of free government, which has re-established and confirmed despotism in Europe and made it exultant, and has rolled back the sun of liberty for a century.

Yes, Mr. President, they have made war upon us; they have armed their own people; they have ransacked the dens of Europe for mercenaries to fill their armies to be hurled upon us, in violation of christianity and civilization; they have robbed us of our slaves and armed them to cut our throats; they have blockaded our ports, shut us out from the world; and have bombarded our towns and cities; they have invaded our territory and devastated our country, destroyed our towns and cities and burnt the houses of our peaceable citizens; they have imprisoned old men and women, driven helpless women and children from their homes to starve and die; they have outraged and violated female innocence and purity, and they have murdered our people.

These barbarous and inhuman acts have passed into history—ineffable, inexorable history. They are there recorded, for all time to come, in characters as bright and burning as if streaked across the blue vault of heaven, in lines of living fire, to excite the horror and stir the indignation of us and our posterity to the latest generation—as long as history shall be read.

Can we become dead to nature and forget these things? Can we forget our slaughtered sons, brothers, and countrymen? Can the father forget his murdered boy; and will not the mangled form, the mutilated limb of the remaining one be ever before him? Can the widow, “with all her household gods shattered around her,” and her helpless and unprotected orphans, cease to mourn their murdered husband and father? Can the affectionate mother ever become deaf to the plaintive moans of her once pure and intellectual, but now violated inaniac daughter? Can the bones of our people, scattered over every State of this Confederacy, be gathered together and buried in the tomb of oblivion? Can that gulf between the North and the South, dug by hostile bayonets, wide and deep, extending from the ocean to the mountains of the west, filled with the reeking blood of our slain martyrs, from which the wailings of our people ever issue forth, and over which the fires of our burning homes are ever blazing, be closed and forever obscured, or converted into a garden yielding the fruits and flowers of peace and safety and, the confidence of fraternal union? Can all these crimes, and ten thousand more against us, against humanity, against God, be forgotten by us, and we, by any means, be induced to live in reunion with the perpetrators of them? The resolves just read, answers for my State: “By the just pride of the manhood and the virtue which we claim as individuals, and as a people; by the divine command which warns us not to walk in the way of the wicked; by the memory of our murdered dead; by the sight of bereaved mothers, widows, sisters, daughters, and orphans in our land; by the heart-brokenness of trampled virtue, and by our desolated hearths, we are forbidden to admit a thought of further association with the people of the North. Our heroic soldiers, the living and the martyred dead, forbid it! and our trust in God forbids it!”

We can but die! Better to die ten thousand deaths than to live in such a union, of wrong, of hate, of scorn, of shame, of infamy and degradation! Better that the earth should open and swallow us up, with our country, our wives and children, and all that we have, obliterating our name and race from amongst the living, than for us to submit to such a reunion!

Our enemies tender us this reunion as the only terms of peace, and threaten us, in case of refusal, with all the horrors of subjugation. Subjugation! What does it mean? Do Senators, do our people, comprehend what it means? It means the erasing of our name and country from the map of the world; the conclusion of our history, with no future; the destruction of our governments, both State and Confederate, and the provincializing of our States, to be governed by a triumvirate, consisting of the whining, canting, hypocritical Yankee, the red republican, infidel German, and, the superior of the trio, the African negro. It means Yankee governors to rule us, Yankee legislators to make our laws, Yankee judges to expound and administer them, and Yankee ministerial officers to enforce and carry them into execution. It means the confiscation of our property to pay their national debt, contracted for our subjugation, the death of our leading citizens, by military executions, or otherwise, for having defended their country and its liberties against their invaders. It means the crushing of the heart by the buffetings and scorn, chastisement and contempt, of the living, and the outrage and violation of their mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters, by a brutalized negro soldiery, stationed

in every town and city and quartered in the houses of the people, to keep them in subjection and crush out the spirit of liberty.

With the past history of Yankee faithlessness and treachery to warn us against any future association with the people of the North, with all the horrors, outrages and crimes of this war before our eyes or fresh in our memories, to stir up the deepest fountains of our indignation against them, with all the evidences of our fate before our minds, should we reunite with or be subjugated by them, is it not madness to cry peace! peace! when there is no peace, but the peace of death, short of our independence? The cry of peace at this time, and under existing circumstances, is but the song of the syren that beguiles to destruction,

“A faithless phantom that only flies,  
To lure us to our doom.”

The road to the peace I covet is enfiladed by hostile armies, hedged by glittering bayonets, and slippery with blood; but it leads to the temple where liberty sits enthroned.

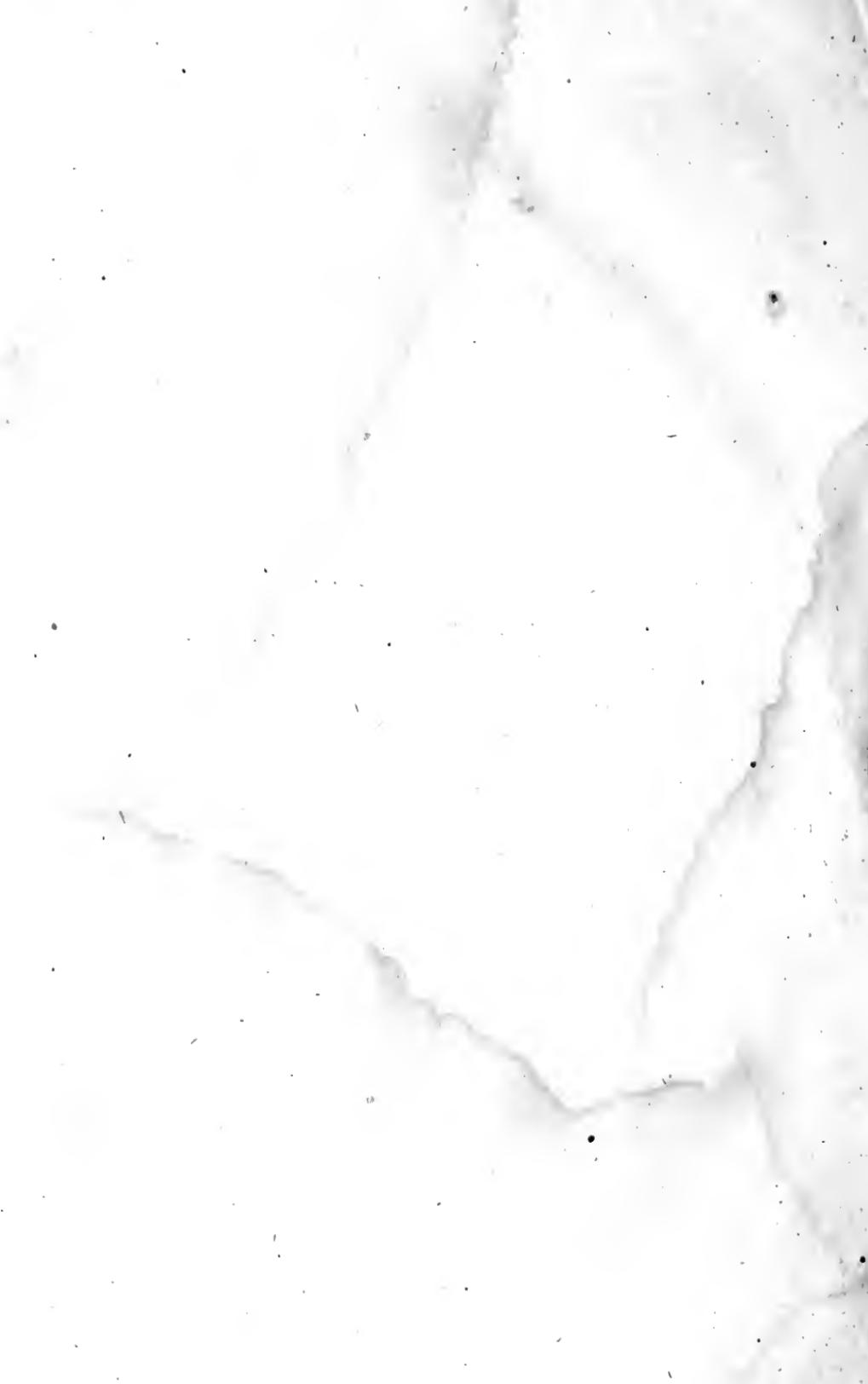
Senators, let us arouse ourselves from our lethargy, and quickly, but wisely, discharge our duties here; then let us go to our brave sons in the army and speak the words of confidence and courage to them. Thank God, they need them not; but, after four years of toil, service, and battle, they are sending those words to us. Then let us go to our people at home, and cheer and arouse them from any depression of spirit that may oppress them, “instruct their minds, and fire their hearts” with enthusiastic devotion to their country’s cause, and nerve their arms to

“Strike for our altars and our fires,  
-strike for the green graves of our sires;  
Strike till the last armed foe expires,  
For God and our native land!”

We will thus strengthen the endurance of our people and fill up our armies. Having tendered the olive branch to our enemies, let us continue, from the mouths of our cannon, to tell them in tones that shall shake the earth and echo to the heavens, that while “we are earnestly desirous of peace, it must and shall be coupled with our independence.” And, when we shall have evinced this unsubdued, unconquerable, spirit, they will soon begin to discover that our subjugation is an impossibility, then the peace party of the North will obtain the ascendant, the flood tide of this desolating war will subside, “the ark of liberty will rest on Ararat,” and the song of the dove of peace will again be heard in our land.







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