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Jas B Townsend Esq.
STAND BY THE PRESIDENT!

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NATIONAL UNION ASSOCIATION,

OF CINCINNATI,

MARCH 6, 1863.

BY REV. CHARLES G. AMES.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE ASSOCIATION.

"Let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guaranty of the plans by which they were effected."—WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

PHILADELPHIA :

KING & BAIRD, PRINTERS, 607 Sansom Street.

1863.

"As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, in time of war, I suppose I have a right to take any measures which may best subdue the enemy."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, God bless him!

"And the hands of the President, the chosen and holy head of the nation, must be strengthened by the people. He is striving in this hour of peril, with all his strength to save the country. Let the people pledge to him their most generous confidence and support—and not turn from him in coldness or palsy his efforts with a feeble and half confidence. Pledge, then, to the President, the lives and fortunes of an united people. Let him be sustained and carried in triumph through the struggle. His patriotism and self-sacrifice deserve it—our duty demands it."—"CALL" FOR A CONVENTION OF MASSACHUSETTS CONSERVATIVES, Sept. 1862.

ADDRESS.

MY COUNTRYMEN AND BROTHERS:—I desire to speak to you a word of encouragement. I believe there is no good reason to despair of the Republic. To be sure, the war has lain bare our weak points, and has disclosed an uncalculated amount of corruption among our people; but it has also developed a sterling bravery and patriotism, and given us a marvellous consciousness of power. We are learning wisdom from our own folly; learning success from our own failures, even as children learn to walk by stumbling. And the furnace-fires of our great trial are slowly purifying us of our silly selfishness and partisan bitterness.

We have at last touched bottom. We know the depth of our difficulties; we have measured the extent of our dangers. We have found out the magnitude of the Rebellion: It is great, but it can never be greater, and it is already perceptibly shrivelling. We have taken the gauge of its power; we know what work is before us; we can fully count the cost; and we may as well settle down to the war as a man goes to a day's work.

We were never so strong as to-day. We have found no limit to our resources, nor to our recuperative power under disaster. We have money; we have munitions; we have men; and, above all, thank God we have a righteous cause. We are the appointed guardians of Liberty and Law; we are the trustees of the natural rights of mankind; we are the body-guard of Christian civilization; and, for these high and holy services, we hold a commission from Heaven.

And I trust we are getting our eyes open, so that we see the folly of wasting, in quarrels with each other and with our rulers, that strength which is needed for the common cause—for the overthrow of murderous treason, and the establishment of rightful authority. The true base for the operation of our armies is in the hearts of the people; and we can serve the country, or we can betray it, through the newspaper, in legislative halls, in our public meetings, and on the streets, as really as in field or Cabinet. A man can help to save his country at home; and he can be a traitor, too, without going South. The available force of the Rebellion comprises all who sympathize with it, wherever found; just as the army of the Union comprises all the loyal souls in the Union. For our safety and success, we must, like our brave brothers in arms, stand shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, seconding and supporting our leaders by every righteous means in our power.

Let us not delude ourselves with the distracting and pernicious foolery which teaches that the country is to be saved, or can be saved, in some other way than by co-operating with the existing administration in the work of subduing the Rebellion. There must be unity of action: and we can have no rallying centre for that unity except the constitutional authorities of the country. There must be a head; and we can have no other head but the nation's Chief Magistrate and Commander. An army must fight under its general, whoever he may be, or not fight at all. There can be disgraceful surrender; there can be bloody mutiny; there can be cowardly desertion; but there can be no victory, except through cordial co-operation with those in authority, and loyal obedience to orders.

And I hold that the President of the United States, as Commander-in-Chief of the armies and navies of the nation has a rightful authority over us all, and a just claim upon our generous and hearty support in the fearful task which Providence and the people have assigned him, of restoring the national sovereignty over the last square inch of the national domain. When he lifted his manly right hand, and solemnly swore, before earth and heaven that he would preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of these States, he became the representative of us all; he consented to embody, in his sole person, the highest magistracy and executive power of the nation—the collected sovereignty of the whole people. He swore for us, and on our behalf; and between us and him there is a covenant of God, to which we form a party. If there is any meaning in American citizenship, we all stand pledged, by all that is sacred in loyalty and in honor, to sustain him in the discharge of his public duties, and in the administration of his mighty trust.

The President is no despot; he is simply a public servant. But he is clothed with vast authority, not the less; and this authority, though delegated by the people for their own use and benefit, is as real as that of any anointed and crowned monarch; and is as much more worthy of our respect as our popular government is superior to kingly rule. Disrespect to the authority of the President, therefore, is disrespect to the Constitution which creates his office; it is also disrespect to the people who created that Constitution, and who reaffirmed it in the very act of voting for a President. We are not living together as a mere debating club; we constitute a *government*, and every attempt to abridge or bring into contempt the rightful powers of those who are charged with executing the functions of that government, or to embarrass them in the preservation and defense of that government, is an offense against the peace and dignity of the nation, which should be branded as infamous and punished as criminal.

The right of impeaching a traitorous and perjured President is unquestioned and unquestionable, as it ought to be; but we have

no right to exact or expect an impossible perfection in any of our public servants. An officer keeps good faith with the people—keeps the spirit and meaning of his oath—when he does the best he can; when he performs his duties as he understands them. Most officers are sworn to discharge their duties “to the best of their ability”—a clause which recognizes this just limit of their obligation and excuses their inevitable and unintentional mistakes. Men do not become all-wise and all-mighty as soon as we elect them to public station. Chosen from among ourselves, they are men of like passions and infirmities with ourselves. They are what we should be, if we had been so unfortunate as to be in their places: subject to inadvertency, error, the bias of outside influences and the limitations of all human wisdom and practical knowledge. From Washington down, we have never had a perfect administration and never shall have one.* We have never had a President who was not charged by his political enemies with violating the Constitution; and we never can have, until we all understand that instrument alike. And yet, probably no nation was ever blessed with sixteen successive administrations which were, on the whole, so free from deserved reproach, as those of our sixteen American Presidents. I think nearly all of them have kept the inaugural oath in good faith and with a good conscience. (Of course, we must always except the man who was incapable of good faith, and who never had a conscience!)

But I do not think any one of them all was more thoroughly true and trusty—more loyal and faithful to the Constitution and to the rights of the people—than ABRAHAM LINCOLN. [Deafening and long continued applause.] I think, also, the impartial Future—if he can afford to wait for its verdict—will award him the praise of a practical ability and a wise statesmanship, which the ungenerous Present denies. Probably we have had but one or two Presidents who could have navigated the Republic through this stormy sea of difficulties with a steadier hand than the man who now sits at the helm.

Mr. Lincoln has serious faults for a Chief Magistrate in troublous times. He is over-amiably towards offenders; else he would have unhorsed that man McClellan at the beginning of his shameful career of disobedience to superior orders. He does not read men well; else he would never have entrusted important positions to men of doubtful loyalty. He is sometimes too slow for an emergency, and so lets the enemy steal a march upon him. And he has doubtless made serious mistakes, both of omission and commission, in general policy. But, conceding all this and much more, he is

* John Adams called Washington a “dolt.” Jefferson charged him with designs against public liberty. Washington himself, in his Farewell Address, thanks the American people for judging so kindly of the imperfections of his public services, and admits that “not unfrequently, want of success countenanced the spirit of criticism.”

nevertheless a great man, a strong, wise, sagacious statesman, an incarnation of patriotism; of unimpeachable integrity; of unbending firmness, when once convinced; of industrious devotion to duty; of broad views, taking in the vast future as well as the present, and the interests of the whole country as well of the loyal North. A man less careful in action might have fallen into more hurtful errors.

No partisan prompting bids me speak in vindication of the administration. Nor can it be vindicated from any partisan standpoint, as it has refused to be guided by partisan considerations. To advocate its claims upon our confidence and support in the present struggle has ceased, long ago, to be a partisan matter, and has become a part of patriotism. More deeply than I can tell you, do I feel that the triumph of the nation's cause, and the security of its very life, depend largely on the degree of confidence which the people repose in their rulers and leaders. An enemy has been sowing tares among us; and we have unwittingly hurt our own cause and given aid and comfort to the rebel conspirators, by a groundless, wrongful distrust of the Federal Administration—by a heedless habit of scolding about the President, the Cabinet, and Congress, as though they were the real conspirators!—by an ungenerous and unjust way of criticising our public servants, who, amid untold embarrassments and ever-multiplying difficulties, have been doing their honest best to work out the country's salvation.

We should be candid enough, at least, to make allowance for these difficulties; difficulties which the administration did not create, and for the magnitude and multitude of which it is in no sense responsible. The purest and best government possible to mankind could be broken down and destroyed, if its own friends would credit the slanders of its enemies, and join in their accusations, denunciations and assaults, as we have been foolish enough to do—magnifying every error and blinding ourselves, by passion and pre-judgment, to every excellence. Even if the administration were absolutely faultless in all respects, it would have been simply impossible for it to please such a whimsical and distracted people as we are. In the rush and excitement of a stormy time, we have become unreasonable. What could be more unreasonable than to charge the disorders of the country upon those who are doing their utmost to heal them? So we have let our own hysterics disqualify us for judging justly of either men or measures.

The more I study our public affairs, and the more I ponder over our recent history, the deeper is my conviction that the present administration has suffered the greatest injustice at the hands of the people, both for what it has done and for what it has not done. Let me recall to your minds the circumstances

under which this administration took possession and charge of the machinery of government.

When Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated—two years and two days ago—secession had already commenced; and the policy of letting the Union go to pieces without attempting to maintain the Federal authority—the policy of letting the rebels have every thing their own way, and even of helping them to seize the guns of the Union and turn them against the Union—was already the established order, or disorder, of things; the fatal precedent having been fixed upon us through the weakness and wickedness of a man who was not ashamed to call himself “the last President of the United States.” Northern Democratic leaders and presses—deeply embittered by their recent political defeat, and half ready to disavow allegiance to a President whom their party did not elect—were openly and violently opposed to all attempts at coercing seceded States. The Southern planting interest might combine to coerce the Southern loyalists—might rob, and imprison, and shoot, and stab, and hang and burn all who bore true and faithful allegiance to the Constitution of their country—might seize the National property, drive out the Federal judges, and proclaim beforehand its intention to capture and hold the Federal capital and dictate terms to the remaining States—but there must be no coercion used in maintaining the Federal authority! And some of these men declared that if troops were raised in the North for such a purpose, such troops should never reach Mason and Dixon’s line without marching over dead bodies! The rebels were thus encouraged to believe that nearly half the people of the North would justify, if not assist them, in throwing off the authority of the new President, and asserting themselves the masters of American destiny. And the weakness, cowardice and treachery of the Buchanan dynasty had disheartened us all. There was little spirit, courage, hope, or energy in the North. Men’s hearts failed for fear, in looking after the things that were coming upon the land. The conspirators alone were bold and defiant; their reign of terror not only suffocated the Union men of the South, but also overshadowed the continent.

Barely escaping assassination, the new President sat down gloomily in the empty mansion, with an empty treasury, a swarm of traitors in all offices, spies about his very person, the atmosphere of Washington hissing with venomous secession serpents. His first work was to organize his administration—a work always difficult and delicate, now doubly so on account of the general distraction and dangers. Before he had time to complete the appointments, the thunder of rebel cannon startled the whole nation. Seventy devoted men, shut up in Fort Sumter, besieged by seven thousand rebels, and by starvation, were forced to surrender.

Thus war began by the act of the South. That sovereignty

which the President had sworn to protect and defend was assailed by force of arms. But his hands were tied. The nation owned forty-two ships of war; all but six of them had been purposely sent beyond his reach, cruising in the Mediterranean and other distant waters. The nation had a small standing army of some twenty regiments. They were away to the Rocky Mountains and beyond. Washington itself was menaced on every side, and the Plug Uglies of Baltimore needed but a word to stir them to deeds of horror.

What if Abraham Lincoln had been a coward then?

He calmly appealed to the loyal masses of the country, saying, "This is your government as much as mine. I have sworn to defend it, and I shall try. Give me men and means!" Then came that sublimest scene in our annals, which a friendly Frenchman has called "The uprising of a Great People." O it was a spectacle for the ages! There were heroic periods of Roman and Grecian history, and there have been stirring events in the life of many another nation; but you and I have lived, and are still living, in a peerless time!

The President committed the safety and honor of the Republic to the people; and the cold, dying embers of hope in their hearts, swept by the breath of patriotism, glowed like living coals of fire. The men of the North rushed to arms, and to the rescue, with a unanimity which seemed to indicate that political animosities and old party feuds were buried and forgotten. The cowardly sympathizers with treason in these free States were awed into silence, and not a dog wagged his tongue except to give in a professed adhesion to the loyal cause with well dissembled insincerity. I never trusted these men; I always felt that they were as snakes in the grass; I continually expected just what has since taken place:—a cunning, sneaking, hypocritical, diabolical attempt to assassinate the government by stabbing it in the back, while the bolder, manlier foe should strike in front. But alas! I did not dream that such multitudes of loyal men would be hoodwinked into alliance and dalliance with them; nor that so many of us would ever be found foolishly playing into their hands, by slandering our own rulers out of the confidence of the people.

But from that day to this, the administration has steadily, honestly, and earnestly, pursued its original purpose of putting down the rebellion and restoring the Federal authority. And, with all our complaining, it has moved far on in the path toward ultimate success. See what has been accomplished! Beginning without an army—without guns, accoutrements, means of transportation, tents, or commissariat, and, what was worse, beginning without experience in any of these matters, and with much of the best educated military talent arrayed on the rebel side; it has raised, equipped, mobilized, and found means of sustaining an aggregate of nearly a million soldiers, who, with all their just and

grievous grounds of complaint in many cases, have been better paid, better fed, better clothed, and better cared for when sick and wounded, than was ever an army of similar dimensions before since the world was made.

Beginning with so small a fleet, it has created a navy of more than four hundred vessels, including an iron-clad flotilla outnumbering all the wooden war-ships we had two years ago, so that America "rules the waves"—the wonder and dread of all unfriendly nations,

Beginning with a people of no military habits or tastes—with a people who never felt the burden of government, and who hardly knew that they had a country—a people chiefly devoted to the dollar and far more intent on private advantages than on the public welfare—it has made us a nation of soldiers, capable of giving and taking the hardest blows of war; and it has put us well on the way to become also a nation of Spartan patriots.

"True," says an objector, "the administration has got together a multitude of soldiers; but it has made miserable work of organizing and managing them." I answer, this was an unavoidable consequence, considering the material with which the government had to deal. In officering so large an army, and in organizing it by joint action with the governors of twenty States, was it to be expected that no unworthy men would receive commissions? There might have been wiser selections; but only through the terrible trial by battle could real merit be discovered: only thus could cowardice and incompetence be made manifest. Slowly and at terrible cost, we are finding out and weeding out the unworthy officers. The process is exceedingly delicate and difficult; and it is not unattended with danger that worse ones may be put in their places; but the path of improvement is now fairly entered upon, and every day adds something to the efficiency of our legions.

There is an apology for the appointment of unworthy men to both civil and military positions, which it shames me to present. Commissions are given to men because they show good recommendations. How should a President or Governor know that the applicant is unworthy, when prominent and respectable citizens are his vouchers? And if a knave or a fool get a commission on the strength of your testimonials or mine, who is most to blame? Two conditions are necessary to secure an honest administration of our government, viz.: An honest President, and an honest people. Gentlemen, we have the honest, President; but do not tell me the people are honest, so long as they knowingly help unworthy men into places of power and trust.

There is laxity and disorder in the army; there is recklessness, waste and fraud in the civil departments; and I am ready to say it is a shame that the President doesn't "strike somebody" for these things, and insist on a purification and a straightening.

But then I am compelled to consider the enormous weight of cares which press upon him; the prodigious multiplicity of details involved in carrying forward such complicated operations over so wide an extent of territory; the chances that in employing so many agents to perform such various business there will be some unfit and some unfaithful. The remedy is partly with the President, partly with the heads of department, partly with the field commanders, still more with the people. When we become intelligent and virtuous, matters will move more smoothly. Till then no power out of heaven can save us, and no power in heaven save us, from jars and jargons, disorders and disasters. As for the President, poor man! he has never learned to split rails without beetle and wedges; and with knotty, gnarly, cross-grained timber and bad tools, the work must go slowly, and the rails, when split, must be as crooked and unhandsome as himself.

Consider in another aspect the kind of material with which the administration has been obliged to deal, and you will see good cause to think gently of its errors, and to speak well of its work. Perhaps no man was ever endowed with a higher or more active sense of general justice than Mr. Lincoln. He could never be the President of a party nor of a section; and those who so consider him have surely mistaken their own prejudices for proofs. He is perpetually conscious of his obligation to the whole country and to all classes of its people; and he respects and wishes to serve every community and every man—every local and separate interest, as well as the general mass. This is one of the strongest points in his character. There are a few dozen “born democrats” in the country; and he is one of the intensest kind. He reverences the rights of all, and wishes to promote the welfare of all, so far as circumstances will permit. I wish he had more of that kind of individuality and Jacksonian independence which would enable him to impress himself upon the nation’s character and life, so that we could all look to him as a fountain of both policy and power: but no! his own sense of justice forbids, because this would then be *his* government and not ours. It is in his very nature and his conscience to look to the people, and to ask what is their will, that he may be their servant. So he consents to consult those who hold every phase of opinion, with a view to conciliate and gratify them so far as possible. Not from timidity; not from weakness, or want of will; not because he has no mind of his own; not because he is easily influenced, as some wrongly imagine; not for a wish to make himself agreeable or popular; but rather from a desire to be just to every body, to give all interests a fair representation, and to allow all classes a share in the practical management of affairs, so that this may be in truth *a government by the people*. That is my reading of Abraham Lincoln’s character; and it explains to me the riddles which have so puzzled the critics of all parties. It explains the apparent indecision, the

long halting at the forks of the roads—the no-policy—which for so long a time characterized his administration in the conduct of the war, and which came so frightfully near to making shipwreck of the army and the country, simply because it drove the impatient people frantic, and left the ship to drift for a time without a helmsman. The whole crew were in council: he was consulting their will as to the best method of safety.

The President was ready to take at *par* every body's profession of loyalty; and he regarded it as both justice and sound policy to share the management of affairs with all American citizens—all who would help to save the Union. Thus he filled the first vacancy in the cabinet, after the war broke out, with a Democrat; thus he filled the chief places in the army with Democratic generals; thus also he lent a patient ear to all that might be said about public policy, about the conduct of the war, and about the disposition to be made of the slavery question, by men of all opinions; by men from Louisiana and men from Massachusetts, and especially by men from the border States, whose precarious attachment to the Union he was, with good reason, solicitous to strengthen and confirm, as there seemed ample need.

And so the war must wait, the nation must wait, the commerce of Christendom must wait, till he had given all sides a fair hearing, submitting with miraculous fortitude to an irruption of advisers more trying to the patience than the eruptions of Job. But when at last he is ready for a decision—when the reponsibility comes home to him alone of choosing between several lines of policy of which only one *can* be followed—then the positive qualities of his character came out; and he shows us the strength with which he can grasp a conviction; the boldness with which he can announce, and the firmness with which he can maintain a principle of duty. His eye sweeps over the vast territory of the Union and down the nation's future. He sees that *slavery* is the arch-enemy of our peace; that *slavery* is the arch-traitor to the Constitution; that *slavery* is the only cause of this terrible rebellion; and its chief support; that *slavery* is the viper which the Republic has warmed into life, and which has stung its unwise benefactor; and then, obedient alike to his inaugural oath, to his view of the public emergency and to the command of eternal justice, he "puts the foot down firmly" on that viper's neck! God bless him! and God blast the viper! [Thundering applause.]

As was to be expected, the President has been very widely and severely censured: by one class of citizens for not reaching this conclusion sooner, and by another class for reaching it at all. These very censures prove how utterly impossible it would have been for him to adopt any principle or policy, or measure, which we could all approve; and that if the nation is to be saved at all, some of us must consent to waive our preferences and stand by

the government, notwithstanding it has not seen fit to adopt our policy.

I think the long delay, the willingness to give a fair hearing and trial to other plans, and the manifest reluctance of the President to meddle needlessly with the old order of things, have been amply justified by the course of events. His policy has arrested the progress of secession in the border States, and has given the people of those States time to consider how much more desirable to them is the Union without slavery than slavery can be without the Union. His policy has probably given to the national armies a quarter of a million of Northern Democrats who would never have enlisted in what their leaders would have denounced as an "abolition war;" but who, having once had a taste of what secession means, have lost all scruples about striking rebellion in the most vital parts.

Gen. Mitchell stated a short time before his death, that while in Northern Alabama, his troops had been engaged in guarding the plantations of men who were absent in the rebel army, thus employing Federal forces to keep slavery alive while the slave masters should finish the work of destroying the Union! And if pro-slavery counsels had prevailed, the President might have retained an uncertain hold upon the sympathy of a semi-disloyal people; but he would surely have lost, and would have deserved to lose, a measure of the confidence of that very large, somewhat respectable, and wholly loyal body of citizens who do not believe that armed traitors have any claim to protection under a Constitution which they disown and seek to destroy. Yet even in that trying case, very few indeed of these loyal citizens would have withdrawn their support from the government; they would never have deserted the banner of the Union, though forced to fight in discouragement and despair.

I marvel at what the administration has been able to accomplish in this combination of embarrassing and distracting circumstances. I marvel that it has been able to disarm Northern opposition and hold it at bay so long and so well. I marvel at its success in retaining Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri in the Union; and still more that their stay in the Union has at last been made the decided choice of the people of those States. Equally do I marvel at the wisdom, moderation and display of power, which have hitherto made it impossible or impolitic for either England or France to shake hands with the Confederacy except behind the door—a state of things which the Emancipation Proclamation has done much to confirm.

Two years ago, I trusted Abraham Lincoln with trembling. To-day I trust him without trembling, but with a growing belief that God has gathered the power of twenty millions of freemen into the right arm of a single man for no unworthy purpose. If he will only fulfil his pledges and follow up the work he has so

well begun of "saving the Union in the shortest way, under the Constitution," we shall all be ready to join in the acclaim, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" and posterity will weep tears of gratitude over the tomb of one who accomplished a greater work than Washington.

Citizens! as true Union men, it is now an important part of our work to frown upon the slanderers of the administration, and to enlighten and correct a public opinion which those slanderers have bewildered and perverted. We must go before our countrymen and say, Let us stand by the President of the United States, as he stands by us! Let us give him men and money, and generous sympathy in his trying duties, and words of cheer through whatever days of darkness and disaster may yet await the Republic. Let us be free to speak words of counsel and of criticism; but always with a view to help and strengthen, and never with a view to hinder and embarrass. Let us *count that man a public enemy who would break the force of any blow which is meant to crush the rebellion, or who would weaken the arm of any officer who strikes at treason.*

But our natural impatience has made us unjust. The government needs not only men and money, but time also, for the performance of a great work. No war goes fast, especially where the operations are extensive. Great armies watch each other for months, hoping to secure favorable combinations or desirable positions, by various strategic manœuvres. Our fathers fought eight years to secure a beginning for our national existence; and we never reproach them for paying too high a price for our liberties. We have fought less than two years. Are our patriotism and pluck and courage so soon played out? Surely, the fortunes of war thus far have not been against us, that we should now lay down our arms. We have fought over a hundred battles, and have driven the enemy within much narrower limits. *We have lost nothing: we have gained much; and we hold all we gain.* We have acquired, and still maintain strong positions on the Atlantic coast, and on the Gulf, giving us a base of operations in North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana and Texas. We hold Fort Pulaski, watching the entrance of Savannah. We control the Mississippi, except at Vicksburg and Port Hudson, although sixteen months ago, it was in the hands of the rebels from its mouth nearly to St. Louis. We have taken New Orleans, the metropolis of the South; we occupy the capitals of two of the seceded States; on the sacred soil of Virginia, Norfolk is again ours, and Fortress Monroe is our great military and naval depot. Every considerable force of rebels has been driven out of Missouri, Kentucky, Arkansas, Western Virginia, and a large part of Tennessee; the heroic Rosecrans has a well-appointed and hopeful army of a hundred thousand men far down in the heart of the

enemy's country; Washington is safe, and all is quiet on the Potomac!

Besides all this, we have maintained, along the extended coast-line, a blockade so effective that every nation under heaven has been compelled to respect it; a blockade which, co-operating with our land forces, hugs the Confederacy like an iron band.

While the credit of the South must be rapidly wasting, we have a masterly system of finance, under which we can triple our enormous public debt without dangerous depreciation. Every one of our State governments is in good running order; the constable with his writ, is respected in every Northern village; the courts of justice are unimpeded; no school house is shut up; nearly all branches of industry are alive and thrifty. Men lash themselves into a fury, and talk like fools and maniacs about the "despotism of the Lincoln government," and then they put in bids for Federal contracts, and ask for commissions in the army! The new and important questions of Constitutional law which have been suddenly sprung upon the government, under circumstances requiring speedy action, may or may not have been wisely decided; but in very rare instances have these decisions operated to the inconvenience of any except those who have forfeited the right to complain—men who ought to be hanged, but who certainly could not be expected to feel—

"——the halter draw,
With good opinion of the law."

But why am I at such pains to vindicate the administration? Because confidence in our rulers and leaders is one link in the chain of our National safety; and because it is the weakest link, and our cunning enemies are trying to sever it, so that we may all fall down together in one general ruin, while bloody treason triumphs over us. We must be saved through co-operation with the administration, or not saved at all. Even you who do not regard the administration as entitled to so much confidence as I have here bespoken for it, must allow that, the weaker the government is, the more the people must do to strengthen and sustain it. No possible good can come from divisions and distractions; we can only succeed through unity of action; and there can be no unity except on the basis of supporting the constituted authorities. No change of President is possible for two years to come; and *two years is time enough to lose our cause*, either through that foreign intervention which is encouraged and invited by our foolish quarrels with the administration, or through the disgraceful surrender of our armies, which may be discouraged, broken up, and perhaps starved, for lack of a suitable moral support, a continuous reinforcement of new troops, and that supply of their wants which must come from the people at home. *Before another President can be elected, the Confederacy may be recognized and established, as the first power on this continent, unless we prevent it by a united and un-*

faltering support of the present President of the United States, in whatever war policy his convictions may require him to adopt. If this policy fails to unite us, what reason is there for supposing that we shall be able to unite on the policy of a successor, chosen amid the din of armies and the storm of maddening passions? It is appalling to think that any considerable portion of the people of the North may be either so blind or so unpatriotic as to risk the ruin of the Republic for the sake of carrying an election, and restoring their political party to power. And yet, the attempt, for partisan purposes, is now being made to alienate the nation's confidence from its own patriotic standard-bearer, by an unscrupulous and malignant system of slander; and this too in the face of an armed and powerful foe! Do the men who made James Buchanan President so soon forget that the country was involved in its present disorders through the criminal folly and pro-slavery servility of their own statesmen?—or why is it that they have so far lost all modesty as to claim for their party and their public men a monopoly of administrative wisdom. To me, it is a minor question by what man or men, by what generals or statesmen, by what party or policy, my country be saved, if it be only truly and wholly *saved*. Perish parties! perish personal ambitions! perish poor private interests and preferences!—but God save the Republic!

And the Republic *will* be saved! The blood of our brave soldiers is not to be shed in vain; but it shall wash out the nation's sin and shame. There is to be no great Slave Empire to darken and damn the continent for ages; there is to be no divided and warring people; but there is to be "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable." The tides of patriotic enthusiasm are rising again, with ever resounding swell, like the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings. The kingdom of heaven is at hand; Babylon is falling; the old serpent must die. A sad waste of grave-clothes, the old fogies will think it; but Lazarus must come forth. Much tearing, and wallowing and foaming of the patient: but the devil must come out. The Great Rebellion writhes, and rages, and threatens, and spits fire; but One stronger than the strong man armed has taken it in hand. There are terrible scenes yet to come; ponderous burdens yet to be borne; agony on agony to be endured; angry tempests to sweep the sky;—but, as the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, this land shall be redeemed and our children shall eat their bread in peace. With tears and songs will they honor the memory of the wise in counsel and brave in fight who carried the Republic through its great peril, and strangled forever the mighty demon.

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