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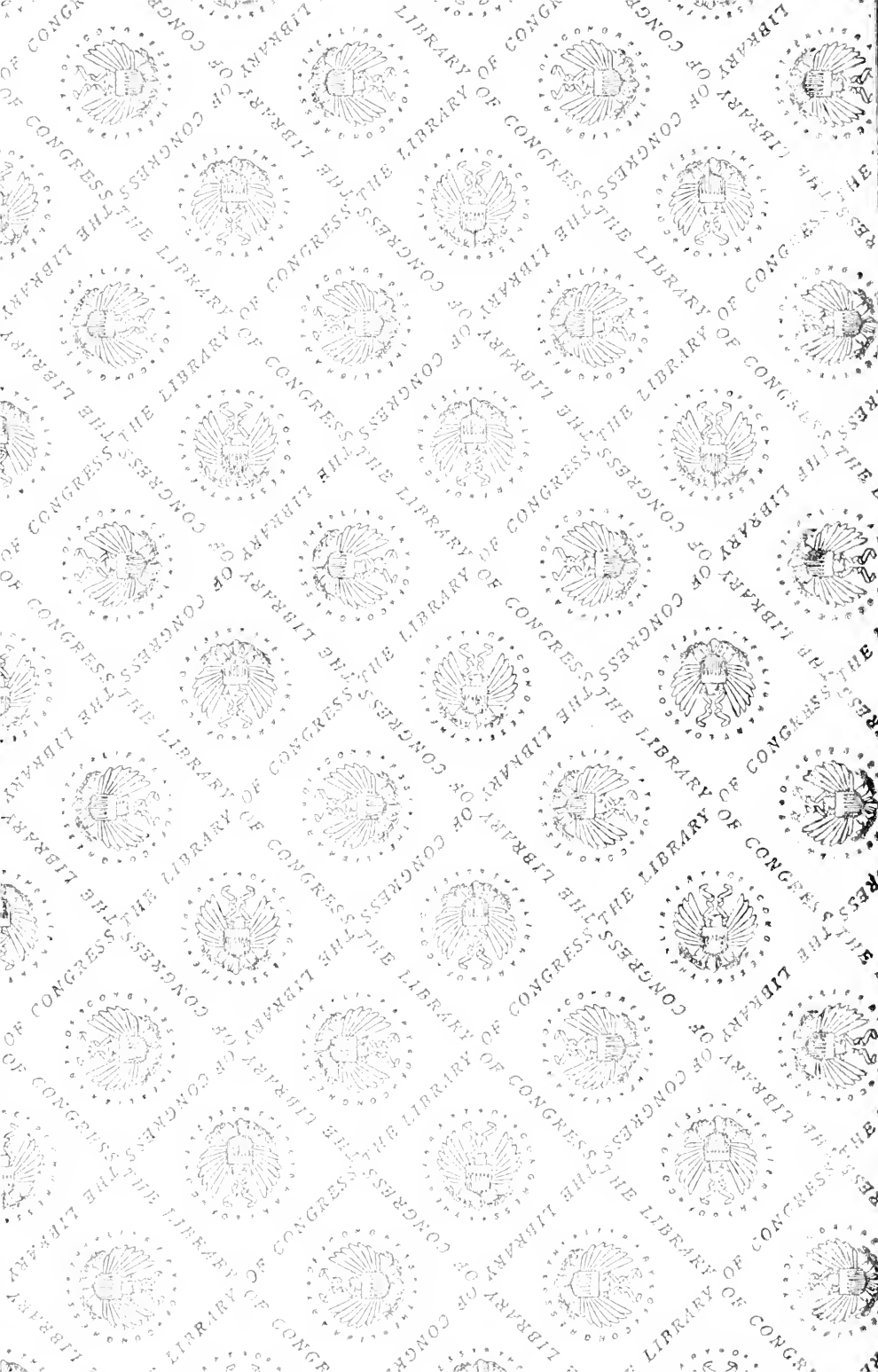
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THE

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

REVIEWED.



- Misstatements and Misconceptions of the Governor.
 - The Immediate Cause of the War.
 - The Concessions and Sacrifices made by the North to preserve the Union.
 - The Issue tendered by and the Real Designs of the Traitors.
 - The Conspiracy to break up the Government and strike down Constitutional Liberty.
 - The Theory upon which our Government was Founded.
 - The Social and Political Effect of Slavery.
 - The Alternatives Presented.
 - The West and New England.
 - The President's Proclamation.
 - The Scare of Insurrection.
 - Arming the Blacks.
 - The Proclamation and the Future.
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BY HON. HENRY R. LOW.

In the Senate, Jan. 28, 1863.

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RESOLUTIONS.

Mr. Low, Union Democrat, addressed the Senate, and said :

I hold in my hand a series of resolutions which I propose to introduce for the consideration of the Senate, and as they express my views of the rebellion, and our present duty, and may serve as explanatory of the remarks I propose to make, I will read them at this time.

Resolutions.

Whereas, The political influences now controlling the rebellion have defined their motives and positions by announcing that "Slavery and Democracy were incompatible," and that they were "irreconcilable antagonisms;" and,

Whereas, Also, it now plainly appears that the slaveholders' rebellion originated in a conspiracy against the principles of free government as well as against the national unity; therefore,

Resolved, As the sense of this Legislature, that it has become a question for the American people, as well as for the advocates of liberal government everywhere, whether slavery shall perish or the principles of free government be overthrown and prostrated. It is further

Resolved, That free government in the South had nearly ceased to exist previous to the inauguration of open rebellion—that in the execrable preparation for rebellion, civil liberty had been stricken down and public opinion had become the result of regulation by mobs—that the management of the incidents of that rebellion has been a mere continuation of an execrable system of coercion inaugurated by slaveholding traitors who had long plotted the overthrow of free government in the South. It is further

Resolved, That the Constitution of the United States guarantees to the people of all the States, free republican government; that this is the absorbing feature of our whole political system and the highest behest of our fundamental law—that there is no reserved power by the States or incident of State sovereignty that has or can have acknowledged existence in opposition to this fundamental guaranty—that in maintaining this guaranty of free government against all antagonisms, we maintain the Constitution as it was, as it is, and as it should be. It is further

Resolved. That the despicable sympathy expressed by political circles in Europe in favor of the overthrow of Democratic Gov-

ernment in the United States, is precisely what the American people had a right to expect—that the expression of sympathy by the masses of Europe in favor of maintaining our free government against the acknowledged antagonism of slavery, is also what we had a right to expect—but, that any portion of our free countrymen of the North, should have joined the coalition between traitors and European despotism to overthrow the national unity, is what no patriot in our country had any right to expect. It is further

Resolved, That we hereby absolve ourselves from allegiance to all party, excepting that great party of American freemen who are determined to stand by the question of national unity and free government—to this great party we cordially tender the hand of fellowship and unity. We call upon the people of this great State to stand by this cause with one accord and to maintain it with all their might and power and means and credit, and to exhibit no hesitation or faltering until this cause is made triumphant.

Resolved, further, that we call upon the Legislatures of the loyal States of this Union, upon Congress and upon the President of the United States, and invite them, clearly and distinctly, to present to their countrymen North and South, the great issue between free government on the one hand and the antagonism of Slavery set up by the conspirators against free government on the other—that we not only believe, but know with moral certainty, that when this question is well and definitely understood by the masses it will bring into political affiliation and unity the free labor force of the whole Union.

Resolved, That as the representatives of the people of New York, we send the tender regards of our whole people to the brave men composing the Army and Navy of the Union—that while we cherish their names and brave deeds in affectionate remembrance, we pledge to them the firm and vigorous support of our people in every way and form possible, to make such support available. It is theirs, through patriotic bravery, to achieve success; it is ours, as their grateful countrymen, to honor them for it.

On motion of Mr. Low, the resolutions were laid on the table and ordered printed.

SENATOR LOW'S SPEECH.

The Inaugural Message of the Executive recently transmitted to this body, will be justly regarded by this Legislature, by the State it represents and by the whole country as a State paper of significant importance, foreboding vast and important results to the country, whether of good or of evil.

Emanating from a gentleman of the acknowledged ability and commanding position of the Executive, occupying as he does the Executive Chair of the Empire State of the Nation, and representing a powerful political organization for which he speaks as the exponent and the leader, this paper carries with it a weight and influence that will not be overlooked by the people of either the Loyal or Rebellious States, and entitles it with more than ordinary claims to the candid, serious and searching consideration of this body.

Particularly is this demanded in the present perilous crisis of our national affairs, when the hopes and the destinies of the country hang upon the single thread of unity of action and singleness of purpose on the part of the Loyal North in putting down the rebellion, and when, therefore, the great political association which the Governor represents, has it in their power to shape the destiny of the Republic—to destroy if not to preserve the Union of these States.

Mr. President, while I am not disposed to deny to this Message, the meed of merit which it deserves as a production of elaborate thought, care and skill—while it must be admitted that the Executive has forfeited none of his well-earned reputation by the plausibility, ingenuity and force with which he has presented his views, and while I trust my remarks are actuated by no mere spirit of caviling or desire for discussion, yet, sir, I desire to express and record my honest convictions as to the errors and the fallacies of the reasoning which characterize this paper and the unwarrantable nature of the conclusions attained, and with due respect to the Executive, to express my humble but sincere and firm belief, that in treating the great problem of our national troubles, he has mistaken both the causes and the remedy, and has not reflected the sentiments or the wishes of the great mass of our loyal citizens.

Misstatements and Misconceptions of the Governor.

When the history of this conflict shall be recorded, and the future shall be called upon to pass its verdict, it will hardly be credited that the Chief Magistrate of the great State of New York, distinguished alike for its intelligence and patriotism, should so entirely misapprehend the whole cause and purpose of this revolt, or that he should so cruelly wrong the people of the Loyal North, both in his exposition of the causes and his dimly developed plan for a final settlement and adjustment of our difficulties.

Why does the Executive, at this late day, when the fate of the country is trembling in the balance, when the people are awaiting with anxiety to hear from him words of encouragement, exhorting his followers to action and to duty, why at this time does he re-assert the exploded theories of a day gone by, and clamor for compromises which have done so much to demoralize the country and which are as impracticable as they are unmanly and humiliating?

Why does he confound alike patriotism and loyalty with treachery and falsehood, and cast the blame and responsibility alike on both?

Why does he ignore the agencies which alone can give us a permanent or enduring peace, and censure the General Government by damaging statements calculated to weaken its hands and to detract from it the confidence and support of the people?

And why does he seem to lend encouragement and countenance to that most pernicious and unpatriotic suggestion, that the States of the North must be still further disunited, and that some of those commonwealths that have poured forth their blood in rivers to sustain the Government, must be offered as a sacrifice to conciliate and appease this, this most causeless and monstrous revolt?

The Errors which prevail at the North as to the Purposes of the War.

I will not be so uncharitable as to believe that the expression of these sentiments in the Message, proceeds from any want of patriotic motive or endeavor, or from a disposition to cripple the power of the General Government; but results rather from a radical mistake and misapprehension of the purposes of the rebels—a mistake which prevails to no inconsiderable extent in the councils of all parties and of the Government, and has led to serious errors in the management and conduct of the war.

I shall not, at this time, review those portions of the Message which relate to the matter of arrests or the animadversions upon the Congress and Senate of the United States, however ill-timed or unfortunate those reflections of the Executive may appear, and however loud may be the clamor of party leaders in regard thereto. I do not regard them as of such vital

importance as to merit our consideration to the exclusion of those great questions upon which now depend the issue of this struggle.

It is a matter of surprise and regret that our free people of the North, who have most at stake in this controversy, and who are periling most—and making the most enormous sacrifices for the war should less clearly comprehend the true nature of the conflict than the men of foreign countries or the Unionists or rebels of the extreme South. While too many here regard this as a question of philanthropy—of freedom or slavery to the black man—and make it an issue for parties to rally upon and divide—it is very differently regarded by those who watch this struggle from abroad—and discern the true issue which is really involved—and also realize the broad grounds upon which the war is really waged, and upon which the Northern people should accept it. How is it that the people of all Europe look upon this as a conflict between despotism and liberty, between democracy and aristocracy—and range themselves upon either side as their feelings or judgment dictate?

How is it that the Tory Aristocracy of England, who have all their lives been abolitionists of the most radical type—in concert with all the despots of Europe—should all at once conquer their prejudices against slavery and become the sympathizers with, and abettors of the South and the indignant and unscrupulous enemies of the North? and why do the laboring poor, the operatives of Lyons and Lancashire, to whom the war has brought distress and starvation, instinctively rally to the support of the North and implore us to fight this contest to the bitter end?

The Immediate Cause of the War.

We find the answers to these questions in the teachings and opinions of the patriots of the South, men who, like Johnson, and Hamilton, and Sherwood, have been familiar with the real motives of the traitors, and who have known for years their secret workings and designs.

With a view, therefore, to a correct understanding of this question, I shall proceed to the consideration of such features of the Message as treat of the origin and motives of the rebellion—its objects and purposes—and the agencies which must finally be resorted to to overthrow it.

And were it possible, I should be glad to treat this subject without mentioning the negro or the question of slavery, since we dislike to contemplate that which seems to have caused our calamities and been the fruitful source of our woe.

But I find it impossible to avoid the discussion of these subjects—they stand directly in our path and confront us at the very threshold of the argument, and it is neither the part of prudence nor discretion to evade or avoid them, or to shut our eyes to that

which we must sooner or later behold. And while I hold that the cause of the North and the Government is essentially the cause of the white man, and that his future welfare very greatly depends upon its success, I shall proceed to show the relations which the institution of domestic slavery bears to the war and in what manner it has incited and brought it on.

First, *It is not true* that this deplorable war was in its inception waged, or has since been prosecuted because the people of the Northern States have departed from the ways and admonitions of their fathers, or have lost either their intelligence or their patriotism, or their appreciation of the value of the Union.

It is not true that the Southern States inaugurated this deadly conflict because of any aggressive spirit or unconstitutional measures of the people of the North, or of any unfriendly action on the part of the Government.

It is not true that they have involved the country in this wholesale bloodshed in vindication of any single one of the principles of our free government, in defense of any endangered right of their persons or their property, or that they have even a colorable justification or excuse for their crime in the opinions or sentiments of the clergymen and schoolmasters of the North.

Nor is it in any sense true or just for the Executive to declare that slavery is but the subject of the controversy, and that it is not the primal, original and essential cause of the rebellion.

At the time that this accursed conspiracy broke upon the country impartial history will bear me witness that the people of the North had never more highly prized the value of the Union, and had never cherished for it a deeper or more fervent regard. With our manufactories dotting every hill side and our commerce whitening every sea, our nation basking in the noon-tide of its prosperity, our people could never have been, and they never were, more averse to war with its devastations and its horrors.

But the rattling of iron hail upon the beleagued garrison of Sumter, the tread of armed hosts marching to destroy the Capital of the Republic, the booming of the enemy's cannon in our very ears left us no alternative but to rally to the defense of a government endeared to us as the inheritance of our fathers; purchased by them at a sacrifice of blood and treasure we can never overestimate, and which demands at our hands its preservation at every hazard, at any cost.

The Concessions and Sacrifices made by the North to Preserve the Union.

Year after year had we made concessions and compromises in the interest of slavery to appease its graspings and gratify its insatiable greed, and time after time had we broken them again at its bidding and demand.

To satisfy its remorseless claims, States and Territories have been surrendered to its behests, and their virgin soil polluted by its blasting touch.

All the territory of the Union was offered to be thrown open to its invasion—the North daring to ask only and consenting to be content with the bare and naked privilege that freedom should have the same right to enter upon the race and battle for the supremacy.

In defiance of our moral convictions, we returned the fugitive in irons to his master, and stripped the negro through the forms of judicial decree of all the privileges of a freeman, a man.

We debauched our conscience, humiliated our self-respect, and brought disgrace upon our government by claiming for the system of Slavery a consideration and respectability at war with our whole theory of government, and which its founders would have blushed to own.

Finally we elected for the slave power an administration which nationalized slavery, and infused its poisonous influence into every vein and artery of the government—which aimed at its aggrandizement as its sole object and policy—which drove free state men from the free territory of the Union—which endeavored to deprive the settlers of the West of their sovereign right of self-government and to force upon them an odious and obnoxious Constitution—which filled the Cabinet and surrounded the Department with traitors who controlled every branch of the Government, and plotted treason under the very dome of the Capitol—who turned the arms and resources of the nation against itself—who plundered its property and paralyzed its power, and left it dismayed and confounded at their treachery and crime.

All this and more was tamely submitted to by the Northern States in defiance of their moral teachings, their sense of right, and of the inroads it was making upon their virtues and their patriotism—with the only purpose and vainly cherished hope of averting civil war and preventing the dissolution of the Union—for the preservation of which no sacrifice was deemed too great—and yet in the face of history and of these indisputable facts we are given to understand that this calamitous war has been superinduced in part by the aggressions of Northern States upon Southern rights, and by their want of loyalty and devotion to the government and principles of their fathers.

For one, I protest in the name of the loyal people of the North against this unjust construction of their conduct and their motives. It is a perversion of truth and right, a falsification of the record and a libel upon our own good name.

The Issue Tendered by and the Real Designs of the Traitors.

Sir, for what purpose does the Executive seek to make the issue of this controversy more favorable to the traitors than they claim it for themselves?

The issue as they present it, speaking authoritatively and officially, is not that the Government shall cease infringement upon their rights, but that the democratic form of government—the government of majorities which has been found antagonistic to their peculiar institutions—shall be destroyed and overthrown.

It is not with them a question or struggle for rights under the Constitution, or for privileges guaranteed by that instrument. They will have none of these—but it is a war declared openly by them to be waged against the Constitution and the form of government it represents.

The leading spirits whose base treason has since measurably pervaded the whole South, inaugurated this bloody revolution with the avowed intention to strike down our system of popular government and supplant it with one better suited to their aristocratic tastes—where their power should be absolute and not subject to the changes of popular elections, in which the masses and the “mudsills” had the right to participate. In their very nature they were and now are as hostile to the principles of Democracy as the nobles of Russia or the Tories of England, and regard the teachings of Washington and Jefferson with as little favor as the writings of Mahomet, either of whom would be hung in the capital of their native State should they now read the Declaration of Independence in the same spirit in which they wrote it in 1776.

The Conspiracy to Break up the Government and Strike Down Constitutional Liberty.

That a conspiracy had for years been in existence in the Southern States, composed of influential and leading Southern statesmen and politicians, having for its object the dismemberment of the Union, has already passed into history, and will not be contravened by any candid, unprejudiced man.

This Cabal, organized and headed by John C. Calhoun, who had sedulously indoctrinated the Southern mind with the dangerous theories of State Rights and Nullification, first met at Nashville in 1850, in a Disunion Convention of the Southern States, at which time and place their plan of action was determined on and perfected, while meetings of a similar character were held almost simultaneously in the different cities of the South.

Their object was avowed to be the separation of the States. Their purpose was settled and fixed, and they only awaited a favorable opportunity when they could fire the Southern heart

and carry out their design, or in their own language, "precipitate the cotton States into revolution."

In this violent and revolutionary attempt to break up the Government and overthrow the Constitution, they had two objects in view —

One was to secure a commercial supremacy and independence of the Southern cities — the other and controlling one, the establishment of a great slave empire, extending around the Gulf of Mexico, founded upon domestic slavery, as Mr. Stephens oracularly declared as its "chief foundation and support, that the stone the builders rejected might become the head of the corner."

There was also another purpose not less cherished by the conspirators as necessary to the accomplishment of the latter result, and that was the trampling down of the rights and liberties of the poorer classes of the South by changing the whole nature of their government from a democracy to an oligarchy where the whole power of the State should be in the hands of the slaveocrats and they no longer remain in terms approaching political equality with the non-slaveholding whites.

With this view, the statesmen of South Carolina have for many years repudiated the doctrines of Jefferson and the old statesmen of Virginia, and effected a Government founded upon Patriotic representation.

That I may not wander from the record or speak unadvisedly upon this subject, permit me to cite some quotations from Southern organs and influential and representative Southern men.

Mr. Spratt, of S. C., in his famous letter to Perkins, of Louisiana, shames the apologists for treason at the North by the following truthful admission :

"There is no man in the South who deserves the name of a statesman who will pretend that secession was caused by any aggression of the North upon the right of the South, and still less is it the result of any act of aggression on the part of the United States Government. The reason was in the difference in the organization of society North and South. Every man in the North being a freeman, the North was naturally Democratic."

Again, in a letter from the Hon. M. R. H. Garnett, a member of the Virginia Convention to revise the Constitution—to Wm. H. Trescott, of South Carolina (Buchanan's Assistant Secretary of State), written in 1851, in answer to a treasonable letter from Trescott, occurs the following significant language :

"I must acknowledge, my dear sir, that I look to the future with almost as much apprehension as hope.

"You well object to the term Democrat. Democracy in its original philosophical sense is indeed incompatible with slavery and with the whole system of Southern society."

Hear, also, this same Mr. Trescott in his address before the South Carolina Historical Society, delivered some years ago :

“The institution of slavery which with the men of former times was an experiment, has become the corner stone of our social and political life, and yet there are men in South Carolina who would eradicate the old State pride, destroy the conservative character of our State politics, and drive us destitute and dishonorable into a fit companionship of a vagabond and demoralized Democracy.”

De Bow's Review, which is the leading periodical and organ of the slaveholders, has for years teemed with attacks upon our government, and articles in favor of a monarchy or aristocracy.

In the February number, 1861, we find an article from George Fitzhugh, of Va., in which he says :

“That it is a great mistake to suppose that abolition alone was the cause of dissection between the North and South—that the Cavaliers, Jacobites and Huguenots who settled the South, naturally hate, condemn and despise the Puritans who settled the North—the former are master races—the latter a slave race—the descendants of Saxon serfs. The former are Mediterranean races descendants of the Romans ; for Cavaliers and Jacobites are of Norman descent, and the Normans were of Roman descent, and so were the Huguenots. The Saxons and Angles, the ancestors of the Yankees, came from the cold and marshy regions of the North, where man is little more than an amphibious biped.”

He says, further, “that the Union has served its purpose ; that at the North the progress and tendency of opinion was to pure Democracy ; that the South must so modify its institutions as to remove the people further from the direct exercise of power ; that it was a characteristic of the progress of opinion in the South that all men see the necessity of more and stronger government ; that the people of the South were the most aristocratic people in the world, and to conclude, that aristocracy is the only safeguard of liberty, and the only power watchful and strong enough to exclude monarchical despotism.”

Such were the opinions and objects of the men who precipitated upon the country this civil war.

It is true they had allied themselves to the Democratic party, and for a time adroitly employed its honored name and prostituted its party machinery to advance their purposes and consummate their schemes. But when they ascertained that the eagle eye of Douglas had penetrated their designs and unmasked their disloyalty they immediately rent in twain that organization, and elected Mr. Lincoln, believing that that event would furnish them their long wished for opportunity of fanning the flame of Southern hatred into the conflagration of war and revolution.

They had outlived the patriotism and forgotten the virtues of their fathers, and were themselves living monuments of the legiti-

mate and debasing effects of that social system under which they had been reared and by which they had been cursed, and their history is sufficient evidence of the folly and absurdity of attempting to compromise this war by restoring to its original status and power, an institution in conflict with our whole theory of government and tending directly to despotism and crime.

This conflict is not an unlooked for struggle, but one which the great statesmen of the country have foreseen and predicted; one which Webster darkly saw in his prophetic vision of the future, and which Andrew Jackson prophesied would occur, with the question of slavery as its pretext, when he had nipped in the bud the Nullification of 1832.

The present state of affairs is but the culmination of events produced by causes at work in our social and political system for many years—the ripening of those seeds which have been planted in the bosom of the Republic and nurtured and fed by a foul and cruel wrong—the probing of that ulcer which fastened upon our body politic has eaten its way into the very vitals of the Republic, until our whole system is convulsed with the agony of disease.

The Theory upon which our Government was Founded.

The theory upon which our Government was organized and the pervading and essential spirit which animated its founders, was that of a free Democracy, allowing the largest liberty compatible with the safety of society, in which all power resided in and emanated from the people, as distinguished from that despotic system of “the right divine of kings to rule,” which, with rare exceptions, had governed the world since its creation.

The distinguishing and vitalizing principle of this form of Government was to elevate the laboring classes—to give them free labor, free schools and a free press, and fit them for the rational discharge and enjoyment of their natural and inestimable rights, to bridge over the great gulf between the workman and the capitalist, which had made the rich, richer, and the poor, poorer, and more nearly equalize the wealth, intelligence and happiness of the people.

This idea took a firm and abiding hold upon the hearts and hopes of our ancestors—it became deeply inwoven into the thoughts and actions of their daily life—and found a lodgment with the stern old Puritans, which neither time nor danger nor death could obliterate or efface.

It was this great ruling motive which bid them dare the anger and the power of the mother country, which sustained them throughout that long and fearful conflict, and finally gained to them their national independence.

It was for this they shook the thrones of the tyrants of the world by a declaration of human rights at once aggressive, original and bold.

It was for this they formed a constitution and a government, not perhaps in all respects perfect, but the best and the freest that had ever yet been devised by man.

Would that they could then have made it entirely free!

Would that they then could have eradicated that other evil which from that time to the present has been our curse and national reproach!

But that the framers of our Government did not at once abolish slavery can never be urged as an argument for the policy of upholding it now.

The country was at that time exhausted by the efforts already made, and was incapable in its then distracted condition of finishing the work so well begun.

The Opinions of the Fathers.

To maintain that they allowed this evil to continue for the reason that they believed it in harmony with our free institutions, or that it could be permanently incorporated into our social system without danger or injury, is to sully their memories and give the lie to the actions and professions of their whole lives.

Can it be possible that the men who put forth that sublime declaration of human rights, "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," can it be that these men had any thought or belief in common with the founders of the Southern Confederacy, who have attempted to establish it avowedly upon domestic slavery as its chief corner stone, and who claim, as a right divine, the privilege of buying, selling and trafficking in human flesh!

We are not left without the opinions of our fathers upon this question.

Among the men of the Northern colonies there was but one opinion. Hancock, Adams, Livingston, Jay, Franklin and Hamilton, were all uncompromisingly hostile to the institution, while there was hardly a Southern statesman of that day who regarded domestic slavery in any other light than as a glaring and crying evil, to be eradicated at an early day.

Says Jefferson: "The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in these colonies, where it was unhappily introduced in its infant state."

"You know, my dear son, I abhor slavery," was the language of the patriotic Henry Laurens, of South Carolina.

In the Constitutional Convention, Mr. Madison thought it unwise and wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea of property in man.

Said Gov. Morris, of Penn., who was one of the framers of the Constitution: "I will never concur in upholding domestic slavery;

it is a nefarious institution; it is the curse of Heaven on the States where it prevails.”

Said Col. Mason, of Virginia: “Slavery discourages arts and manufactures—the poor despise labor when performed by slaves—it produces the most pernicious effects on manners—*every master of slaves is a petty tyrant—they bring the judgment of Heaven upon a country!*”

The Social and Political Effect of Slavery.

While these are some of the consequences entailed upon the country, the effect of slavery upon the masters is to dwarf their mental development, debase their moral natures, transforming them into petty despots and wholly unfitting them for the discharge of their obligations toward the citizens of a free government and to each other.

Read the prophetic words of Jefferson upon this subject and mark their almost literal fulfillment in our day:

“The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions—the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this and learn to imitate it, for man is an imitative animal. The parent storms—the child looks on—it catches the lineaments of wrath—puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves—gives a loose rein to the worst of passions—and thus nursed, educated and daily exercised in tyranny cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. *The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded who, permitting one-half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies—destroys the morals of the one part and the amor patriæ of the other.*”

And again, in speaking of his fruitless endeavors to procure the abolition of slavery, he says:

“But we must wait with patience the workings of an overruling Providence, and hope that that is preparing the deliverance of these our suffering brethren

“When the measure of their tears shall be full—when their groans shall have involved Heaven itself in darkness—doubtless a God of Justice will awaken to their distress, and, by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or, AT LENGTH, BY HIS EXTERMINATING THUNDER, manifest his attention to the things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality.”

The following is what General Washington said in his letter to General Lafayette:

“I agree with you cordially in your ideas in regard to negro slavery. I have long considered it a most serious evil both

socially and politically; and I should rejoice in any feasible scheme to rid our States of such a burden.

“The Congress of 1787 adopted an ordinance which prohibits the existence of involuntary servitude in our North Western territory forever. *I consider it a wise measure.*”

“It meets with the approval and assent of nearly every member from the States more immediately interested in slave labor.

“The prevailing opinion in Virginia is against the spread of slavery in our new territories, and *I trust we shall have a Confederation of free States.*”

Thus it will be seen that not only has slavery reared up a generation of men in the South, who from early habit and education, are hostile to the genius of our institutions, but that the necessary tendency of the institution is, and always will be, to unfit them for the performance of those reciprocal duties which devolve upon the citizens of a free government, and one must be blind to all the truths of history and the plainest principles of philosophy that fails to perceive it.

The first notion that a slaveholder acquires in life, is that he is born to command. He is supercilious in his manners—violent in his temper—arbitrary in his tastes, and brooks neither restraint nor control—and being brought up in idleness, he spurs industry and labor as disreputable and degrading.

There is no middle class surrounding him. The non-slaveholders are ignorant, degraded and very poor. Common schools and universal education are unknown while the exclusive system of agricultural labor carried on by slaves is constantly draining and impoverishing the State—so that in wealth, intelligence, in population, in resources and patriotism and all the manly virtues, their people fall far behind the free labor States, and are then left to contemplate what is most humiliating to their pride, their own inferiority and decline.

On the other hand, compensated labor gives you the great *middle class*—the bulwark of the nation. It gives you free schools for all the people—it gives you a varied and useful industry—it gives you a population at once patient, self-reliant, frugal and persevering, tolerant of the opinions and respectful and tender of the rights of their fellows.

Abolishing everything like caste and nobility, it places all alike upon an equal footing in the race of life, opening up to the humblest the pathway to usefulness and honor.

Developing, as it does, agricultural wealth, encouraging manufactures and commerce, the arts, science and literature, this system has cultivated all those habits and traits of character which have tended so much to make our nation great and make our people happy—placing us far in the van of human progress—command-

ing surprise at our own achievements and extorting the praise and admiration of foreign nations.

I have been more particular in reviewing at length the philosophy and hidden causes of the conflict now distracting the country because these considerations must, in the future, measurably control our action in dealing with it.

And if the conclusions to which I have arrived be correct, it shows the sheer and utter absurdity of ever again attempting to compromise with slavery by making to it new concessions and guaranties.

The Alternatives Presented.

This rebellion is but the culmination of a revolution which has been going on for years, and will no more go backward than the mid-day sun, and the individual who honestly expects to again see "the Union as it was, with slavery restored and in the ascendant, is a madman or a dreamer." It is the exterminating "thunder of the Eternal" that has brought it to its present condition, and nothing less than the miraculous interposition of his power will ever reinstate it.

There is but one of two alternatives now presented to our people — either the States in armed rebellion must be subdued and brought back to their allegiance by the military power of the government without conditions or concessions, and with the institution of slavery in just the broken and crippled condition that the war shall leave it, or else you must consent to the independence of the revolted States and the dismemberment of the nation — and the sooner the Governor and his followers make up their minds and announce their decisions upon this question the better for the country and all concerned.

He who at this stage of the rebellion clamors for a settlement and compromise upon other terms is, in effect, preaching disunion and aiding the traitors, whatever may be his motive or intentions.

What is the compromise which they expect to make with the rebellion which is to woo back the traitors and reunite the States?

What is the plan of action; what the terms of peace which they mysteriously offer and ask the people of the country to adopt?

We submit that they shall show their hand. They shall not dismember nor play the coward, nor ask us to desert the administration and follow their fruitless chase after an imaginary peace which is to result from a wasteful truce or a disgraceful compromise.

If they wish a separation of the States let them say so—or if they wish to adopt the plan proposed by Sanders in his letter to His Excellency of repudiating our National debt and paying that of the traitors, let them say that. As a sample of the manner in which their efforts in behalf of treason are appreciated by "their

Southern brethren," I will read an extract from the *Richmond Dispatch* upon their efforts at compromise, which I think ought to satisfy them of the intentions of the traitors, and of their regard for their *conservative and compromising* brethren of the North.

It discusses the peace propositions of Mr. James Brooks in its issue of January 10th, in which it says :

"Mr. Brooks appears to be in earnest in these extravagant propositions, strange as it may appear to any man who has possession of his senses ; for upon the occasion of presenting them, he made a long speech, and expressed himself confident of their success. Are the Northern people all natural-born fools, or are they only stricken with that judicial madness which we are told the gods always inflict upon the victims of their wrath preparatory to their ruin ? Can they suppose that the South is as galled and as lily-livered as themselves, and that they are willing, for mere considerations of interest, to forget the unheard of outrages under which they have suffered during this war ? Can they believe them capable of so soon burying in oblivion all that they have done and all that they have suffered ? * * * * *

If the whole Yankee race should fall down in the dust to-morrow and pray us to be their masters, we would spurn them even as slaves. Our only wish is to be separated from them finally and forever—never to see the face of one of them again—never to hear the voice of another Yankee on the south side of the Potomac or the north—to have no traffic and no intercourse of any description whatever with them. We are fighting for separation, and we will have it, if it cost the life of every man in the Confederate States.

We are aware that many persons believe that the party of which Brooks and Van Buren are representatives, desire and design to restore peace, and that at present they dare not speak out their real sentiments, which are in favor of separation. We do not believe they are any such thing. *They would like peace on condition of our return to the Union, and they are fools to believe that a majority of the people in the Confederacy are in favor of reunion.* They would like peace on these terms, because it would restore the commercial supremacy of the North, and especially of the City of New York, which is gone forever if the Union be not restored. But they are as bitterly opposed to separation as Lincoln himself, or any of the thieves and murderers who lead his armies. In the event of a refusal to return to the Union, they would, to a man, unite in hounding on the assassins who are desolating our country and murdering our people as fiercely as they have ever been hounded on by Beecher and Hale. *They look only to their pockets when they preach of reconciliation and restoration.* If the same object could be effected by entirely destroying the people of the Southern States, and they thought it as easy to do, they would recommend it as the best of all possible policy. Let them be satisfied,

however. *President Davis expressed the sentiment of the entire Confederacy, in his speech the other night, when he said the people would sooner unite with a nation of hyenas than with the detestable and detested Yankee nation. Anything but that. English colonization, French vassalage, Russian serfdom, all, all are preferable to any association with the Yankees."*

The Errors of the Governor.

But if the Governor has wandered from the record in dealing with the nature and causes of this civil war, he has still more grievously erred in dealing with its practical realities, and in the measure of his support which he tenders to the administration, upon which now hangs such terrible responsibilities.

The Governor has been elevated to power by a confiding people at this most critical period in the nation's history, pregnant with vast and momentous consequences to the cause of republican government throughout the world.

We see now after a conflict of centuries the spirit of aristocracy and the spirit of democracy engaged in mortal contest locked in a death struggle for the mastery, and the whole world watching with anxious gaze the issue of the conflict.

On the one side is arrayed the blighted and blasting form of human slavery, supported and upheld by every tyrant, aristocrat, and oppressor of our race. On the other, the genius of civil liberty, the Constitution and the Union, encouraged by the champions of freedom everywhere, and cheered and beckoned on by the millions of toiling humanity all over the globe.

Had the Executive struck boldly for the right—had he planted himself firmly with his New England brothers upon the platform of justice and truth; had he held up the hands of the President; pardoned his mistakes and encouraged him in his fearful trial (as I hope he may yet do) he would have dealt a blow at the rebellion more effectual and deadly than the bayonets of 100,000 men, and would have won the unreserved praise and gratitude of the American people.

But he allowed the golden opportunity to pass by unimproved; he succumbed to the prejudices and yielded what I believe to have been his better judgment to the demands of partisan counselors, and communicates to this body declarations and sentiments that are proclaimed in triumph through the streets of Richmond, and read with pain and mortification in our own Capital.

The West and New England.

That selfish and disloyal men should have held out inducements to the Great West to repudiate the national debt, or that they should have sought to offer up New England as a sacrifice to appease the slave owners of the South, was what every loyal

man had reason to expect. But that the Message of the Executive of the State of New York should appear even by inference to countenance this wicked suggestion conceived and proclaimed by Southern traitors and Generals, may well excite fear and apprehension.

The Great Western are but the children of the Eastern States, bound to them by bands of iron and by every consideration of interest and duty.

Unwavering in their loyalty ; unfaltering in their trust in the great cause of free government, and fully determined that this contest shall be so terminated that a slaveholder's rebellion never again shall curse our shores—there they stand side by side with their New England brothers. Shoulder to shoulder they march to the conflict with them, emulating their patriotism, rivaling their bravery and patiently enduring all the hardships, privations and sacrifices which the cause of our common country demands.

And what of New England, now held up to opprobrium and dishonor as equally guilty with the South in this crime against the Government ?

That land where constitutional liberty first found its home and fastened its deepest and firmest hold !

“ The land where our fathers died ;
The land of the pilgrim's pride.”

The land of virtue, of patriotism, of science and religion. The land of churches and school houses, of industry and happy homes ; where the desert has been made a fruitful field, and the rugged mountain taught to bend to the industry of man—whose hardy and thrifty sons have leveled the forests and redeemed the deserts of half a continent ; whose schoolmasters and orators, statesmen and divines have carried from ocean to ocean, and from pole to pole, her love of learning and virtue, and her reverence for the laws.

Who is there around this circle that has not witnessed at his own home the evidence of New England civilization stamped indelibly upon the character of our own noble State, and yet we are told that all this must be sacrificed to appease this bloody Moloch of the South.

The President's Proclamation.

We next come to consider, as the most important practical question with which we have to do, the proclamation of the President for emancipating the slaves.

While we reflect upon the erroneous and superficial view which the Governor has been led to take of the motive and scope of the rebellion, we cannot be surprised that he should oppose this exercise of the war power by the Executive.

“ Slavery,” says he, “ is but the subject ; not the cause of the controversy.”

He argues, it is true, that it thrust itself into the very focus of the rebellion. One side is battling to build it up, and the other to break it down; but, after all, slavery did not set them by the ears—they went to fighting because they were excited, and they were excited because of the bad blood that had found its way in the extreme States, very much, as an apt writer has recently remarked about the struggle of two dogs over a bone—the bone is the subject of the fight, but the cause lies “in the bad *passions of the dogs.*”

Slavery has not only been the original, inciting cause of the rebellion, but thus far has been one of its principal bulwarks and supports, without the aid of which it would have been now numbered among the things that were—would have been literally starved into submission.

The negro has raised their food, carried on their industrial pursuits, performed their labor, built their forts, dug their trenches, and enabled almost their whole population to take the field against us.

The Original War Policy.

Our Government, out of deference to the supposed public opinion of a minority at the North, which had been corrupted by long contact and intercourse with slavery, or else misapprehending the real design and determination of the traitors, and hoping they would yet return to their allegiance, long hesitated to strike at the heart of the disease.

The President and his advisers, rejecting the advice of the bold and earnest men who saw and comprehended the full measure of the iniquity of the traitors, adopted the counsels of the Border State conservatives, and carried on, for long and bloody months, a tedious, exhausting, and almost fruitless war. Conservative Generals were placed in command of the army; a conservative and conciliatory policy was adopted; the “constitutional rights” of traitors were sedulously protected; the slaves were kept without our lines; and the most scrupulous regard had for the conservative sentiment of the North.

What, I ask, was the result of this ill-timed and hesitating policy? Disastrous in the extreme! It is true that we had won victories and possessed ourselves of portions of rebel territory, but the strongholds of the rebellion had not been shaken, nor did the faintest indication of returning allegiance on the part of rebels appear—on the contrary, they daily became more brutal, more defiant and more unyielding in their purposes. All this time their sympathizers at the North became more bold, more outspoken and disloyal to the government.

The reluctance of the President to adopt a policy that seemed to look like trenching upon this favored and worshiped system of domestic slavery restrained his hand, and it was not until after the rebellion was enabled to mass almost its whole white popula-

tion in the field, and thereby outnumber and defeat our armies, and even invade the soil of the Free States, that the bolt was launched and he determined to try "what virtue there was in stones."

The objections made to the exercise of this power on the part of the President are of the most trivial and unsatisfactory character. The right of the President to make this Proclamation as a war measure, can hardly be questioned.

The argument that the Constitution stands in the way has been nearly abandoned. The traitors themselves have made their Northern sympathizers ashamed of that pretext. They throw back in their very faces the hypocrisy that concedes to them immunities they are not cowardly enough to ask for themselves—the *protection of a constitution which they spit upon and defy.*

The Inconsistencies of the Opponents of the Proclamation.

It is a strange anomaly in the history of this rebellion that concedes the right of the Government to batter down the forts—bombard the cities—lay waste the country—shoot, stab and mangle the inhabitants—confine in prison the subjects—burn, confiscate and destroy every species of property, (one only excepted), and yet deny the authority to touch that human property—the most useful to them, and therefore most damaging to us! And claim the right to hold a human being in slavery more sacred than any other right to life or property!! But as I have before intimated, the rebels do not put their objections to the Proclamation upon that ground. They allege that it is brutal and not sanctioned by the laws of war. Let us examine this position for a moment.

Slavery is a great source of strength to the rebels in a military point of view. We can overthrow that power by setting the slave free and taking him into our service instead of theirs. Why may not we do so? If the negro be property why may we not take him as well as a rebel's horse? If the negro be an ally simply, then by all rules of international law we may persuade or seduce that ally from the service of our enemy by offering him superior inducements in our own.

Carry out this policy rigorously and effectually, and in a single half year you take from the rebellion, a power and add it to our side—equal to half a million of armed men.

Must we continue to send down the flower of our youth and the best blood of the land to confront the batteries of the traitors and dare the dangers of battle and disease, out of deference to a sentiment or prejudice which has no foundation in reason, and is only pandered to by selfish and designing men who, disregarding the nation's good, seek party aggrandizement upon its overthrow and ruin?—or are we blindly and madly to leave this mighty power unemployed, out of fear that the slave may seek his free-

dom, and that insurrection and bloodshed may follow the attempt? I trust that no such folly will mark our conduct or brand us with the infamy that must follow such weakness and imbecility.

The Scare of Insurrection.

The scare of insurrection is simply used to serve a purpose among cowardly or disloyal men at the North, who affect to tremble at its terrors. There can be no danger of such results unless the traitors bring it upon themselves.

Slaves never rise against their masters because they *gain their freedom*; it is only when the *attempt is made to re-enslave* them that insurrection need be apprehended. The bloody scenes of St. Domingo were not a result of giving freedom to slaves; but first originated in the attempt to take from the free blacks the rights of citizenship, and culminated in the bloody tragedies of Dessalines, when Napoleon again attempted to re-enslave them, years after emancipation had set them free.

But suppose that these fears are well founded and insurrections should occur, the answer is obvious and plain. *Let the rebels take from their armies the masters of the slaves who are now cutting the throats of our sons and brothers, and bid them take their muskets and defend their own firesides against the new-made enemy at home.* This would protect their property and secure the safety of their families, and at the same time *give preponderance to our arms in the field.*

And this is precisely what the traitors foresee. This "fire in the rear" will deplete their armies in our front and render it impossible to recruit their thinned ranks. Ours, on the contrary, will retain their full strength and become more formidable as this preponderance in our favor increases.

Arming the Blacks.

If the President will immediately raise, equip and drill every able-bodied black man whose services can be obtained, officer them with white soldiers and put the direct management of the war in the hands of men who, like Butler, are equal to the occasion and thoroughly determined that this treason shall be put down at any hazard, Jeff. Davis will be a fugitive or a prisoner before the expiration of the present year.

Black soldiers fought and won under Washington, and distinguished themselves under Jackson, and it is difficult to see why they will not fight as well for their own freedom as for that of their masters.

I know there has been a prejudice on the part of a portion of our people against organizing and arming the blacks, and so long as our brave friends and neighbors volunteered and filled the ranks of the army, it was not urged nor attempted to any great extent; but the time will soon come when we shall need more men, and we shall have to meet the question in a practical way,

and we ask, are the men who now so loudly clamor against the arming of the blacks, willing to take their muskets and themselves go into the ranks? I venture the assertion that one-half of them *would resist a conscription by force if attempted to-morrow*; and yet in the face of these facts they would repel the willing aid which is now ready for the country.

Our bravest and most deserving men are already in the field, and, of those who remain at home, too many are like "the dog in the manger," they will not go themselves to the service of their country, nor permit the Government to use the services of others.

The Proclamation and the Future.

I have thus far considered the proclamation solely in a military point of view, and with regard to its efficacy as a measure of military policy, but there are other results and advantages which must come from its practical and effective enforcement, that are most cheering and encouraging to every loyal and patriotic heart.

We commenced the struggle for our national independence with two enemies to free government, having fast hold on our nation's life; one the Tory Aristocracy of the mother country, the other, domestic slavery in our own. By the valor and patriotism of our heroic ancestors, we vanquished the one; by the madness of the rebellion we may now, through the Providence of God, rid ourselves of the other.

What the Declaration of Independence was to the war of the Revolution, is the Proclamation of Freedom to the Rebellion of to-day. Before the Declaration of Independence, the war on the part of the Colonists was simply a war of self-defense, forced upon them by a grasping tyranny which sought to wrest away their chartered rights. They fought at Concord, at Lexington and Bunker Hill with Spartan bravery, but as British subjects, for rights secured under the English Constitution. The first bold blow for freedom was the Declaration of Independence. Then, as now, the cowards quailed—the disloyal threatened, the timid doubted, and the hesitating feared, and only the few bold, fearless men, who trusted in the right and realized their destiny, broke to the world a battle-cry that awoke the spirit and roused the energies of freedom throughout the land, and startled every tyrant with a danger that shook the very strongholds of his power.

It gave a new hope and life to the patriots and opened up to their vision a reward more dazzling and brilliant than their imaginations had ever before conceived.

So is it now with us. The madness of *the rebellion has driven its authors on to crime, and Slavery has now become the victim of their wickedness.*

A destiny and a future more brilliant and inspiring than ever before held out to mortal man awaits the issue of this struggle, if

we are only true to ourselves and the great cause committed to our keeping.

This night of darkness and of trial will yet give place to the morning sun of victory, and one wild shout of triumph go forth from every freeman, and find an echo from the oppressed of every land. Our fair-haired boys will not have died in vain, and the hundred thousand heroes who have found their bloody graves will be the martyrs to a more glorious and wide spread liberty.

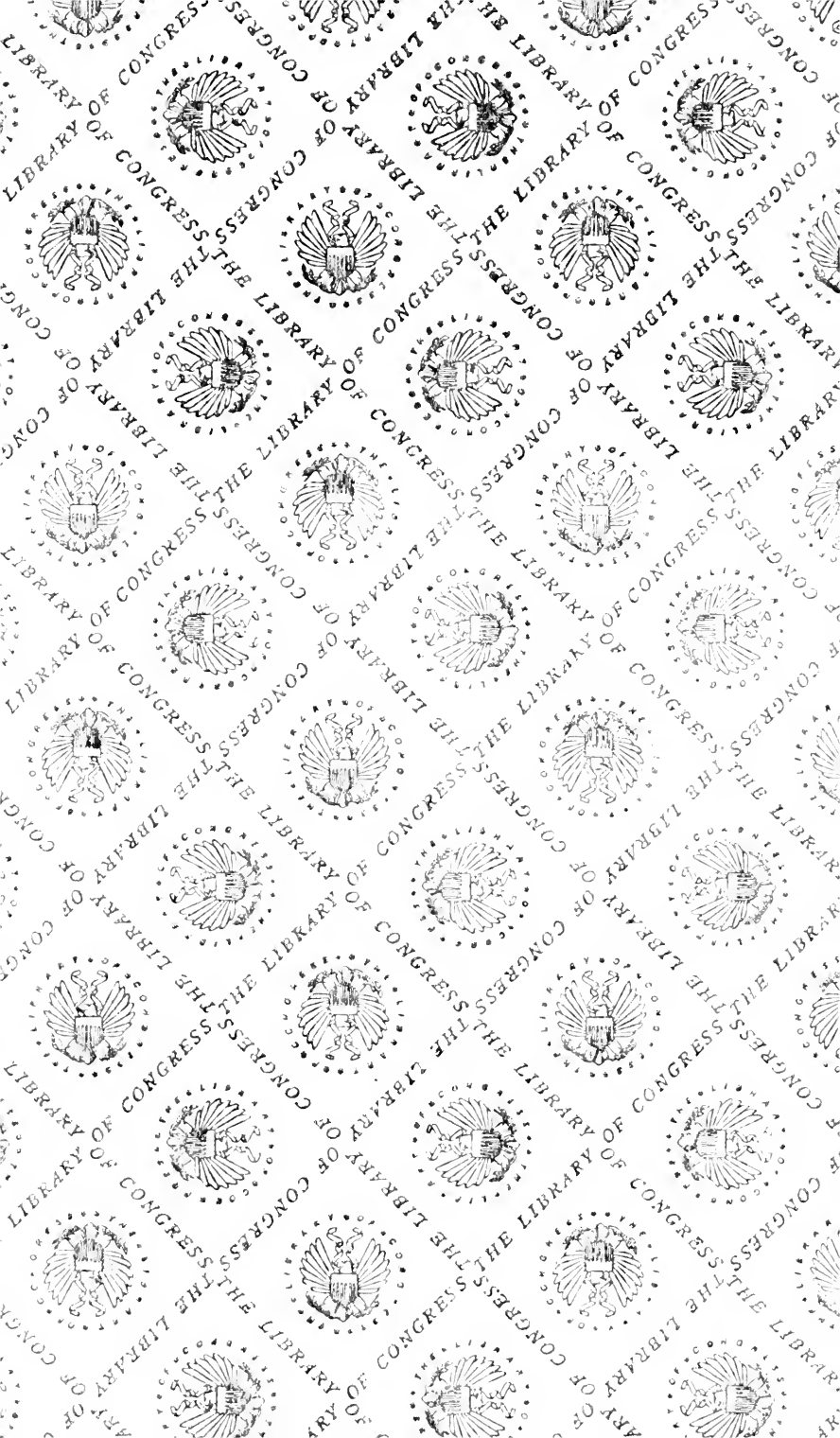
The holy name of freedom will no longer be a mockery and a cheat to any of our fellows, and this bloody era will have become a glorious epoch in the world's history, from which great systems of government and morals shall date their rise, and from which nations may draw anew their inspiration and their life.

I know, Mr. President, the dangers and embarrassments that surround us now. I know the coward cravens who seek a hollow truce which can but be the prelude to unending war. I see the disloyal plotitngs that even now essay to lick the hand that spurns them, and would barter their nation's honor for eternal shame. I am aware that indecision, disaster and defeat have alarmed the timid and served to dampen the ardor of the patriotic and the brave; but, sir, I have faith in God and in the great cause of human right, and will not allow myself to doubt the issue of this conflict.

"Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers;
But error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies amid her worshipers."

The war may yet go on — the death of the first-born may clothe our homes in mourning: —wasted commerce, disordered finances and blighted industry may mark its pathway; but the great heart of this nation shall not bow itself in shame.

The broken columns of the Republic will be replaced by a purer and a nobler structure. The mourner's sorrow shall yet give place to gladness. The desolated field shall yet grow green again; and a newer and holier civilization shall carry our flag and our freedom from ocean to ocean, and from the lakes to the gulf, until this people shall give law and freedom to all the continent, and "dictate terms, if need be, to the world in arms."



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