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SPEECH  
OF  
HON. W. T. WILLEY,

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

*On the 25th day of March, 1864,*

ON THE PROPOSITION TO

AMEND THE CONSTITUTION,

FOREVER

**Prohibiting Slavery in the United States.**

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WASHINGTON:

H. POLKINHORN, PRINTER, 375 AND 377 D STREET, NEAR SEVENTH.  
1864.

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HON. W. T. WILLEY,

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On the 29th day of March, 1851

ON THE PROPOSITION TO

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S P E E C H

Mr WILLEY. Mr. President, there are several bills before the Senate, each having a special design to accomplish, and all of which have a general purport. The special design of each bill is apparent on its face; but the general object of all these bills, and I am disposed to believe the main object, is the destruction of slavery. Among these bills is one to repeal what is usually called the fugitive slave law. There is another to make persons of color competent witnesses in the Federal courts; and there is also the bill now under consideration, more especially

I was and am very desirous to bring my mind to the conclusion to vote for the bill under consideration, and to see it put in such a form that I could, consistently with my convictions of justice and duty, do so; and it was with a view of having it put in such a form that I voted yesterday to send the bill to the Judiciary Committee.

I confess that my commiseration was excited the other day by the reading of the letters presented to the Senate by the honorable Senator from Massachusetts, [Mr. WILSON;] but I am disposed to believe that those instances of vindictive cruelty to which the Senator alluded, and to which also the Senator from Missouri, [Mr. BROWN] alluded, were more the result of another consideration than they were the result of the pique and passion of the masters of the slaves, exasperated by their enlistment. I think the sales, of those women and children may be more justly attributable to the impending universal emancipation of slavery in Missouri than to any exasperation of the master growing especially out of the enlistment of his slave into the service of the United States.

Again, if those wives and children were sold by their masters because the husbands and fathers had enlisted in the military service of the United States, it is my opinion that a change of masters would work no disadvantage to them. They may well be glad to escape from the custody and ownership of a miscreant who would indulge his evil passions on account of any such consideration.

But the greatest difficulty that I have in bringing my mind to vote for this bill is this; I am satisfied that if it passes in its present form it will lead to almost endless confusion and to very distressing difficulties in the States where these slaves live. The marital relation is not known at all between slaves in many of those States. I do not know how it is in Missouri. It was not and I presume is not yet recognized in Virginia. I believe it is not recognized in Maryland. Of that, however, I am not certain. Marriage is a civil contract, and it has been expressly held by the courts of Virginia that a slave is incompetent to make a contract. There can be therefore in Virginia between slaves no legal marriage;

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there can be therefore no wife in the eyes of the law ; there can be no children of slaves in the eyes of the law.

Let me allude to a decision of the supreme court of appeals in Virginia to show how far our courts have gone to destroy the idea of personality in the slave at all. A benevolent master made his will and died. In that will there was a provision that the executor should hire out the slaves for so many years, and that they should sacredly keep and preserve the proceeds of their labor until the end of the term, and then such of the slaves as should elect to be free and to go to Africa might do so, and should thereby be entitled to the proceeds of their previous labor. Our court of appeals decided that the slave could not make any such election ; and notwithstanding the explicit provisions of the will, they retained him in slavery and distributed the fund, the proceeds of his labor during the term which I have stated. There is, therefore, no such relation as the wife of a slave in Virginia, and his offspring is truly *nullius filius*.

It seems to me that unless the terms of this bill are more strictly guarded a conflict may arise with the State courts, and much distressing confusion will necessarily ensue. It was from these considerations that I desired to see this bill go back to the Committee on Military Affairs or to the Committee on the Judiciary, that there might be a careful consideration of some means by which the identity of the persons referred to in the bill might be legally fixed and established.

Then, sir, I have another difficulty. I see in the Constitution which I have taken an oath to support a very plain provision that we shall not take private property for public use without just compensation ; and it seems to me that the plain principles and obligations of constitutional law and the simple dictates of justice should compel the Senate to incorporate in a bill of this character a provision looking to that result. It will not do to tell me that there can be no property in slaves, and that, therefore, there ought to be no compensation for them. The very terms of the bill negative any such idea as that. I agree perfectly with Senators as to whether slaves should have been regarded as property in the first place ; but we are to look at things as they are, and at facts as they exist. I say then the very terms of the bill itself include the idea of property in slaves. Else where the necessity for the emancipation of the slaves whose husband and father enlist in the service of the United States ? The main and fundamental principle of the bill is predicated upon the very idea that there is property in a slave. It is to take him out of the custody of his master and give him to himself. I should like, therefore, (for I want to vote for this bill,) to see this plain requirement of the Constitution recognized in the provisions of the bill ; this plain response to the dictates of common justice, and I had nearly said of common honesty, heeded and obeyed under our obligation to the Constitution.

But, sir, I can never bring myself to rest contented while the father and husband is fighting the battles of his country that his children and the woman whom he regards as his wife shall be left in the bonds of slavery ; and I trust, ere we are brought to a vote on

this matter, there may be some amendment of this bill whereby the difficulties to which I have alluded may be obviated and the requirements of the Constitution complied with.

But it was not my intention to go very largely into these considerations. I alluded to another bill, and I propose to submit a few remarks in relation to that bill. I may as well do it here as when the bill comes up, and especially so since the main object of my desiring to occupy the attention of the Senate was to suggest another measure, which might well supersede all these partial means of abolishing slavery. The bill to which I allude is that introduced by the honorable Senator from Massachusetts, [Mr. SUMNER,] to repeal the law for the return of fugitives from labor to their masters. The constitutional provision on that subject is very plain :

“No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.”

It seems to me that the idea that slaves escaping from their masters in the slaveholding States to the free States were not intended to be embraced in the terms of this clause of the Constitution that I have read utterly ignores the entire legislative and judicial history of our Government from its foundation to the present hour. Many of the men who framed the Constitution helped to frame the first law for the return of these fugitives. They were fresh from the labors of the formation of the Constitution itself. They gave that construction to this law, and every action of our national Legislature on that subject, from that day up to this, has given the same construction to this section of the Constitution.

Moreover, the Constitution has provided a tribunal which is to settle finally every question of constitutional law arising under it; and in repeated instances the supreme judiciary of the land have given this interpretation to the words in the clause which I have read, and this application of these words. They have repeatedly recognized not only that fact and that construction of those terms, but they have recognized the constitutionality of the law of 1793, as well as of the law of 1850.

After this uniform recognition of the plain meaning of the terms of the Constitution, from the origin of our Government up to the present hour, after this uniform current of our legislative history on the subject, after the repeated decisions of the supreme judiciary of the land arriving at the same result, it seems to me a little singular, after three quarters of a century of our history, that there should at this late day spring up any idea that it was not intended that this clause in our Constitution should apply to the reclamation of fugitive slaves. But, sir, I merely make this reference without intending to go into the argument, because it seems to me that a simple statement of the case is the best argument that can be made in the premises, and I shall content myself with the authority of our present excellent Chief Magistrate. In his inaugural address he said :

"It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the lawgiver is the law. All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution—to this provision as much as any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves, whose cases come within the terms of this clause, 'shall be delivered up,' their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not, with nearly equal unanimity, frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?"

"There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by State authority; but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him, or to others, by which authority it is done. And should any one, in any case, be content that his oath shall go unkept on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to *how* it shall be kept?"

I think the case is very plainly stated, sir, and therefore I shall conclude my remarks on that branch of the topics which I propose to discuss to-day by simply saying that I cannot vote for any repeal of our fugitive slave law until there is another law proposed accomplishing the same result in a better and more humane manner. If the honorable Senator from Massachusetts had introduced a law to supply the place of this, so that we might keep our constitutional obligation, and if that in its terms had been efficient and more humane, it would give me great pleasure to vote for it; but while this obligation rests upon me as a member of the Senate, while I am one of those who have taken that "unanimous oath," I shall feel as long as there is a slave remaining with the shackles on him, however much I may detest slavery in the abstract, that it is my solemn duty to make a provision to carry into effect the plain requirement of the Constitution.

But, Mr. President, my main object to-day was to discuss the necessity and propriety of a remedy for all these evils of a different character from any of these and perfectly conclusive in its effects; and in doing so to ask the Senate to indulge me for a short time in a course of remarks which has as much reference to my own personal vindication as it has to the question in hand. It is known to the Senate that in consequence of the peculiar condition of West Virginia and my relations to that State I have become involved somewhat in this controversy about slavery; and I wish to-day, on the floor where I committed the offence, if any offence was committed, to make my vindication for the position I then assumed.

Mr. President, whoever is responsible for the questions connected with African slavery which are now agitating the public mind, these questions have, I think, assumed such importance and become so interwoven with the policy and current history of the nation as to involve not only the propriety of discussion but the necessity also of final adjustment. They cannot now be avoided or evaded. Whether they should have been introduced it is useless now to controvert. They have been introduced, the issues are made, and there is no alternative but to meet and decide them.

For myself, however, I can have no hesitation to say where the responsibility properly belongs. It rests with Mr. Jefferson Davis

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and the other conspirators who co-operate with him. They are the real, practical, and efficient abolitionists of the day. Had they remained faithful to the Constitution slavery to-day would have been where it was when the present Administration came into power, secure under the guarantees of the Constitution and under the obligation of the party in power maintain in good faith the pledge which they made to the country in the fourth resolution of the Chicago platform:

"That the maintenance inviolate of the rights, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend."

Not only had these conspirators the protection of the Constitution and the pledge of the party coming into power, but they also had a majority in both Houses of Congress. Yet they revolted under pretense of danger to their domestic institutions. But that is not all. The friends of slavery, both in the North and in the South, have now placed it upon grounds which challenge controversy and preclude indifference to it. Formerly it was generally acknowledged to be a moral, social and political evil, tolerated only because no feasible mode of getting rid of it had been suggested; but now it is maintained as a moral, social, and political blessing. It arrogates to itself the divine sanction. It is heralded as the chief corner-stone of the insurrectionary confederacy. It is proclaimed as essential to the consummation of any high degree of civilization. If this be so, the policy of the Government should be to encourage rather than to contract its expansion.

Sir, the apology so often repeated in extenuation of the rebellion, that it originated in a just apprehension of unlawful interference by the General Government with the institution of slavery in the States where it existed, is not warranted by the truth. To refute such a pretense it is only necessary to quote the well-considered speech of Mr. A. H. Stephens, the vice-president of the confederate States, delivered in Georgia prior to the ordinance of secession which assumed to dissolve the connection of that State with the Federal Union. In that speech he said:

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"Pause, I entreat you, and consider for a moment what reasons you can give that will even satisfy yourselves in calmer moments. What reasons can you give to your fellow-sufferers in the calamity that it will bring upon us? What reasons can you give to the nations of the earth to justify it? They will be the calm and deliberate judges in the case; and to what cause or one overt act can you name or point on which to rest the plea of justification? What right has the North assailed? What interest of the South has been invaded? What justice has been denied, and what claim founded in justice and right has been withheld? Can either of you to-day name one governmental act of wrong deliberately and purposely done by the Government of Washington of which the South has a right to complain? I challenge the answer. While, on the other hand, let me show the facts (and believe me, gentlemen, I am not here the advocate of the North, but I am here the friend, the firm friend and lover of the South and her institutions, and for this reason I speak thus plainly and faithfully, for yours, mine, and every other man's interest, the words of truth and soberness)

of which I wish you to judge, and I will only state facts which are clear and undeniable, and which now stand as records authentic in the history of our country. When we of the South demanded the slave trade, or the importation of Africans for the cultivation of our lands, did they not yield the right for twenty years? When we asked a three-fifths representation in Congress for our slaves was it not granted? When we asked and demanded the return of any fugitive from justice, or the recovery of those persons owing labor or allegiance, was it not incorporated in the Constitution, and again ratified and strengthened in the fugitive slave law of 1850? But do you reply that in many instances they have violated this compact, and have not been faithful to their engagements? As individual and local communities they have done so, but not by the sanction of Government, for that has always been true to southern interests.

"Again, gentlemen, look at another fact. When we have asked that more territory should be added that we might spread the institution of slavery, have they not yielded to our demands in giving us Louisiana, Florida, and Texas, out of which four States have been carved, and ample territory for four more to be added in due time, if you, by this unwise and impolitic act, do not destroy this hope, and perhaps by it lose all, and have your last slave wrenched from you by stern military rule, as South America and Mexico were, or by the vindictive decree of a universal emancipation, which may reasonably be expected to follow.

"But again, gentlemen, what have we to gain by this proposed change of our relation to the General Government? We have always had the control of it, and can yet if we remain in it and are united as we have been. We have had a majority of the Presidents chosen from the South, as well as the control and management of most of those chosen from the North. We have had sixty years of southern Presidents to their twenty-four, thus controlling the Executive Department. So of the judges of the Supreme Court. We have had eighteen from the South and but eleven from the North. Although nearly four-fifths of the judicial business has arisen in the free States, yet a majority of the court has always been from the South. This we have required so as to guard against any interpretation of the Constitution unfavorable to us. In like manner we have been equally watchful to guard our interests in the legislative branch of Government. In choosing the presiding Presidents (*pro tempore*) of the Senate we have had twenty-four to their eleven. Speakers of the House we had twenty-three, and they twelve. While the majority of the Representatives, from their greater population, have always been from the North, yet we have so generally secured the Speaker because he, to a great extent, shapes and controls the legislation of the country. Nor have we had less control in every other department of the General Government. Attorney-Generals we have had fourteen, while the North have had but five. Foreign ministers we have had eighty-six, and they but fifty-four. While three-fourths of the business which demand, diplomatic agents abroad is clearly from the free States, from their greater commercial interests, yet we have had the principal embassies, so as to secure the world's markets for our cotton, tobacco, and sugar on the best possible terms. We have had a vast majority of the higher officers of both Army and Navy, while a larger proportion of the soldiers and sailors were drawn from the North. Equally so of clerks, auditors, and comptrollers filling the Executive Department; the record shows for the last fifty years that of three thousand thus employed we have had more than two-thirds of the same, while we have but one-third of the white population of the Republic. Again, look at another item, and one, be assured, in which we have a great and vital interest. It is that of revenue, or means of supporting Government. From official documents we learn that a fraction over three-fourths of the revenue collected for the support of Government has uniformly been raised from the North.

"Pause now while you can, gentlemen, and contemplate carefully and



candidly these important items. Leaving out of view for the present the countless millions of dollars you must expend in war with the North, with tens of thousands of your sons and brothers slain in battle, and offered up as sacrifices upon the altar of your ambition; and for what, we ask again? Is it for the overthrow of the American Government, established by our common ancestry, cemented and built up by their sweat and blood, and founded on the broad principles of right, justice and humanity? And as such I must declare here as I have often done before, and which has been repeated by the greatest and wisest of statesmen and patriots in this and other lands, it is the best and freest Government, the most equal in its rights, the most just in its decisions, the most lenient in its measures, and the most inspiring in its principles to elevate the race of men, that the sun of heaven ever shone upon. Now, for you to attempt to overthrow such a Government as this, under which we have lived for more than three-quarters of a century, in which we have gained our wealth, our standing as a nation, our domestic safety while the elements of peril are around us, with peace and tranquillity, accompanied with unbounded prosperity, and rights unassailed, is the height of madness, folly, and wickedness, to which I can neither lend my sanction nor my vote."

If further or more conclusive proof is required, we have it over the signatures of Wm. L. Yancey, P. A. Rost, and A. Dudley Mann, in their joint letter addressed to the London Times:

"It was from no fear that the slave would be liberated that secession took place. The very party in power has proposed to guarantee slavery forever in the States, if the South would but remain in the Union. Mr. Lincoln's message proposes no freedom to the slave, but announces subjection of the owner to the North. Even after the battle of Bull Run both branches of the Congress at Washington passed resolutions that the war is only waged to uphold that (pro-slavery) Constitution and to enforce the laws, (many of them pro-slavery,) and out of one hundred and seventy-two votes in the lower House they received all but two, and in the Senate all but one vote."

I will read additional authority. Senator Hammond, of South Carolina, in a speech made in that State, October 24, 1858, said:

"The Rock of Gibraltar does not stand so firm on its basis as our slave system. In this very quarter of a century our slaves have doubled in numbers, and each slave has more than doubled in value. The very negro who as a prime laborer would have brought \$400 in 1848, would now, with thirty years upon him, sell for \$800."

Mr. A. H. Stephens, in a speech delivered by him in 1859, said:

"I do not believe that slavery has sustained any injury from these agitations. On the contrary it had been greatly strengthened and fortified by the action of the Government."

And we all know the oft-quoted expression of Mr. Rhett, of South Carolina, in the convention of that State:

"The secession of South Carolina is not the event of a day. It is not anything produced by Mr. Lincoln, or by the non-execution of the fugitive slave law. It is a matter which has been gathering head for twenty years."

We must therefore, look for the motives of the insurrectionists elsewhere than in their fears for the security of slavery; and, sir, I am greatly mistaken if, in the prosecution of this inquiry, we shall not discover a design looking beyond the dissolution of the Union and the establishment of an independent southern confederacy. Their dissatisfaction went further than hostility to the Union; it

consisted, in fact, in hostility to the fundamental principles of republican government. It was a revolt against popular institutions, a repudiation of democracy. The ultimate result contemplated was the establishment of an oligarchy, if not a monarchy. Their present form of political organization is a temporary expedient devised to cover up the fundamental purpose of the conspirators, and to be used as the deceptive agency by which they will accomplish the destruction of the equal rights and liberties of the southern people. This purpose, at first faintly shadowed forth, is becoming every day more and still more apparent. It is wonderful that it has not attracted more of the public attention. It seems to be better understood and better appreciated abroad than at home. It furnishes the explanation of the sympathy and favor with which foreign monarchists regard the great rebellion. They recognize the true design of it, and see in its success not only the destruction of the unity of the Republic, but that it will be a serious if not fatal blow against republican institutions, here and elsewhere, now and forever.

Perhaps the public indifference in this respect may arise from incredulity as to the reality of such a purpose. It may not, therefore, be amiss to advert to some of the evidences indicating such a design. I need hardly remind Senators of the arbitrary provisions existing in the fundamental law of many of the southern States, such as the qualifications of members of the General Assembly of South Carolina, requiring that they should own slaves and land, and the apportionment of representation upon the basis of property, as in Virginia. Nor is it necessary to do more than allude to the indisputable fact that free labor in the South is everywhere esteemed as degrading. The teachings of Mr. Calhoun against the *jus majoris* found a wide-spread lodgment in the minds of southern statesmen. An aristocratic sentiment, carefully and sedulously inculcated, had become everywhere prevalent, especially in the Gulf States, prior to their ordinance of secession.

I remember well with what vehemence Mr. Preston, of South Carolina, one of the commissioners sent by those States to the Virginia convention in the spring of 1861, and one of the most eloquent men I ever heard, in an address to that body, forshadowed the aristocratic designs of the revolutionists; and I remember, too, with what sadness and dismay I saw the manifest favor with which the promulgation of his imperial utterances was received. Among them was the following:

"In the free States the simple, isolated, exclusive, sole political principle is a pure democracy of mere numbers, save a scarcely discernible modification by a vague and undefined form of representation. In these States there can be no departure from this principle in its extremest intensity. The admission of the slightest adverse element is forbidden by the whole genius of the people and their institutions. It is as delicate in its sensitiveness as personal right in England, or slavery in Carolina; it is the vitalizing principle, the breath of the life of northern socialism. The almighty power of numbers is the basis of all social agreement in the northern States. A fearful illustration of this is at this moment exhibiting its results in the Government under which you are consenting to live. Tha

Government was 'instituted and appointed' to protect and secure equally the interests of the parts. By the agency of mere numbers one section has been restricted and another expanded in territory; one section has been unduly and oppressively taxed, and one section has been brought to imminent peril, and in this hour the people of the North are consulting whether they can subjugate the people of the South by the right of numbers.

"The government by the people' is equally the rule of the South, but the modification of the 'rule of numbers' is so essential in the slave States that it cannot coexist with the same principle in its unrestricted form. In the South it is controlled, perhaps made absolutely subject, by the fact that the recognition of a specific property is essential to the vitalization of the social and political organisms. If, then, you attempt to institute the rule of either form into the organism of the other, you instantly destroy the section you invade. To proclaim to the North that numbers shall not be absolute would be as offensive as to proclaim the extinction of slavery in the South. The element of property would neutralise the entire political system at the North; its exclusion would subvert the whole organism of the South."

He continued by saying :

"Southern civilization cannot exist without slavery. None but an equal race can labor at the South. Destroy involuntary labor, and the Anglo-Saxon civilization must be remitted to the latitudes from which it sprung."

This same convention appointed a committee to report to an adjourned session what amendments ought to be made in the constitution of Virginia. The chairman of this committee was Mr. Stuart, formerly Secretary of the Interior. The report made by him recommended very fundamental restrictions upon the right of suffrage, took from the people the right of electing most of the public officers whom they had hitherto chosen, and among other enunciations declared :

"Governments are instituted for the protection of the rights of person and property; and any system must be radically defective which does not give ample security to both. The great interests of every community may be classed under the heads of labor and capital, and it is essential to the well-being of society that the proper equilibrium should be established between these important elements. The undue predominance of either must eventually prove destructive of the social system. Capital belongs to the few, labor to the many. In those systems in which capital has the ascendancy, the Government must, to some extent, partake of the character of oligarchy, while in those in which labor is predominant, the tendency is to what Mr. John Randolph graphically describes as 'the despotism of king numbers.'

"In the opinion of your committee, no system of government can afford permanent and effectual security to life, liberty, and property which rests on the basis of unlimited suffrage, and the election of officers of every department of the Government by the direct vote of the people."

\* \* \* \* \*

"This tendency to a conflict between labor and capital has already manifested itself in many forms, comparatively harmless, it is true, but nevertheless clearly indicative of a spirit of licentiousness which must, in the end, ripen into agrarianism. It may be seen in the system of free schools, by which children of the poor are educated at the expense of the rich."

When our fleet was menacing Port Royal, Governor Pickens, of South Carolina, in his message to the Legislature, made this recommendation :

"As far as the northern States are concerned their Government is hopelessly gone; and if we fail, with all our conservative elements to save us,

then, indeed, there will be no hope for an independent and free republic on this continent, and the public mind will despondingly turn to the stronger and more fixed forms of the Old World.

"In this point of view I most respectfully urge that you increase the power and dignity of the State through all her administrative offices, and adhere firmly to all the conservative principles of our constitution."

So palpable were these manifestations of hostility to republican government then becoming that Governor Brown, of Georgia, not then, I suppose, fully initiated into the secret purposes of the leaders of the rebellion, (if he be yet, judging from his late message,) indignantly denounced them. His language was that some of these men desired to establish

"A strong central Government, probably, preferring, if they did fear to risk an avowal of their sentiments, a limited monarchy similar to that of Great Britain, or other form of Government that will accomplish the same thing under a different name."

Not long afterwards the Raleigh Standard, one of the leading journals of North Carolina, thus expressed its apprehensions:

"We have for months had fears that an organization existed in the southern States, or may be in process of formation, to pull down the fabric of the southern confederacy, to establish in its stead a despotism or monarchy." \* \* \* \* "We assert what we know to be true, that there are destructive office-holders in North Carolina who ignore the confederate constitution and republican institutions. They are avowedly in favor of a military despotism or king. They are tired of freedom of speech and free press, and they would to-morrow, if they could, vote to change the character of our institutions. That these views are entertained by a large number of the secession destructive office holders, both in the army and in civil life, we have the best of reasons for believing. These views are held both by the destructives of the old Whig school and by fiery open-mouthed States rights Democrats."

Recent developments have established the fact, ~~that~~ the rebellion was not the fortuitous result of a sudden impulse, but was the deliberate consummation of a long meditated and carefully matured plan, and that the fundamental purpose from the beginning was to repudiate the principles of democratic government. During the session of the Legislature of South Carolina in 1850-51 Mr. Perry, a member of that body, rebuked Mr. Memminger, the present secretary of the treasury of the rebel government, in the following significant terms:

"I was very much surprised, Mr. Chairman, at the honorable member's speech from Charleston (Colonel Memminger) who said that he had rather South Carolina was attached to the Government of Great Britain, as she was previous to the revolutionary war, than to remain a member of this Union. Such an expression neither becomes an American nor a Carolinian, and must have been uttered in the heat of argument and declamation, without due consideration."

It seems the sober second thought has not cured that distinguished financier of his propensity for oligarchical forms of government.

The leading political organ of the South, the Democratic Review, in the January number, 1850, forgot its usual prudent reserve, and promulgated its views in explicit language. It said:

"The formation of the cotton States with Cuba into a great cotton, tobacco, sugar, and coffee-producing Union, calling forth the boundless

ertility of Cuba, and renovating the West India islands with the labor of the blacks of the southern States, in those hands in which their labor and numbers have thriven so well, and this empire annexed to Britain by treaties of perfect reciprocity, giving the latter the command of the eastern commerce by way of Nicaragua, and all the benefits of possessions without the responsibility of slave ownership, would be a magnificent exchange for the useless province of Canada."

In August, 1862, De Bow's Review, true to the policy and principles of its prototype of 1850, reiterates the same political dogmas in terms equally plain. This is its language :

"A nation trammelled with a written constitution is like a man with his hands manacled. Its capacity for action is cramped and diminished.

"The confederate constitution is a mere tub thrown over to the whale. No intelligent man who voted for it deemed it would be permanent, but only considered it a temporary expedient, a giving way for the time to popular prejudices, a bridge or pass-way between mobocracy and anarchy and conservative republicanism.

"No people can be well ruled by a Government of limited powers—by a constitutional Government."

A writer in the same journal, of large influence and reputation, in an elaborate article, published in 1860, had avowed similar sentiments in the following language :

"England has once tried to dispense with nobility, and France twice, but each experiment was a failure. In America we have the aristocracy of wealth and talents, and that aristocracy is somewhat hereditary. The landed aristocracy of the South, who own slaves, approach somewhat to the English nobility. Time must determine whether the quasi aristocracy of the South has sufficient power, permanency and privilege to give stability, durability and good order to society. It is sufficiently patriotic and conservative in its feelings, but we fear wants the powers, privileges and prerogatives that the experience of all other countries has shown to be necessary." \* \* \* \* "The most perfect system of government is to be found in the armies, because in them there is least of liberty and most of order, subordination, and obedience."

These are not the vagrant ebullitions of obscure and frenzied individuals. The principles thus avowed have the sanction, directly or indirectly, of the wisest and greatest men of the South. Among others I may refer to Judge Pratt. He expatiates upon the subject with all the calmness and precision of a philosopher. Hear him :

"The contest is not between the North and the South as geographical sections, for between two such sections merely there can be no contest ; nor between the people of the North and the people of the South, for our relations have been pleasant, and on neutral grounds there is still nothing to estrange us. We eat together, trade together, and practice yet in intercourse, with great respect, the courtesies of common life. But the real contest is between the two forms of society which have become established—the one at the North and the other at the South. Society is essentially different from Government, as different as is the nut from the burr, or the nervous body of the shell-fish from the bony structure which surrounds it ; and within this Government two societies had become developed as variant in structure and distinct in form as any two beings in animated nature. The one is a society composed of one race, the other of two races. The one is bound together but by the two great social relations of husband and wife and parent and child ; the other by the three relations of husband and wife and parent and child and master and slave. The one embodies in its political structure the principle that equality is the right of man, the other

that it is the right of equals only. The one embodying the principle that equality is the right of man, expands upon the horizontal plane of pure democracy; the other embodying the principle that it is not the right of man but of equals only, has taken to itself the rounded form of a social aristocracy. In the one there is hireling labor, in the other slave labor; in the one, therefore, in theory, at least, labor is voluntary; in the other involuntary. In the labor of the one there is the elective franchise, in the other there is not; and as labor is always in excess of direction in the one the power of Government is only with the lower classes; in the other the upper. In the one, therefore, the reins of Government come from the heels, in the other from the head of the society; in the one it is guided by the worst, in the other by the best intelligence; in the one it is from those who have the least, in the other from those who have the greatest stake in the continuance of existing order."

Nor are these sentiments of dissatisfaction with our system of republican equality and popular institutions confined to Quarterly Reviews. They fill the columns of the metropolitan daily papers, and are thence transferred to the country press. Even so late as May 23, 1863, the Richmond Examiner, emboldened by the partial successes of the confederate arms, with jubilant eagerness proclaims:

"The establishment of the confederacy is verily a distinct reaction against the whole course of the mistaken civilization of the age; and this is the true reason why we have been left without the sympathy of the nations until we conquered that sympathy with the sharp edge of our sword.

"For 'liberty, equality, fraternity,' we have deliberately substituted 'slavery, subordination, and government.' The social and political problems which rack and torture modern society we have undertaken to solve for ourselves in our own way and upon our own principles. That 'among equals equality is right; among those who are naturally unequal equality is chaos; that there are slave races born to serve, master races born to govern. Such are the fundamental principles which we inherit from the ancient world, which we lifted up in the face of a perverse generation that has forgotten the wisdom of its fathers. By those principles we live, and in their defense we have shown ourselves ready to die. Reverently we feel that our confederacy is a God-sent missionary to the nations, with great truths to preach. We must speak them boldly; and whoso hath ears to hear, let him hear."

In perfect harmony with all these expositions of the principles and purposes of the leaders of the rebellion, the literary journals of the South lend their pages and presses to the common onslaught against popular liberty. The Southern Literary Messenger, the leading literary periodical of Virginia, after adverting to the dangers of the extreme democratic and popular tendencies of the times, uses this language:

"It is against this tendency that we would warn our young Republic. Let us learn from history that popular principles are but poor guarantees of liberty.

"We would not be understood as uniting in the belief of the impossibility of a successful republic, that we cry out for the re-establishment of royalty in this free country, whose noble sons daily attest their detestation of tyranny in all forms by those terrible libations which it is the habit of liberty to exact from her votaries. We have no special objections to royalty when restrained by constitutional barriers. The glorious career of freedom in England, illustrating for centuries the beauty and truth of free government, demonstrates that royalty and liberty are incompatible. Certainly the condition of a subject of the Czar of Russia, the most absolute of

monarchs, is preferable to that of that democratic Government which we are, nevertheless, assured is the 'freest and best Government the world ever saw.'"

That is a very distinct allusion to the speech of the vice-president of the southern confederacy.

Again tracing the genealogy of the races of this country, the Puritan and the Cavalier, the writer closes his argument in this language:

"Who will insist that the Saxonized mawworms, creeping from the Mayflower on the cold, forbidding crags of the North, have any right to kinship with the whole souled Norman British Planters of a gallant race, on a welcoming sunny soil?"

Sir, the conspirators who devised the constitution of the confederate States are entitled to more credit for sagacity than we are accustomed to vouchsafe to them. They are not obnoxious to the reproaches which are so often cast upon them for the want of foresight in the construction of their system of confederate government. Their wisdom is to be measured by their motives; and when we apprehend the truth that the ultimate object of the rebel leaders was the establishment of an oligarchy, or a monarchy, we shall be able to understand the policy of their fundamental law, which contains within itself the irrepressible elements of its own destruction. Their object was to superinduce its overthrow, and to coerce their people to adopt some form of despotic government as a refuge from the greater evils of the disorder and anarchy which they have foreordained shall inevitably overtake them. In the language thus quoted from their review, their constitution was "a tub thrown over to the whale." They intend to compel the repudiation of "a Government of limited powers." X

Do we not therefore, Mr. President, find in this juster appreciation of the purposes of the rebellion, and in this juster apprehension of the consequences of its success, enhanced motives for resistance to it? For, if thus far in the history of the nation the policy of opposing the intervention of foreign Powers in the affairs of this hemisphere has been wise, if the existing efforts of France to establish an imperial dynasty in a distant and different part of the continent be just cause of apprehension and animadversion, what shall be said of the danger to our free institutions in the loyal States if a part of our own people, on a part of our soil, shall succeed in erecting a system of anti-republican government so near that the shadow of its throne will darken the portals of our Capitol?

Mr. President, my relation to some of the questions involving the merits of slavery as an institution, especially in my own State, has subjected me to the severe animadversion of both friends and foes. But the people whom I have the honor to represent have, I thank God, vindicated me with a unanimity hardly ever paralleled. They have made West Virginia a free State by a vote of 28,743 to 572. Sir, I am ready to acknowledge a change, not of opinion as to the character and merits of slavery in the abstract, (for in that respect I entertain the same opinions now that I have always done,) but of

my sympathies for slavery. There was a time when it had my sympathies. Once I was ready to resent the obloquy cast upon it and to resist the threatened encroachments on the slaveholder's rights. But now, sir, when from the lips of the second officer of this insurrectionary government I am assured that no southern man "can name one governmental act of wrong done by the Government of Washington of which the South has a right to complain;" and when, notwithstanding this, I look abroad upon the desolated fields, the sacked cities and villages, the scenes of blood and carnage, and the widowhood and orphanage with which the land is filled, all, all of which have been brought upon the country in order that a new government shall be erected upon the ruins of the Republic, having for its chief corner-stone the institution of slavery and discarding the principles of republican institutions, my sympathies for slavery are supplanted by the higher obligations of duty to resist by all lawful means a proposition so monstrous and humiliating. Whatever the slaveholder is entitled to by the laws and the Constitution, I will give him—nothing more. I will invade none of his legal rights. These must be sacredly regarded. I will infringe none of his constitutional guarantees. I will give "the devil his due." But if the force of naked law cannot preserve slavery, then, so far as I am concerned, it must fall. I will give it no aid in word or will, in deed or thought, beyond what the strict obligations of law will compel me to give to it. As for me, henceforth and forever it must stand, if it can stand, by the vigor of its own inherent strength and the support of the legal guarantees that surround it. If this be abolitionism, then I am an abolitionist.

And, sir, when its apologists and defenders, not satisfied with the legal securities upon which alone it has a right to rely, abandon the only tenable grounds which can be consistently urged for its existence in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, and challenge for it the approbation of mankind as an institution essential to the liberty of the white race and to any high degree of civilization and social and intellectual refinement, I do not feel inclined to allow the challenge to pass without question or rebuke. Mark you, Mr. President, with what superciliousness and with what terms of contempt this challenge is sometimes made! I read, sir, from a leading organ of southern sentiment, the Richmond Whig, of June 14, 1861; and the extract is quite exemplary of the general tone of southern journalism:

"This vast region, inhabited by a people who are bred from childhood to horsemanship and the use of arms, and who know what liberty is, and love and adore it, is portioned out for subjugation, by the disgusting Yankee race, who don't know how to load a gun, and look contemptible on horseback. That they may be drilled into respectable military machines by the Virginian"—

This was in the days of General Scott—  
 "who commands them is likely enough; but without disjoining the eternal fitness of things and dislocating the order of nature, that they should become capable of empire is simply absurd. Grant that mere force should enable them to overrun the land like a cloud of eastern locusts



their reign would pass with themselves. They possess not one quality that fits them for command. Since their beginning as a nation, and out of all their seething population, they have never yet produced a general or a statesman. That is an effort beyond their ability. But for organizing a hotel, working machinery, and other base mechanical contrivances, they are without equals in the world. And the very law of nature which invests them with excellence in those inferior departments of humanity condemns them to inferiority in those of a nobler and more exalted station."

Sir, when the assumed superiority of the slaveholding States, which these extracts imply, is attributed to the existence of slavery, it certainly will be neither impertinent nor unprofitable to inquire into the truth of the allegation.

Sir, I would not detract a jot or tittle from the just fame of the immortal names which adorn the history of the Southern States. I am, as an American citizen, proud of them all. They are a part of the rich heritage of our common country. But, sir, when slavery is assigned as the source of this greatness, and is thus made to invoke our homage and approbation as a political and social blessing, I must enter my emphatic demurrer. Sir, in what element or department of moral, political, or intellectual excellence have the slave States exhibited any superiority over the free States? Where is the illustration of the inimitable excellence of the influence of slavery upon individuals or upon society? It appears to me that there is something of temerity, not to say of judicial blindness, in these defiant boasts of the advocates of slavery. But as the appeal is made to facts, let facts settle the controversy.

Now, sir, the best system of political economy is one of the highest problems addressed to the mind of the statesman. Taking actual results as the surest test of wisdom here, what do they teach us? I shall not weary the Senate with details. I only ask you to contrast the slave States with the free States; slave labor with free labor. When you do so every constituent of national prosperity and power; every element of progress and development; increase of population; increase of wealth, education, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, the sciences, the arts, ay, the fine arts too, all, all attest beyond the reach of the caviler, the superiority of free labor over slave labor. The census is a standing refutation of the economical claims of slavery. Nor will it avail anything to attribute these advantages to soil or climate, or geographical position, for in all these respects no section of the earth is to be compared with the Southern States. But then we shall be told that these are mere physical achievements resulting from the peculiar adaptability of the "Yankee race" to mechanical and menial pursuits. It is in the higher fields of intellectual culture and refinement where the peculiar and beneficent influences of slavery are to be sought for and realized. Well, sir, let us survey some of these exalted fields. Is jurisprudence one of them? And was not Marshall a southern man? He was. But did slavery make him a jurist? Let his own estimation of the institution answer the question. In 1835, in an interview with Miss Harriet Martineau, he said:

"He had seen Virginia the leading State for half his life; he had seen

her become the second and sink to the fifth. Worse than this, there was no arresting her decline if her citizens did not put an end to slavery."

Besides, if Virginia had a Marshall, New York had a Kent, and Massachusetts a Story.

Then, sir, there is the field of history, which I suppose might not be beneath the ambition of the higher civilization of slavery. And yet what slave State has produced a Bancroft? What age or nation has furnished another Prescott? In the department of general literature, what country would not be proud to claim the nativity of Irving? And in poetry, where is the southern parallel of Longfellow?

Two or three nations have claimed the honor which undoubtedly belongs to Fulton. Shall his genius, which has revolutionized the economy of all civilized nations, and now controls their destinies in an eminent degree, be sneered at as merely mechanical, and, therefore, base and degrading? Upon the same principle the social position of Morse must be assigned to a servile rank. But one thing is certain, their nativity belongs to the North. Sir, if "cotton is king," he was a sovereign without dignity or dominion until the genius of Whitney placed a scepter in its hand in the form of the cotton gin.

Still advancing in the contrast, what shall be said respecting the eloquence of the two sections? Will slavery point to Henry as without a parallel? Sir, I shall not pause to perform the ungrateful and invidious task of seeking for his conpeer. But in our reverence for his memory let us not forget the lessons he taught when he said, in a letter to R. Pleasants:

"The time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil. I shall honor the Quakers for their noble efforts to abolish slavery."

Are instances of excellence in this department to be multiplied upon us? Does the name of Clay challenge comparison? Sir, he never had a more ardent admirer than myself, both for his eloquence and his manhood. But, although he was born in the South and lived and died in the South, yet he "knew no North—no South." And the thrilling echoes of his voice have hardly yet died away among the Halls of this Capitol, where he exclaimed:

"So long as God allows the vital current to flow through my veins I will never, never, never, by word or thought, by mind or will, aid in admitting one rood of free territory to the everlasting curse of human bondage."

Sir, I cannot forbear to read an extract from a speech of Mr. Benton referring to this grand passage in Mr. Clay's life. It was delivered by him in St. Louis in 1856. He says:

"It was a great and proud day for Mr. Clay, toward the latter days of his life, and if an artist could have been there to catch his expression as he uttered that sentiment, with its reflex on his face, and his countenance beaming with firmness of purpose, it would have been a glorious moment in which to transmit him to posterity—his countenance all alive and luminous with the ideas that beat in his bosom; that was a proud day. I could have wished that I had spoken the same words. I speak them now, telling you they were his, and adopting them as my own."

But it seems that statesmen are the special results of the influ-

ences of slavery. And who are the eminent men to be adduced as the apposite illustrations of this assumption? The memory instinctively recalls the names of Madison and Jefferson. I ask, does the name of Hamilton suffer by a comparison with them? I may enlarge the scope of inquiry and challenge the world to produce another Franklin.

“Eripuit celo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.”

But, sir, what was the opinion of Jefferson and Madison, those illustrious, if not incomparable statesmen, respecting the institution of slavery? The former, in a letter written in 1814 to Edward Coles, Esq., said :

“The hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. It shall have all my prayers, and these are the only weapons of an old man. It is an encouraging observation that no good measure was ever proposed which if duly pursued failed in the end.”

I have heard that sentiment of Mr. Jefferson stigmatized as the result of his dotage; but I will quote now from his Notes on Virginia, written when he was quite a young man, in which he said :

“Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever. Doubtless a God of justice will awake to their [the slaves] distress, and by diffusing a 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 blind fatality.”

Mr. Madison declared in the Federal Convention that he “thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man.” (3 Madison Papers, 1429.)

In the debate in Congress on the memorial of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, 1790, drawn up by Benjamin Franklin, in favor of “restoration to liberty of those unhappy men who in this land of freedom, are degraded into perpetual bondage,” Mr. Madison said :

“The dictates of humanity, the principles of the people, the national safety and happiness, and prudent policy, require it of us. The Constitution has particularly called our attention to it.”

And, sir, that other name which is incomparable—a name belonging not to the North or the South, nor to one clime or age, but to all climes and all ages to come, and to all races of mankind—Washington, shall we forget that he wrote to R. Pleasants as follows :

“There is not a man living that wishes more sincerely than I do to see plan adopted for the abolition of slavery; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority, and this, so far as my suffrage will go, shall not be wanting.”

Again, to Sir John St. Clair, he wrote :

“I never mean, unless some particular circumstance should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law.”

Sir, it is a remarkable fact that nearly all of the illustrious men of the slaveholding States who are so constantly and boastfully held up to our admiration as examples of the elevating influences of

southern institutions have left the most unequivocal testimony of their disapprobation of slavery. Is it not so, sir? Even at the risk of trespassing on the patience of the Senate, I propose to prove it to be so. And the Senate, I trust, will the more readily indulge me since I have been and still am wantonly assailed as having forsaken the old paths of my fathers and begun to follow strange gods, even the false gods of northern fanaticism. Sir, I deny the imputation. I am standing to-day where my fathers stood, a humble disciple of the political doctrines which they taught. If other evidence than that which I have already given be required to prove this assertion, I am ready to produce it. Sir, I have long suffered in silence the taunting cry that I am guilty of political infidelity, that I am untrue to my section, that I have been false to the interests of those I have represented, and am wandering after an *ignis fatuus* engendered in the hot-bed of modern abolitionism. Sir, what are the facts?

Before the Declaration of Independence, while Virginia was yet a colony, the House of Burgesses declared:

"The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in these colonies, where it was unhappily introduced in their infant State. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa. Yet our repeated efforts to effect this, by prohibiting and by imposing duties which might amount to prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by his Majesty's negative, thus preferring the advantages of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature deeply wounded by this infamous practice."

George Mason, the author of the bill of rights of Virginia, and one of her most eminent early statesmen, has left this record of his opinion of slavery:

"Slavery discourages arts and manufactures. The poor despise labor when performed by slaves. They prevent the immigration of whites, who really enrich and strengthen a country. They produce the most pernicious effects on manners. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of Heaven on a country. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities."

President Monroe, in the constitutional convention of Virginia in 1829-30, used this language:

"We have found that this evil has preyed upon the very vitals of the Union. It has been prejudicial to all the States in which it has existed."

Benjamin Watkins Leigh, a member of the same body, and a very distinguished man too, in discussing the matter used this language:

"I wish, indeed, that I had been born in a land where domestic and negro slavery is unknown. I wish that Providence had spared my country this moral and political evil. It is supposed that our slave labor enables us to live in luxury and ease, without industry, without care. Sir, the evil of slavery is greater to the master than to the slave."

In the convention of Virginia which adopted the Constitution of the United States, Patrick Henry took the ground that if the General Government was clothed with power "to provide for the general defense," it would have authority "to pronounce all slaves free." In reply, Governor Randolph said:

hope there is none here who, considering the subject in the calm light of philosophy, will advance an objection so dishonorable to Virginia; that at the moment they are securing the rights of their citizens, an objection will not be started that these unfortunate men now held in bondage by the operation of the General Government may be made free."

Nor were such opinion peculiar to Virginia. They were entertained by the leading men of the entire South. William Pinkney, in the Maryland House of Delegates, in 1789, made this declaration:

1232  
1233  
"Never will our country be productive, never will its agriculture, its commerce, or its manufactures flourish, so long as they depend on reluctant bondmen for their progress. 'Even the earth,' says Montesquieu, 'which teems with profusion under the cultivating hand of the free laborer, shrinks into barrenness from the contaminating sweat of the slave.' The sentiment is not more figuratively beautiful than substantially just."

Luther Martin, in a speech before the Legislature of Maryland on his return from the Federal Convention, thus expressed himself:

"Slavery is inconsistent with the genius of republicanism, and has a tendency to destroy those principles on which it is supported, as it lessens the sense of the equal rights of mankind and habituates us to tyranny and oppression."

Judge Gaston, of North Carolina, in a speech before the literary societies of that State, said:

"Disguise the truth as we may, and throw the blame where we will, it is slavery which, more than any other cause, keeps us back in the career of improvement. It stifles industry, and oppresses enterprise; it is fatal to economy and providence; it discourages skill, impairs our strength as a community, and poisons morals at the fountain head."

Even South Carolina has furnished illustrious witnesses to the pernicious effects of slavery. Governor Hammond used this language in regard to the effects of slavery upon the white population:

"They obtain a precarious subsistence by occasional jobs, by hunting, by fishing, by plundering fields or folds, and too often by, what is in its effects far worse, trading with slaves, and inducing them to plunder for their benefit."

Mr. William Geary, of the same State, another distinguished gentleman, said:

"A man who is an observer of things could hardly pass through our country without being struck with the fact that all the capital, enterprise, and intelligence are employed in directing slave labor; and the consequence is that a large portion of our poor white people are wholly neglected, and are suffered to while away an existence in a state but one step in advance of the Indian of the forest. It is an evil of vast magnitude, and nothing but a change in public sentiment will effect its cure."

Mr. Farren, another southern man, said:

"In the more southern portion of this region the non-slaveholders possess, generally, but very small means, and the land which they possess is almost universally poor, and so sterile that a scanty subsistence is all that can be derived from its cultivation; and the more fertile soil being in the possession of the slaveholder, must forever remain out of the possession of those who have none."

Mr. Jefferson when he died desired that there should be two inscriptions on his tombstone; one of them was, that he was the author of the bill for religious liberty in Virginia; and the other, the

bill abolishing the rights of primogeniture. Sir, the proper effects of the latter bill can never be felt and enjoyed in the slave States until slavery is abolished. Until then the poor white man will always be kept in subjection; the land and capital will be in the hands of the slaveholders.

Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, wrote to his son in 1770, "You know, my dear son, I abhor slavery."

Sir, when a northern man of distinction, influenced by his amiable feelings of compromise, made somewhat of an apology on the floor of Congress for the existence of slavery in the South, Mr. John Randolph rose in his place, and said:

"I envy neither the head nor the heart of that man from the North who rises here to defend slavery upon principle."

The delegates to the General Congress assembled in 1774, two years before the Declaration of Independence, ordained and subscribed certain articles of association. The second article was as follows:

"2. That we will neither import nor purchase any slave after the first day of December next, after which we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it."

These articles were signed by the southern delegates as follows:

Maryland: Matthew Tilghman, Thomas Johnson, jr., William Paca, and Samuel Chase.

Virginia: Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, jr., Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton.

"North Carolina: William Hooper, Joseph Hawes, and Richard Caswell.

"South Carolina: Henry Middleton, Thomas Lynch, Christopher Gadsden, John Rutledge, and Edward Rutledge."

Sir, I will not trespass further on the time and patience of the Senate by the citation of other evidences of the anti-slavery sentiments of the fathers of the Republic. You will observe that I have confined myself to southern authorities. I have not referred to the opinion of a man north of Mason and Dixon's line. These are the expressed opinions of the founders of our Government. At their feet and around the altars consecrated by their virtue and wisdom. I learned the lessons of the political faith for which I have been arraigned; and for the profession of and adherence to these principles of Washington and Madison, Marshall and Mason, am I assailed as a political reprobate. Sir, I might well retort upon my accusers. They are the real apostates. It is they who are the innovators and renegades from the early principles and policy of the South, as enunciated and maintained by the leading men of the South. But, sir, it is said we have received new light on the subject. It has been recently ascertained that slavery is a divine institution. Holy men, it is said, in holy orders, pronounce their blessing upon the Heaven-ordained institution. But, sir, it will be hard, I think, to find anywhere in the Bible a warranty for African slavery as it exists in the United States; and I can but believe with Mr. Madison, who said in 1835 that "the clergy perverted the Bible, because it is altogether against slavery."

I will say nothing of those occasional barbarities which are inseparably incident to the relation of master and slave. Instances of cruelty occur, beyond question, which are shocking to humanity. But like instances of cruelty and barbarism are constantly occurring among the free population of the North, in every department of society. Such exceptional cases afford no fair criterion of the general character of the society where they happen. Sir, I take pleasure in bearing testimony to the humanity and kindness with which a very large proportion of southern masters treat their slaves. And I doubt now, as I have always doubted whether the effect of immediate universal emancipation will not be to greatly diminish the comfort and happiness of the slave for the present if not for many generations. I had hoped heretofore to see some plan of gradual emancipation adopted by the States, preceded and accompanied by some process of moral and intellectual culture which should prepare and qualify the poor, miserable, and ignorant slave for the duties and responsibilities of his new position. I fear, however, that the logic of events and the exigencies of the country do seem to indicate that such delay is now impolitic if not impossible. The condition of our own race is too critical to be embarrassed by much attention to the welfare of any other. But, sir, that is not the question I was discussing. I was inquiring if slavery had, as its friends say it has, the divine sanction. And, sir, while I shall not stop to controvert the assumption that negroes are of an inferior race, yet I do say they are human beings, that they are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. That fact has the divine sanction beyond all caviling. The Bible teaches the unity of the human race. And further, slaves, negroes, have souls, to save. They are the purchase of the Redeemer's blood—of him who, by the Grace of God, tasted death for every man. That is another fact verified by the Bible and having the divine sanction. We and the slave are children of the same heavenly Father, equally dependent on Him, and equally helpless in His sight; endowed with the same natural affections and sympathies. It is the legal consequence of slavery which clothe it with its blackest horrors.

Sir, when I know that by the actual written, laws of many of the States where slavery exists—not alone by the casual and arbitrary exercise of individual cruelty, but by positive statutory law—this race of men, these children of the same federal head and same heavenly Father with ourselves, these subjects and objects of redeeming grace, are debarred from the benefit of the marital relation in some States under heavy penalties, and by like stringent provisions of law forbidden to learn to read the word of God; when, sir, I have a hundred times seen the regularly authorized officers of the law, in the lawful discharge of their duties, seize and drag away from the arms of the father of her children the miserable mother by process for debt, and seize and carry away from her bosom the helpless infant, and sell one here and another there—one to be carried to the cotton-fields of Georgia, the other to the sugar-mills of Louisiana; when I have seen all this done under

authority of law—have seen females on the sale-block, at public vendue, subjected to the close inspection and manipulation of every limb and part by shameless and unfeeling speculators in human souls and bodies, and have heard men say, have heard ministers of the gospel say, have heard grave and honorable Senators say that this African slavery was a divine institution, I have been astounded that there ever was credulity to believe or presumption to avow a blasphemy so abhorrent to every essential attribute of the Supreme Being. Sir, if I could believe that such a recognized and legalized system of inhumanity as this had the divine sanction, I would accept the advice given to the patriarch of old in the hour of his extremity, and “curse God and die.” No, sir; the founders of our great Republic never approved an institution so demoralizing in its nature, so cruel in its incidents, so adverse to all the interests of a wise political economy, so anti-republican in its spirit and tendencies, and so repugnant to the principles of Christianity. They condemned it, and deplored its existence, with hardly an exception. Looking forward to the day when the country should be relieved from it, Mr. Madison said :

“I object to the word slave appearing in a Constitution which I trust is to be the charter of freedom to unborn millions; nor would I willingly perpetuate the memory of the fact that slavery ever existed in the country. It is a great evil, and under the providence of God I look forward to some scheme of emancipation which shall free us from it. Do not, therefore, let us appear as if we regarded it perpetual by using in our free Constitution an odious word opposed to every sentiment of liberty.”

So Washington, in his letter to La<sup>\*</sup>Fayette respecting the ordinance forbidding involuntary servitude in the Northwestern Territory: “The prevailing opinion in Virginia is against the spread of slavery in the new Territory; and I trust that we shall have a confederacy of free States.” So, too, we have the fact of the hostility to slavery of the great men who established our national Government emphatically attested by Mr. A. H. Stephens in his rather notorious speech at Savannah since the commencement of the rebellion :

“The prevailing ideas entertained by Jefferson and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution were that the enslavement of the African was a violation of the law; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically. Our new government is founded upon exactly opposite ideas; its foundations are law, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth that the negro is not the equal of the white man; that slavery is his natural condition.”

Thus, sir, I think I may safely say that recreancy to the South and to the principles and policy of the South, as enunciated and defined by her early leading statesmen, who were the founders of her State governments and of the Federal Government, belongs not to me—not to me, Mr. President—but to those modern converts of slavery whose zeal for their new-born faith seems to have power to manifest itself only in the approbrious, unvarying, Guinea-fowl cry of “abolitionist,” “abolitionist,” against all who reverence the traditions of the past or adhere to the principles of the fathers of the Republic.

But, sir, I am sustained in my views of slavery by later enuncia-



tions of the opinions of many of the leading men of the South, and especially of the more prominent men of Virginia, my native State. And, sir, I now propose to vindicate my present position by reference to some of those more recent expressions of opinion.

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The first to which I shall allude is the Richmond Enquirer of January 7, 1832. Everybody knows what the Richmond Enquirer was, and everybody used to know Thomas Ritchie, and between the man and his paper there was very little public sentiment in Virginia that he did not dictate or control. In this paper of that date I find the following editorial article, as any Senator can find by reference to the bound volume in the library:

"It is probable from what we hear that the committee on the colored population will report some plan for getting rid of the free people of color. But is that all that can be done? Are we forever to suffer the greatest evil which can scourge our land not only to remain but to increase in its dimensions? 'We may shut our eyes and avert our faces if we please,' writes an eloquent South Carolinian, on his return from the North a few weeks ago, 'but there it is, the dark and growing evil at our doors; and meet the question we must, at no distant day. God only knows what it is the part of white men to do on that momentous and appalling subject. Of this I am very sure, that the differences—nothing short of frightful—between all that exists on one side of the Potomac and all on the other is owing to that cause alone. The disease is deep-rooted; it is at the heart's core; it is consuming, and has all along been consuming, our vitals, and I could laugh—if I could laugh on such a subject—at the ignorance and folly of the politician who ascribes to the act of the Government that which is the inevitable effect of the eternal laws of nature. What is to be done? Oh, my God, I don't know, but something must be done! Yes, something must be done, and it is the part of no honest man to deny it, of no free press to conceal it. When this dark population is growing upon us, when every new census is but gathering its appalling numbers upon us; when within a period equal to that in which the Federal Constitution has been in existence those numbers will increase to more than two million in Virginia; when our sister States are closing the doors on our blacks for sale, and when our whites are moving westwardly in greater numbers than we like to hear of; when this, the fairest land on all this continent for soil and climate and situation combined, might become a sort of garden spot if it were worked by the hands of white men alone, can we, ought we, to sit quietly down and fold our arms?'"

This editorial of the Richmond Enquirer was prompted by a rising of the slaves, known as the "Nat Turner insurrection" or "Southampton massacre." This event produced a profound sensation throughout the State of Virginia. At the session of the Legislature next after its occurrence numerous memorials from all parts of the State were presented, asking the Legislature to adopt some means to relieve the State from the evils of slavery. A select committee was raised, to whom all these memorials were referred. The result will appear from the following abstract which I have made from the journal of the House of Delegates.

Virginia Legislature of January 25, 1832;

"Resolved, (as the opinion of this committee,) That it is inexpedient for the present to make any legislative enactments for the abolition of slavery.

"Mr. Preston offered as a substitute the following:

"Resolved, (as the opinion of the committee,) That it is expedient to adopt some legislative enactments for the abolition of slavery.

"Mr. Witcher moved that the whole matter be indefinitely postponed—ayes 60, noes 71.

"Among the noes were the names of Wood of Albemarle, Randolph of Albemarle, Garland, Rives, Bryce of Goochland, Marshall, Leigh, Preston, Faulkner, Rutherford, Moncure, &c., &c.

"The question then recurring on the adoption of Mr. Preston's amendment, the vote stood—ayes 58, noes 73. Among the ayes are the names of Randolph, Garland, Faulkner, Good, Moore, McDowell, Preston, &c.

"Mr. Bryce, of Goochland, then moved to amend the report of the committee as follows:

"Profoundly sensible of the great evils arising from the condition of the colored population of this Commonwealth, induced by humanity as well as policy to an immediate effort for the removal, in the first place, as well of those who are now free as of such who may hereafter become free, believing that this effort, while it is in just accordance with the sentiment of the community on the subject, will absorb all our present means, and that a further action for the removal of the slaves should await a more definite development of public opinion, *Resolved, &c.*

"Ayes 67, noes 60. Among the ayes were Randolph, Faulkner, Bryce, Preston, Leigh, McDowell, &c.

"The question then recurring on the report as amended, it was adopted—ayes 65, noes 58."

Thus it appears to have been the deliberate sentiment of Virginia in 1832, as these proceedings demonstrate, that slavery was an unmitigated evil; and the only reason preventing the Legislature from removing it from the State was the want of ways and means to do it.

While the report of the committee referred to in the proceedings which I have recited was under consideration, the merits and demerits of slavery were freely discussed by the leading men of Virginia. I beg leave to read copious extracts from the speeches delivered, all of which may be found in the *Richmond Enquirer*, a file of which is in the Congressional Library.

Mr. Moore, of Rockbridge said:

"Is it not due sir, to our character, as a moral, a just, a sincere and magnanimous people, that we should yield obedience to those principles contained in our bill of rights, and which we have solemnly declared to be applicable to and obligatory upon all mankind? Can we be justified in the eyes of man or Heaven in withholding from our negroes rights which we have declared to be the common property of all the human race; and that too in violation of the fundamental principles of our Government?"

In the same speech he said:

"No man can doubt sir, but that the deterioration in the appearance of the country is owing mainly to the careless manner in which the soil is cultivated by slaves, and the indolence of the white population; nor can we hesitate to ascribe the flourishing condition of the non-slaveholding States, which are everywhere covered with highly cultivated farms, thriving villages, and an industrious white population, to the absence of slavery?"

Mr. Bolling said:

"There is yet another evil growing out of our present system of slavery. It drives from us the laboring man, the honest, industrious poor. The hard struggle they have to make for the bare necessities of life, to say nothing of its luxuries, puts an effectual extinguisher upon all the humble aspirations of their ambition. The sparseness of the white population opposes almost insurmountable obstacles in the way of the education of their children."

Jefferson Randolph, the grandson of Mr. Jefferson, and one of the leading men in Virginia, said :

“Is it wise to fold our arms in indifference upon it as an irremediable evil? To shut our eyes in imitation of the sagacity of the ostrich, who, if it hides its eye behind a pebble, imagines its huge body concealed from its enemies? Would silence restore the death-like pall of the negro mind? It might be wise to let it sleep in its torpor, but has not its dark chaos been illumined? Does it not move and feel and think? Has it not existence? The hour of the eradication of the evil is advancing; it must come. Whether it is effected by the energy of our minds, or by the bloody scenes of Southampton and St. Domingo, is a tale for future history.”

His allusion was to the excitement produced on the mind of the African race in Virginia, growing out of what was called the Nat Turner insurrection and the Southampton massacre. If the murder of a few families and the tocsin of war in some of the eastern counties of Virginia was pointed to as cause of alarm on account of its influence on the mind of the slave, what must be the condition of that aroused mind to-day, after three years of bloody war, and after the thunders of cannon all through their midst?

Mr. Rives said :

“On the multiplied and desolating evils of slavery he was not disposed to say much; the cause and its deteriorating consequences were within the observation and experience of the members of the House and the people of Virginia, and it did seem to him that there could be now two opinions about it.”

Mr. Brodnax said :

“That slavery in Virginia is an evil and a transcendent evil it would be idle and more than idle for any human being to doubt or deny. It is a mildew which has blighted in its course every region it has touched from the creation of the world. This is the incubus which paralyzes Virginia's energies, her every effort at advancement.”

All of us are acquainted with the reputation of Charles J. Faulkner. Some of us have been in the habit of saying harsh things of the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, [Mr. SUMNER,] for the harsh things he has seen proper to say sometimes in regard to slavery. Here is a Virginian on the soil of Virginia who uttered language as terse and severe as I ever heard anywhere, and in the very hall of Legislature of Virginia he used the language which I beg leave to read to the Senate :

“Slavery, it is admitted, is an evil; it is an institution which presses heavily against the best interests of the State. It banishes free white labor, it exterminates the mechanic, the artisan, the manufacturer. It deprives them of occupation. It deprives them of bread. It converts the energy of a community into indolence, its power into imbecility, its efficacy into weakness. Sir, being thus injurious, have we not a right to demand its extermination? Shall society suffer that the slaveholder may continue to gather his vintennial crop of human flesh? What is his mere pecuniary claims compared with the great interests of the common weal? Must the country languish, droop, die that the slaveholder may flourish? Shall all interests be subservient to one; all rights subordinate to the slaveholder? Have not the mechanics, have not the middle classes, their rights, rights incompatible with the existence of slavery?

“Sir, so great and overshadowing are the evils of slavery, so sensibly are they felt by those who have traced the causes of our national decline,

so perceptible is the poisonous operation of its principles in the varied and diversified interests of this Commonwealth, that all whose minds are not warped by prejudices and interest must admit that the disease has now assumed that mortal tendency as to justify the application of any remedy which under the great law of State necessity we might consider advisable."

Mr. Preston, afterwards a member of Mr. Fillmore's cabinet exclaimed :

"The gentleman from Brunswick [Mr. Gholson] after depicting in glowing colors the prosperous character of our country, the beauty of our daughters, the high and manly chivalry of our sons, concludes by telling us that the only wealth of eastern Virginia was in the increase of her slaves. In the name of God, Mr. Speaker, has it come to this? Does the wealth and the beauty and chivalry of Virginia derive its support and owe its existence to the increase of our slaves? If it be so, Mr. Speaker, I would relieve them of so heavy a reproach."

Mr. Summers said :

"It will not be denied, I think, that slavery tends to diffuse ignorance among those more immediately in contact with it. I do not mean to assert that a location in a slaveholding community is incompatible with the highest development of human intellect. Such a position would be controverted by facts." \* \* \* \* "But, sir, I speak, in reference to the great body of the people, and ask you to compare the general distribution of elementary education in the non-slaveholding States with the slaveholding States."

Sir, I will read one further extract, and that will be from a speech delivered in the same Legislature, by James McDowell, jr., of Rockbridge, subsequently Governor of Virginia, whose name is a household word in Virginia; whose purity of life, whose culture of mind, and whose unimpeached and unimpeachable character commanded the universal homage and respect not only of Virginians, but of all who knew him in the United States. Here is his language :

"Who, sir, looks at this property as a legislator, and marks its effects on our national advance, but weeps over it as the worst of patrimonies? Who that looks to the unhappy bondage of our unhappy people, in the midst of our society, and thinks of its incidents and its issues, but weeps over it as a curse upon him who inflicts as upon him who suffers it?"

"If I am to judge from the tone of our debate, from the concessions on all hands expressed, there is not a man in this body—not one, perhaps, that is even represented here—who would not have thanked the generations that have gone before us, if, acting as *public* men, they had brought this *bondage* to a close; who would not have thanked them, acting as private men on private notions, if they had relinquished the property which in their mistaken kindness has devolved upon us?"

"Proud as are the names for intellect and patriotism which enrich the volumes of our history, and reverentially as we turn to them at this period of waning reputation, that name, that man, above all parallel, would have been the chief who could have blotted out this curse from his country; those, above all others, would have received the homage of an eternal gratitude, who, casting away every suggestion of petty interest, had broken the yoke which in an evil hour had been imposed, and had translated as a *free man*, to another continent, the outcast and the wretched being who burdens ours with his presence and defiles it with his crimes."

"But, sir, it has been otherwise appointed; slavery has come down to us from our fathers; and the question now is, shall we in turn hand it over to our children? Hand it over to them aggravated in every attribute of evil? Shall we perpetuate the calamity we deplore, and become to posterity the objects, not of kindness, but of cursing?"

I ask, sir, if I am not vindicated in the action I have taken on this subject? Take away the names which I have recited to-day—the Marshalls, the Madisons, the Washingtons, the Leighs, the Henrys, the Randolphs, the McDowells, the Riveses, &c., and what is there left? What is there left but the mad, fanatical ravings of the Wises and the Pryors, *et id omne genus*? While I am sustained by these great names, while I am fortified by the principles which they taught, I think I can well afford to treat, if not with scorn, yet with indifference, the imputation that I am a renegade from the principles of my fathers, and false to the section in which I have lived.

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But, sir, all this does not absolve us from the obligations of the Constitution as it is. It is the law paramount; and whatsoever may be our theoretical views respecting slavery, the guarantees of the Constitution must be observed while those guarantees remain a part of it. Slavery is an evil; but a broken, demoralized Constitution would be a greater evil. It is for the integrity of the Constitution, to restore its power and authority, that I understand we are now waging this terrible war. Its prosecution can be justified on no other consideration; and we shall do well to take heed to the fact that civil war, beyond all other causes, is fruitful of pernicious and dangerous passions and antipathies, leading to a disregard of constitutional obligation. The sectional character of the rebellion adds another and still more malignant element to the inflammation of public sentiment ordinarily incident to revolts against the civil authority. And I think I utter no paradox when I say further, that the manifest justice of our cause constitutes in itself a source of danger. Justly exasperated at the wanton wickedness of the bad men who, in seeking to overthrow our wise and benignant Government, have plunged the country into all their sins and sorrows by which we are surrounded, we are liable to be transported by a just and patriotic indignation beyond the limits of a lawful resentment. And now it is to be feared that corrupt men, demagogues, unprincipled politicians, will be ready to avail themselves of this patriotic excitement, and under the cover and pretext of a holy zeal for the public good, seek to accomplish their own ambitious personal ends in defiance of the law. It is in times like this when written organic laws become valuable. It was to meet such contingencies especially that our Constitution was ordained.

In times of peace and harmony and prosperity, when there is little occasion or temptation to do wrong, but little restraint is required to prevent the commission of wrong. When the sea is smooth and the wind is fair the vessel glides safely on with little attention to compass or rudder; but when the tempest rises and the waves roll high, and especially when the crew mutinies, then it requires a steady, true hand at the helm, and the trumpet of the commander should utter no uncertain sound. So I may say now, when the great deep of the human passions is convulsed and lashed into frenzy and tumult by the shocks of battle, the nation's life depends upon a firm and unflinching adherence to the Constitution. This is the great sheet-anchor of the national safety. Nothing else can enable us to outride the storm that is beating upon us. Detached from this firm mooring our noble vessel of State, freighted with the happiness of the people, and with the final hopes of liberty, will be stranded on the breakers of political anarchy and ruin, and thenceforth forever its wrecked fragments, scattered along the shores of time, shall be quoted and commended by tyrants and despots as the miserable mementos of the futility of the last great effort of humanity to vindicate the capacity of man for self-government.

Now, therefore, has come the crisis when the value of our national Constitution is to be tested, and when the wisdom and foresight of its immortal framers are to be exemplified and consecrated in the successful application of its powers and adaptations to the overthrow of its enemies and to the preservation of the public liberty. Now, too, has arrived the hour in the history of the country when those who are entrusted with its destinies

should rise to the full stature of a wise and lofty statesmanship. My humble abilities and limited experience may forbid me from any worthy participation either in its duties or its honors. But, sir, I think I can properly conceive of what an American Senator ought to be, and of what, when I look around upon this august body, I feel assured he will be, in this great national trial. He will rise above the prejudices and passions of the hour. He will be incapable of the motives of mere revenge or retaliation. No narrow sectional influences will trammel his conduct. Fully instructed by the wisdom of the past, calmly meeting the exigencies of the present, and profoundly comprehending the behests of the future, he will march steadily forward to the accomplishment of the simple and only lawful purpose of the war—the suppression of the rebellion, the integrity of the Union, and the supremacy of the Constitution. No motive of unholy ambition will warp his purpose. No thirst for blood will taint the pure aspirations of his patriotic heart. No eagerness to inflict punishment beyond what is essential to enforce obedience to lawful authority will prompt his action or deform his policy. He will disregard the idle clamors of the mere partisan, and scorn the angry menaces of the political zealot. Recognizing the force of the maxim that “law is reason without passion,” he will be dispassionate in the administration of the law.

And, sir, let it not be said that such a course will fail to meet the exigencies of the country. There will be, there can be, no other course so successful. Let the Government clothe itself with the awful sanctions of the Constitution, and eschew all other motives than the vindication and re-establishment of its legitimate authority, and thus proclaim its pure, unimpassioned purpose in prosecuting the war, and the moral influence of such an attitude will be more potential than “an army with banners.” It will appall the guilty conscience of the States in rebellion; it will add tenfold force to every blow struck by our armies; it will silence the clamors of northern factionists, who are eagerly seeking for pretexts to embarrass the Administration; it will unite and consolidate all the friends of the Union; it will command the homage and sympathy of foreign nations; it will secure the blessing and favor of Heaven; and thus it will insure final victory. Animated by such a sentiment and guided by such a principle, the day is not distant when our great Republic, purified by the fiery ordeal through which it shall have passed, its integrity restored, its Constitution unimpaired, its authority everywhere reestablished and acknowledged, and with a history that shall secure it against all future attempts to overthrow it, will renew its onward march of prosperity, power, and glory. Then, sir, we may catch the inspiring vision of one of your northern poets, and sing:

“ I see the living tide roll on ;  
It crowns with fiery towers  
The icy capes of Labrador.  
The Spaniard's ' land of flowers ;'  
It streams beyond the splintered ridge  
That parts the northern showers ;  
From eastern rock to sunset wave  
The continent is ours.”

Mr. President, I commenced these remarks by saying that the question of African slavery could no longer be evaded, and that it ought now, if possible, to be finally adjusted. But how shall it be adjusted? In my opinion, the most effectual method of accomplishing this result is a vigorous prosecution of the war for the suppression of the rebellion. I do not mean to say that the extinction of slavery should constitute the motive of the war. No, sir. The purpose of the war is and should be now what it was declared to be in the beginning; and that now, as then, “Congress, banishing all feeling of mere passion and resentment, will recollect only its duty to the whole country; that this war is not prosecuted on our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor for the purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or estab-

lished institutions of the States in rebellion, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and all laws made in pursuance thereof, and to preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired; that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease."

But while in the prosecution of the war for these justifiable ends no constitutional right of any individual or of any State should be renounced or infringed, yet if by the necessary and lawful exercise of the authority and power vested in or pertaining to those to whom the conduct of the war properly belongs slavery shall be destroyed, and our beloved country be thus redeemed from "the everlasting curse of human bondage," it will be just cause of joy and gratitude to every patriot and Christian, and go far to indemnify our country and the human race for the sacrifices of treasure and blood made in the accomplishment of a result so beneficent. One thing is certain; the rapid and universal advance of our arms into the insurgent States, to which all are agreed, and for which all parties are urgent, must necessarily, less or more, obliterate slavery wherever they go. In proportion as we succeed in redeeming the insurgent States from the thralldom of the rebellion, almost in the same proportion will they be released from the thralldom of slavery. My own State is an example. When the loyal sentiment was left free to act it abolished slavery. The same result has been virtually accomplished by the same means in Missouri. Arkansas has crossed the Rubicon; Louisiana is on the shore; so is Tennessee. Even North Carolina indicates her purpose to unite in the general emancipation as soon as she is relieved from the yoke of the rebellion.

The public sentiment of the slaveholding States which never passed any ordinance of secession is beginning to demand the abolishment of slavery in their limits. Maryland has already inaugurated the good work. Delaware, never more than merely a nominal slaveholding State, must soon follow her neighbor, and the tide of public sentiment in Kentucky, tending to the same result, is rapidly advancing, destined soon to sweep away the institution in that gallant and chivalrous Commonwealth. Nothing can suppress the rebellion but the power of our arms; and while the rebellion lasts slavery will endure. Every great victory obtained in the field is of more practical value than a thousand proclamations of emancipation, and whole volumes of acts of confiscation. It is war, sir, stern war, and not words, which shall put down the rebellion; and in proportion as we successfully prosecute the war, and so put down the rebellion, in the same proportion will slavery be put down. Its political power is even now forever annihilated. And sir, a few more victories will place slavery in a condition where it will be just and expedient to inaugurate the only wise and competent measure for its extinction. What is that measure?

The Committee on the Judiciary have reported a proposed amendment of the Constitution prohibiting slavery. This, in my opinion, is the true solution of the question. It is conclusive, it is final; and, moreover, it conforms to the requirements of the Constitution. It works out this great result in the mode prescribed by the Constitution. It accomplishes its purpose directly and lawfully, and thus avoids all those indirect, partial, and questionable, if not unlawful expedients which have been proposed. I should have preferred a national convention; and I would, perhaps, have postponed the measure until the next Congress. I will even now venture to suggest to the Committee on the Judiciary and to the Senate some of reasons why I think it would be better to postpone the proposition until the next Congress. I believe that many of the insurgent States will then be represented here by loyal men. I suppose, too, that by that time many of those States, by the action of their own people, will have abolished slavery, and their representatives here will be the most earnest advocates of the amendment proposed. Will it not be so in Arkansas, in Tennessee, in Louisiana, in North Carolina, and perhaps other States? These States represented in Congress, and advocating, as I feel assured they will, the

proposed amendment of the Constitution, in connection with the States of Maryland, Missouri, Delaware, and West Virginia, constituting half of the southern States, would not only avoid the imputation of unfairness in acting upon the subject when the former States were not represented here, but would certainly secure the two-thirds vote of Congress required by the Constitution, as well as the more immediate adoption of the amendment by the requisite number of States, and would give to the measure a moral influence that would silence all the partisan clamors of simulated sympathy in the non-slaveholding States.

• And moreover, it is not to be denied, Mr. President, that the public excitement consequent upon the condition of the country, in the midst of the most bloody and tremendous war known in the annals of history, is not entirely compatible with the calm deliberation with which so grave a matter as the alteration of our fundamental law in reference to a most delicate and exciting subject should be considered. But, sir, if a majority of the friends of this measure think this is the proper time to propose it, I shall waive my preference for postponed action, and support the measure now. Sir, I believe this amendment of our Constitution is demanded, either now or soon hereafter, by every principle of justice and by every consideration of expediency; by the history of the past, by the woes of the present, and by the hopes of the future; by the blood of our fellow-citizens sacrificed on the altar of their country in defence of the Union; by our defeats at Bull Run and at the Chickahominy; by our victories at Antietam, at Gettysburg, and at Chattanooga; by the millions of our national debt; by the burdens of Federal taxation; by the genius of our American liberty; by the spirit of our Christianity; by our love of freedom; by our hatred of tyranny; and by the voice of the people, which, in this instance, is the voice of God.