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THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

From the Princeton Review, January, 1861.

THERE are periods in the history of every nation when its destiny for ages may be determined by the events of an hour. There are occasions when political questions rise into the sphere of morals and religion ; when the rule for political action is to be sought, not in considerations of state policy, but in the law of God. On such occasions the distinction between secular and religious journals is obliterated. When the question to be decided turns on moral principles, when reason, conscience, and religious sentiment are to be addressed, it is the privilege and duty of all who have access in any way to the public ear, to endeavor to allay unholy feeling, and to bring truth to bear on the minds of their fellow-citizens. If any other consideration be needed to justify the discussion, in these pages, of the disruption of this great confederacy, it may be found not only in the portentous consequences of such disruption to the welfare and happiness of the country and to the general interests of the world, but also in its bearing on the Church of Christ and the progress of his kingdom. Until within a few years there was no diversity of opinion on this subject. It was admitted that the value of the union of these states did not admit of calculation. As no man allowed himself to count the worth of the family union, to estimate in dollars and cents the value of his father's blessing or his mother's love, so no one dreamt of estimating the value of the union of these states—a union cemented by a common lineage, a common language, a common religion, and a common history. We were born in the same family, rocked in the same cradle, struggled through the same difficulties. We were united in the council-chamber and on the battle-field. The blood of Northern and of Southern patriots flowed in a common stream, and their

ashes lie mingled in the same graves. These are not sentimentalities which men of sense can afford to despise. They are bonds of union which it argues moral degradation to disregard. Moreover, there is no denomination of Christians whose members are not found in every part of our common country. Almost every family at the South has kindred living at the North, and the families at the North have kindred at the South. The union of these states is a real union. It is not a mere association, such as binds together nations of different races, languages, and political institutions, as in the Austrian empire. Our outward union is the expression of inward unity. To this we owe our dignity and power among the nations of the earth. Had we been as the dissociated communities of Italy, we had been insignificant. It is because we are one that we are great, prosperous, and powerful.

Besides the bonds of union above adverted to, this country is geographically one. The bounds of nations are not arbitrarily assigned; they are, in general, determined by fixed laws. A people indeed, as in the case of the Romans, may conquer other nations, and gather them all under one despotic head in despite of their essential diversities. But this is a temporary contravention of the laws of nature. It is the configuration of the earth's surface which determines the boundaries of nations. Greece was geographically one. So was Egypt; so is Italy, which is now at last struggling to attain its normal state. Spain, France, Great Britain, Germany, are all one, not by the will of man, but by physical laws, which men can contravene only to their own detriment or destruction. The immutable law of God, as expressed in nature, makes the territory assigned to the Anglo-Saxon race on this continent one nation. The same mountain ranges run through the whole land. The great valley, beginning in Carolina and Tennessee, reaches to the borders of Canada. The broad Atlantic slope is one continuous plain. The immense basin of the Mississippi includes, as the bosom of a common mother, the states from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. The Ohio, the Missouri, and the Mississippi, are arteries which carry the same living flood through the vast region through which they flow. The country is thus physically one, and therefore its organic life is one. We can not divide a tree without destroying its life. We can not divide a river without producing an inundation. The union of this country, therefore, is determined by the homogeneity of its people, by its history, and by its physical character. It can not be permanently dissevered. The mistaken counsels or passions of men may cause a temporary separa-

tion, but the laws of nature will ultimately assert their supremacy, and avenge, by terrible disasters, their temporary violation. Besides, there is the moral bond. We are bound together by covenants and oaths. It requires something more than annoyances, or collisions of opinion or interests, to free men in the sight of God or man from the obligation of an oath. These states are pledged to a "perpetual union." All federal and state officers are bound by oath to maintain that union, and the constitution on which it is founded. It is admitted that there may be circumstances which will justify a nation in violating a solemn treaty, or a people in casting off the obligation of an oath of allegiance; but no man, who has the fear of God before his eyes, will advocate such violation except in extreme cases.

Although these things are so, and although the conviction of their truth until recently rested as an axiom in the public mind, we are nevertheless at this moment on the brink of disunion. We are not of the number of those who think there is no danger in the present state of the country. We fully believe that several of the Southern states are bent on secession, and there is great reason to fear that should a Southern confederacy be once formed, all the fifteen slaveholding states will ultimately combine. What has produced this great and lamentable change in the public mind? Why is disunion, so recently regarded as criminal and impossible, now looked upon as almost inevitable? What are the causes which have produced the present state of feeling? This question may be viewed in different aspects. It may be understood to mean, What are the political events of which the existing condition of the country is the natural sequence? or, it may mean, What are the grounds on which the cotton states desire a separation from the Union? These are different questions and must receive different answers. As to the former, it is a political question, and will be answered according to the political views of those by whom the answer is given. One party says, that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the effort to force the Lecompton constitution upon the people of Kansas, the refusal of Southern politicians to unite in the nomination of a Northern democrat for the presidency, are the causal antecedents of the present state of things. It matters not, they say, whether the Missouri Compromise Act was constitutionally obligatory as a law, it was binding as a compact. It had been voluntarily formed; it had been regarded as sacred for thirty years; to set it aside for the sake of a sectional advantage was regarded as a violation of honor and good faith. Much of the Ter-

ritory of Kansas lies to the north of latitude $36^{\circ} 30'$. If the compromise was acted upon, Kansas must be a free state. To secure her admission as a slave state was regarded as a matter of great importance, not only to the South generally, but especially to Missouri. Therefore that compromise was abolished. Then whether Kansas should be a free or slave state depended on the character of the settlers. This led to a rush from both sections of the country to preëoccupy the ground. This gave rise to fierce collisions. The settlers from the North proved the more numerous. To overcome this fact and to give the minority the ascendancy, fraud and force were resorted to. Election returns were falsified, legislatures and conventions were packed with men illegally elected; attempts were made to force the pro-slavery constitution thus framed upon the people without their consent. These facts rested not on rumor, nor upon newspaper reports, but upon judicial investigation and the testimony of democratic governors and federal officers. It was the conviction of the truth of these facts which called into existence the Republican party. That party is not an anti-slavery, much less an abolition party. It may suit politicians on either side so to represent it, but the mass of the people care little for politicians or for what they say. They make little account of platforms, which are not read by one in a thousand. The people act from their own views. The facts above mentioned offended the conscience of the people of the North, and the condemnation of those acts was the whole significance of their vote, first for Fremont, and then for Lincoln. In this condemnation they have the concurrence of probably nine tenths of all the intelligent people in the country; for it is one of the infelicities of the necessary existence of parties in a free government, that men are often obliged to sanction acts which they personally condemn. Notwithstanding, however, the general disapprobation of the measures referred to, such is the disposition at the North to concede every thing to the South for the sake of peace and party predominance, there is little doubt that the election of Mr. Lincoln would have been defeated had it not been for the split in the Democratic party at Charleston. The nomination of a sectional candidate at the South and another at the North necessitated the defeat of the other candidates who had some claim to stand on a national basis. Such is the view of the political causes of the present alarming state of the country, taken by the great body of the people of the North. They refer it to the action of the dominant party during the last six years. Whether this is a correct view of the case is not the question. It is enough that this is the

view which has determined, and which interprets the action of the North. It is important that this should be understood, in order that the state of the public mind should not be misapprehended and misinterpreted.

The special supporters of the present administration, or the leaders of the dominant party, of course seek for other political causes of the present agitation of the country. They deny that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, or the action of the government in the Kansas question, or even the division of the Charleston convention, is the cause of the difficulty. They throw the responsibility on the opposers of those measures. They say that if the policy of the administration had been acquiesced in, as a true regard for the interest of the country required, there would have been no interruption of the public peace.

It is not, however, the political aspect of the case that we propose to examine. It is more important to turn our attention to the question, What are the grounds on which the cotton-growing states advocate the dissolution of the Union? * or, What are the reasons why they desire to secede? These reasons are two, very different in their nature and in their effects. The one is the conviction that they would be more prosperous in a separate, independent confederacy. Their pecuniary interests, they think, would thereby be greatly promoted. The other reason is, the alleged aggressions of the North, which, it is said, not only justify secession, but render that measure necessary for the preservation of the rights and safety of the South. The former reason probably determines the action of the leaders in this movement, the latter sways the popular mind, and by the exasperation of feeling which it excites under the sense of injustice and apprehension of danger, furnishes the motive power.

That the leaders of the secession movement are influenced by the conviction that secession would promote the prosperity of the cotton states, has been openly and frequently avowed. It is said they would not only be relieved from great national burdens and from commercial restrictions, but their resources would in every way be increased. They cast their eyes on Cuba. They see that that noble island is rendered secure by the jealousies of other

* We confine the question to the cotton-growing states, as in them only has any strong secession movement been developed. The vast majority of the people in the other slave states are opposed to disunion. They would prevent it if they could. It is only in the event of the cotton states withdrawing from the confederacy, that the other states may be constrained to join them.

nations. France will not permit its acquisition by Great Britain, and Great Britain will not consent to its passing under the dominion of France. Neither France nor England would be satisfied to see it in the hands of the United States. Thus secure from foreign aggression, its productiveness and its geographical position would render it, in a pecuniary point of view, one of the most prosperous portions of the globe, were it not for the enormous drain upon its resources made by the demands of Spain. As it is, it has few rivals in pecuniary prosperity. What is to hinder the cotton states, it is asked, from occupying a similar position? Cotton is held to be an absolute necessity to England, France, and the Northern states of this Union. All would be forced, by a regard to their own interests, to maintain the independence of the Southern confederacy: With unlimited free trade, the ships of other nations would crowd the Southern ports, bringing every article of luxury or use the South requires, and taking cotton in return. The wealth which now pours into the North would thus be transferred to the South. By opening the slave-trade, labor could be obtained at a far cheaper rate than at present, and the production of cotton increased to meet the utmost demand. The Southern tier of states would thus become rich and prosperous beyond all competition. Such is the picture which the advocates of disunion have drawn. The first remark which such representations suggest is, that all these advantages are for a class, and that a very small class of the inhabitants of those states. The benefits of disunion are to accrue to the holders of slaves. But they constitute a small minority of the white population of those states. Is it fair or reasonable that a revolution should be effected for the benefit of so small a minority of the people? Has not class-legislation been ever regarded as one of the greatest evils of the nations of Europe? Are not thousands of sufferers from such legislation constantly flocking to this country as to an asylum? And are we to introduce among ourselves this most odious and unjust feature of foreign policy? But admitting that disunion would not only be advantageous to slaveholders, but incidentally to the non-slaveholding majority, is this a reason for disunion which can present itself at the bar of conscience? Can a contract be rightfully broken for money? The people of Pennsylvania, and of many other Northern states, are fully convinced that a high protecting tariff would be greatly to their advantage; that under such protection, with their immense mineral resources, they would soon become to this continent what England has long been to Europe and the world. It has, how-

ever, never been suggested that this conviction would afford any justifiable ground for a dissolution of the Union. The prosperity of the New-England states was utterly prostrated by the policy of the government in the times of the non-intercourse and embargo laws. In those times, secession, as a means of redress, was denounced as high treason. How then can any Southern state justify a disruption of the Union which was declared to be perpetual, on the ground that it would be profitable?

This bright vision, however, of the prosperity which is to follow disunion, is a work of the imagination. All the conditions of the problem are not, and perhaps can not be, taken into view. The cotton-growing states are not an insular territory like Cuba. They are an integral part of a great continent. They are a member of an organized body. They can not have a separate life of their own. A tourniquet applied to a limb may cause its distention for a time, but at the certain expense of its vitality. The carrying out of this Southern programme would place the cotton states in direct hostility with the other slave states. It would be their ruin, at least for years to come. The value of their property in slaves must be depreciated many per cent. This would lead to their being crowded into those states where their labor could be profitably employed. This would soon be followed by over-production; the price of cotton, the sole foundation of all these brilliant hopes, must decline, and the besom of desolation would sweep over the land. The hopes of security and protection from the conflicting jealousies of European powers; the anticipation that France and England, having abolished slavery in their own dominions, would unite to uphold it in the cotton-growing states of this confederacy, and rejoice in the humiliation and destruction of the North, are all built on the assumption that Satan governs the world. The natural anticipation is, that as those nations have submitted to the enormous sacrifice of emancipating their own slaves, they would use all their influence to abolish slavery elsewhere. It has long been the conviction of our most enlightened men, that it is nothing but the protection which the flag of the Union spreads over slavery in this country, that prevents England arraying all her power for its destruction. Separated from the North, a Southern confederacy of the cotton-growing states would be at the mercy of the anti-slavery feeling of the world. The dissolution of the Union, therefore, in all human probability, would be the death-blow to slavery. Hence men who think only of that subject, have been the earliest and warmest advocates of the dismemberment of the confederacy

We have no heart to dwell on this point. No one can predict the evils of disunion. The chimera of abounding wealth can prevent none but the infatuated from perceiving the overwhelming counterbalancing considerations. An entire loss of dignity and power by the cotton states consequent on secession from the Union, might suffice of itself to deter from such an experiment. Without a navy, without an army, without resources for either, such a confederacy could only exist by sufferance. It would be subject to all kinds of insults, annoyances, and injuries, for which impotent wrath would be the only redress. The disproportion between the two portions of the Union thus divided would constantly increase. The South would grow in a slave population, and the North in a population of freemen. By the time the Southern confederacy numbers four millions of white inhabitants, the North would have forty millions. What can be the consequence of such disproportion between conterminous political communities, when there is nothing to restrain injury and annoyance? This is a dismal prospect, from which we gladly turn our eyes. The evils to the cotton states themselves, from disunion, are so probable and so great, that the argument from interest is not that on which reliance is placed. It is a sense of injustice, of injury, of danger, and consequent feeling of animosity, that is appealed to by political leaders in order to make the people willing to secede.

Let us calmly, and in the fear of God, examine this other view of the case. What are the grievances of the South? That our Southern friends do feel aggrieved, that they believe that great injustice has been done them, that their rights have been encroached upon and their safety endangered, there can be no doubt. Nothing else can account for the state of feeling which now prevails at the South. It must also be acknowledged that the South has some just grounds of complaint, and that the existing animosity towards the North is neither unnatural nor unaccountable. At the same time it is perfectly apparent to every dispassionate mind, that these grievances are greatly exaggerated, and that this animosity arises in a large measure from misapprehension.

The first great grievance of the South is the spirit, language, and conduct of the abolitionists of the North. It is a grievance to be hated and denounced, to be held up as execrably wicked. It is a grievance to have slaveholding represented as the greatest of crimes; to have immediate emancipation insisted upon as an imperative duty. The grievance consists partly in the injustice of these judgments. Those thus condemned and denounced feel that they

are injured. Resentment is the unavoidable consequence of unmerited condemnation. Mere moral disapprobation of the system of slavery would be no just ground of complaint. One of the ablest and most philosophical speeches delivered of late years on the floor of Congress, was pronounced by a representative from Alabama, in which he took the ground that the mere disapprobation of slavery was a sufficient reason why the South could not remain united with the North. But this is evidently untenable. A man may have a moral disapprobation of the system of serfdom in Russia, of the church establishment in England, or of the law of primogeniture, or of an order of nobility, and yet live as a peaceful citizen of those countries. The disapprobation of slavery, always entertained and avowed by the Quakers, has never been regarded as a grievance by the South. It is only when such disapprobation is not only unjust, but when it is the source of hatred and abuse, that it rouses animosity. In the case before us the elements of injustice and violence are combined. Slaveholding is not a crime. A man by being the owner of slaves does not justly forfeit respect and confidence. He may be one of the best of men. It is, therefore, an act of injustice to condemn him as a criminal. And when this condemnation is connected with violent defamation, it becomes an intolerable grievance; that is, such a grievance as can not ordinarily be submitted to without awakening the strongest resentment. It must be admitted that this is a grievance under which the South has labored and is still laboring. The great mistake, however, of our Southern brethren, is that they charge this offence on the people of the North; whereas, the truth is, there is not one in a hundred of the people of the North who entertains these opinions and joins in these denunciations. We appeal in support of this statement to every accessible index of public opinion. Of the hundreds of religious newspapers published at the North, the number is very small that breathe the spirit of abolitionism. The proportion of the secular press controlled by that spirit is not greater. We do not know of one clergyman among the Roman Catholics, or the Episcopalians, or the Dutch Reformed, belonging to the class of abolitionists. Of the three thousand old-school Presbyterian clergymen in the country, we do not believe there are twelve who deserve to be so designated. Of the Northern Baptists we have no knowledge of the prevalence of abolitionism to any great extent in their ranks. Among the Methodists there is, perhaps, more of that spirit, but counteracted by a strong conservative element. The clergy may be taken as a fair index of public sentiment on all moral and relig-

ious subjects, and their influence in determining that sentiment can not be denied. It is a great and lamentable mistake, therefore, on the part of the South, to suppose that the great body of the intelligent men at the North have any sympathy with those who are known among us as abolitionists; that is, with those who regard slaveholding as a crime, and immediate emancipation a duty; and who denounce all slaveholders as unworthy of Christian fellowship.

But it is said that the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency is unmistakable evidence of the prevalence of abolitionism, and of settled hostility to the South. It has been pronounced a declaration of war. The fact that abolitionists generally voted for Mr. Lincoln, is appealed to as one proof, at least, that the Republican is an abolition party. But does the fact, that all the Southern disunionists voted for Mr. Breckinridge prove that all who favored his election are disunionists, or that he himself belongs to that class? The reverse is notoriously true. Why, then, should the Republicans be denounced as abolitionists, because abolitionists voted the Republican ticket? No rational man can believe that Pennsylvania gave Mr. Lincoln sixty thousand majority as the representative of abolition principles. As before remarked, the Republican party consists of those who desired to enter their protest against the repeal of the Missouri compromise, and the attempts to force slavery upon Kansas, joined by thousands who wish for a protective tariff, and thousands more, who, from dislike of one candidate, and distrust of another, preferred to vote for Mr. Lincoln. The only question of principle, so far as relates to slavery, which distinguishes the mass of the people at the North from the extreme Southern party, is, whether slavery is a municipal or natural institution; whether a man's right to hold a slave as property rests on statute law, or upon the common law. If the latter, then a man has a right to carry his slaves into any state or territory into which he may lawfully carry his ox or his horse. He may bring them by hundreds and thousands into any state in the Union, and settle with them there. If the former, he can carry them no where beyond the legitimate authority of the law by which slavery exists. Which of these views is correct, this is not the place to discuss. All that we wish to say on the point is, that this is the sum of the difference in principle between the North and the extreme South; and that, as a historical fact, the doctrine that slavery is a municipal institution, that no man has the same right to hold his slave in bondage in France and England, that he has there to keep possession of his books or clothes, was the doctrine of all parties in this coun-

try until within the last twenty or thirty years. If, therefore, holding this opinion is a just ground for separating from the North, it was a just ground for refusing to submit to the administration of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and every other President, unless our present chief magistrate be an exception. Holding this opinion as to the foundation of slavery, therefore, does not constitute the Republicans an abolition party, and does not afford a reason for disunion which can satisfy the judgment or conscience of any reasonable man.

There is another consideration which ought to satisfy the South that the North is not infected with abolitionism. There are three different views entertained as to the moral character of slavery. The one is that adopted by the abolitionists, viz. that slaveholding is a crime calling for the execration of the world, and excommunication from the church. The opposite extreme is that slavery is a normal institution, good in itself, and one which should be perpetuated and extended, and, therefore, that the slaves should be kept in such a state of ignorance and dependence as is necessary to render the indefinite duration of the institution possible, safe, and useful. The third view is that slavery, as a system of domestic despotism, belongs to the same category with political despotism. It is not morally wrong in itself, and, therefore, under all circumstances; it is not to be denounced as a crime, nor are slaveholders, as such, to be held up as worthy of condemnation, or excluded from the fellowship of the Christian church. At the same time, as slaves are men, they should be treated as such, as the children of a common Father, entitled by the gift of God to mental and moral culture, to have the light of heaven let in upon their souls, to the rights of property, and to the prerogatives of the conjugal and parental relations. To deny them these rights is as great a sin as though they were freemen. Most men, when they condemn slavery, have certain slave laws in their minds; laws which forbid the slaves to be instructed, which declare they can not contract marriage, or which authorize the forcible separation of husbands and wives, parents and children. But Southern Christians condemn these laws as heartily as we do. Indeed, no man can be a Christian who does not condemn them. It is only a few days since we heard a slaveholding minister say that his church would as certainly discipline a man for selling a husband away from his wife, as for drunkenness. It is a wicked misrepresentation when men at the North hold up Southern Christians as approving of such laws, and it is an equally wicked misrepresentation when men at the South

denounce men at the North as abolitionists, because they condemn those same laws. This view of slavery, we verily believe, is held by nine tenths of the intelligent Christian people of this country, north and south, east and west. At the late meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church at Rochester, there were present over three hundred delegates from every state in the Union, except Oregon and one or two of the New-England states. A more harmonious body never assembled in this land. It was a fair representation of the whole country. Yet on the subject of slavery there was no difference of opinion or feeling manifested from beginning to end. There was not one Southern minister in that body who might not have settled at the North, nor one Northern minister who might not labor acceptably at the South. Presbyterians do not differ so much from other Christians, as to invalidate the argument from their unanimity in proof of the prevailing sentiment of the country. It is, therefore, a judgment unsupported by facts that the people of the North are the abolitionists in the sense in which that word is constantly used. There is no material difference of opinion on the subject of slavery among the intelligent Christian people of this country. There are extremists North and South, but the mass of the people are of one mind. The state of opinion, therefore, at the North on this subject, affords no reasonable or justifiable ground for the disruption of the Union.

Another grievance justly complained of, is the interference of Northern abolitionists with the slaves of the South. This is done by the attempted distribution of abolition publications through the Southern states, and by emissaries who endeavor to create dissatisfaction among the slaves. This is not only offensive, but in the highest degree dangerous. It puts in peril the lives of men, women and children—of wives and daughters. This is beyond measure exasperating. The slaveholders feel as men living over a powder-magazine into which people outside insist upon throwing burning coals. We admit that such tampering with the slaves is a great crime, and that it is a grievance which would justify almost any available means of redress. We doubt not that it is to the exasperation arising from this cause that the animosity and excitement now pervading the Southern mind are principally due. We admit the fact; we admit that it is a crime and an offence; we admit that it calls for redress. But is disunion the rightful or effectual remedy? Is it right to break with the whole North because of the conduct of a small band of fanatics over which the people have no control, and for which they are not responsible? Of the eighteen

millions of Northern white men, there is probably not one thousand who have any agency in these attempts to excite the Southern slaves, or who approve of it. Would it be fair for the North to hold the South responsible for the deeds of violence reported in almost every paper, of which innocent Northern citizens in Southern states are the victims? It is unjust, therefore, to visit on the North the sins of a small class of men among them, when those offences are heartily condemned, and when they would be prevented, were prevention possible.

This, however, is not the only injustice in the case. It is not only unjust to hold the North responsible for the dissatisfaction excited among the slaves at the South, but it is a great injustice to attribute that dissatisfaction to the efforts of Northern abolitionists as its sole or principal cause. For one communication that reaches the minds of the slaves tending to promote disturbance, coming from Northern fanatics, a hundred, probably a thousand, come from Southern men and from their political allies at the North. The circulation of abolition publications is prohibited by law, and sedulously guarded against; abolition emissaries, if such there be, act at the imminent peril of their lives. So far as the minds of the slaves are concerned, little can possibly be effected by those agencies. Whereas Southern papers, and those of the same political party from the North, circulate freely through the South. Those papers teem with extracts from the extreme anti-slavery publications. They labor to convince those who read them, that the North with its eighteen millions of people is of one mind, that slaveholding is a great crime. They constantly endeavor to prove that the Republican party is pledged to abolish slavery, to interfere with the peculiar institutions of the South. Who read those papers? The colored people read them. Their contents spread from mouth to mouth—exaggerated and distorted. You might as well fire cannon from one end of the country to the other, and complain of the slaves hearing them, as to allow such papers to circulate and expect their contents to remain unknown. We verily believe that it would be less dangerous to the South to allow unrestricted circulation to avowedly abolition papers, than to some party journals who labor to misrepresent the sentiments of the mass of Northern men. If disunion is to come, if the South is to experience the horrors of servile insurrections, it will be referable more to the inflammatory and defamatory character of such publications, than to any other proximate cause. Besides the evil done by such publications, exciting public speeches are made in almost every town and vil-

lage. In these speeches Northern men are denounced as enemies. They are spoken of with hatred and contempt. These orators labor to convince the people that property in slaves is in danger; that the North is sending emissaries through the land to promote emancipation; that the success of the Republicans would be the triumph of abolitionism; and, if not resisted, the death-blow to slavery. Who hear those speeches? The slaves hear them and believe them, though nobody else may. Southern planters also do not hesitate to discuss all these questions around their dinner-tables, while their slaves are standing at their elbows. We have heard and seen this with our own ears and eyes. Southern men say they are living in a powder-magazine, and resent the show of combustibles a thousand miles off, and yet daily disport themselves with fireworks. It is a miracle of mercy that an explosion has not long since occurred. While, therefore, we admit that the attempts of Northern fanatics to produce dissatisfaction in the slaves, is a crime, yet we deny that this offence can be justly chargeable on the people of the North, the vast majority of whom condemn it, and would gladly prevent it if they had the power; and we maintain that so far as dissatisfaction or disposition to servile insurrection exists, it is attributable far more to Southern papers, speeches and table-talk, and to Northern anti-Republican papers having free circulation at the South, than to all the efforts of fanatical abolitionists.

A third prominent grievance of which the South complains, is that the provision of the Constitution requiring the restoration of fugitive slaves, has been, and is, openly disregarded and set at naught. The Constitution is a compact. If, say our Southern brethren, that compact is violated by one party, it ceases to be binding on the other. On this ground they assert that they are at perfect liberty to secede from the Union. This is the argument which is presented in every possible form, in newspaper editorials, in legislative debates, in gubernatorial messages. It is rung through the South, and echoes through the North. Yet a moment's consideration will show that the complaint is utterly unfounded. It is admitted that Southern masters have a constitutional right to the restoration of their fugitive slaves. On whom does the obligation to restore such slaves rest? Upon the Federal Government, or upon the state authorities? Upon the Federal Government, according to the solemn decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, our highest judicial authority. Assuming that the obligation rested upon the states, Pennsylvania passed certain laws to regulate the manner in which the duty should be performed.

The Supreme Court pronounced those laws unconstitutional, on the ground that it belonged to the Federal Government to carry into effect that provision of the Constitution. Has the General Government refused to perform that duty? It is the party on whom the obligation rests. Has it failed to discharge that obligation? Not at all. Stringent laws for carrying into effect that part of the constitutional compact have been passed by both houses of Congress, and approved by the President. The whole judicial and executive power of the Government is pledged to their execution. In not one instance have the judicial or executive officers charged with this duty failed to perform it. So far from it, the judicial officers have notoriously erred on the other side. They have sent free men to the South as slaves, who have been returned on their hands. They have shocked public justice in their zeal to carry out the law. The United States troops have been called out to secure its execution. Slaves have been returned to their masters, in some instances, at an expense of twenty, thirty, or forty thousand dollars to the Government. Educated men, professors in our colleges, have been condemned to imprisonment for attempting to interfere with the execution of the fugitive slave law. At this moment, if any Southern man can point out a slave living in Massachusetts or Vermont, he will be restored, though it should cost a hundred thousand dollars, or even a civil war. The Federal Government, the party bound, has never failed to discharge to the utmost its constitutional obligations in this matter. It is not true, therefore, that the national compact has been broken. The North, as represented in the Federal Government, the only organ through which it can constitutionally act in the premises, has not only been faithful in this matter, but it has carried its fidelity to the verge of servility. Contrast the zeal of the General Government in carrying out the provision of the Constitution in reference to fugitive slaves, with its conduct in regard to the provision which requires that the citizens of one state shall have in all other states the same privileges as the citizens of those states themselves. This provision of the Constitution, so far as concerns colored persons, is a dead letter in some of the Southern states. It has been formally nullified by law. A gentleman of the highest social and professional standing was sent to Charleston, peacefully and respectfully to bring the validity of that law before the United States courts. He was not allowed to do so. He was ordered and forced to leave the city. No judicial officer of the General Government has been commissioned to carry out that provision of the Constitution. United States troops have not been or-

dered out to secure its faithful observance. It has not been executed, and it can not be executed. The attempt to enforce its observance would inevitably split the Union, and therefore the North quietly submit. It may be said that persons of African descent are not citizens in view of the Constitution, and therefore have no right to be recognized as such in the Southern ports. This is the point which Massachusetts wished to have judicially decided, and was forbidden to make the attempt. It never has been judicially decided by a court of competent jurisdiction. Besides, this was not the ground on which the law forbidding free negroes to enter the state of South-Carolina was enacted. Whether citizens or not, they were to be excluded. We do not say there may not be an overruling necessity for that law. It may be that the North would be unreasonable and unjust to insist on the full execution of the Constitution in this matter. Our only object is to show that while a constitutional provision painful to the North is carried out by all the resources of the Federal Government, a like provision distasteful to the South is allowed to remain a dead letter.

It is, however, said that "the personal liberty laws" passed by some of the Northern states are a virtual nullification of the fugitive slave law, and therefore a breach of compact. If a breach of compact, they are, as it is asserted, a full justification of the disruption of the Union. We admit that the obligation to restore fugitive slaves is a constitutional and moral obligation, and consequently that any law designed to prevent such restoration is unconstitutional and criminal. So far as the laws in question have that design, they are worthy of all condemnation; and so far as they are the expression of impotent hostility, they are unbecoming the dignity of a sovereign state. If the people of any state can not conscientiously submit to the Constitution, there are only two courses open to them: they should either endeavor, in a peaceable and orderly way, to have the Constitution altered, or they should move out of the country. They have no right to live under a Constitution and enjoy its benefits and yet refuse to submit to its stipulations. This is a matter as to which the conscience of many people is at fault. They think that if they disapprove, on conscientious grounds, of the restoration of fugitive slaves, they are bound to resist such restoration. This is a great mistake. Their duty, in that case, is to try to have the Constitution altered, but until it is altered, they are bound to allow it unrestricted operation, or to renounce all allegiance to it. We regard, therefore, all opposition

to the restoration of fugitive slaves, whether by legislatures, or by individuals, or by mobs, as morally a crime, deserving legal penalties and the condemnation of all good men. If, therefore, any state has passed laws to prevent the full and efficient operation of that provision of the Constitution, we hold that they are bound by their allegiance to God as well as to the country at once to repeal them. Let them endeavor to free themselves from an obligation which wounds their conscience, in some just and honorable way. There is a very prevalent mistake as to the responsibility of individuals for the Constitution and laws under which we live. We are bound to use all our influence to make the Constitution and laws what they ought to be. But if, without our agency, or in despite of our efforts, constitutional provisions are adopted or laws enacted, which our conscience does not approve, it is not our fault. We are not at liberty to resist them. Submission to their operation implies no approbation. We are not bound to coöperate in giving them effect. We may quietly refuse, and submit to the legal penalty. It is thus the Quakers act with regard to church-rates in England, and to the militia laws in this country. They do not muster for military training as the law requires, but they pay the prescribed penalty. Thousands of the people of France disapprove of the act of Louis Napoleon in assuming imperial power, but it would be a crime to resist his authority. Our country may enter on an unrighteous war, but that would not justify any state legislature or any individual in resisting the national army. The moral responsibility of such laws rests upon those who pass them, not on those who have no agency either in their enactment or their execution.

We heartily join, therefore, in the condemnation of all resistance to the restoration of fugitive slaves. All laws designed to interfere with the full and efficient operation of the constitutional compact on this subject are immoral. But the question now before us is, Whether the personal liberty laws, as they are called, free Southern men from their allegiance to the country and from the obligation of their oaths? This is the question which every Southern man has to answer in the sight of God. It is not to be answered under the impulse of passion, or the dictates of interest. He is not freed from his obligation to the Union because he is alienated in feeling from the North, nor because he thinks his interests would be promoted by secession. The only question is, whether these personal liberty laws are such a violation of the national compact as to destroy its binding force, and to justify disunion?

We answer, No, for the following reasons: 1. Because, as already said, the Federal Government is the party bound, and therefore so long as that government is faithful to the contract there is no violation of the compact. 2. Because the liberty laws, so far as we can learn, are not *ex professo* a nullification of the fugitive slave law. They are not directed against the agents legally appointed to execute that law. The law emanates from the General Government. It is designed to carry into execution a federal prerogative and duty. It is confided to federal officers. A law to forbid the collection of duties at a port of entry by federal officers would be an act of nullification. But a law to forbid state officers to make the collection, or state warehouses to be used for storing the goods, would not be nullification. So in like manner, a law to forbid federal officers to arrest fugitive slaves would be nullification. But a law forbidding state officers making the arrest, and prohibiting the use of state prisons for their detention, is not a nullification of the law of Congress. The duty is from its nature a distasteful one, and any declaration that it must be performed by federal officers thereto appointed, and not by state officials, who can not legally be required to perform it, is not a breach of contract. If the United States troops in Boston harbor should desert, Massachusetts is not bound to arrest them, and a law prohibiting the state officers from being called upon to perform that service, would not be a nullification of the law against desertion. It is a United States law, and must be executed by United States officers. 3. A third argument on this subject is, that the liberty laws are designed professedly to protect free negroes. There is danger of their being unjustly carried into slavery. It has been done, and we know that a young woman from Texas, although liberated by her owner and father, was considered so much in danger in New-York that she was sent to Canada for protection. If a negro in Virginia, held as a slave, claims to be a free man, the law gives him certain facilities for having the validity of his claim judicially decided. If a negro living in Massachusetts is seized as a slave, Massachusetts desires to give him the same means of proving that he is free. The provisions of the Massachusetts law are said to be identical with those of the corresponding Virginia law. This is not nullification. 4. But suppose these laws to be directly in conflict with the fugitive slave laws; suppose a state should expressly prohibit the restoration of a fugitive slave arrested within her borders, would that justify secession? Would that exonerate any slaveholding State from its allegiance to the Union? Certainly not, because secession is not the proper

remedy for this injustice. The first step would be to have such State law declared, by the Supreme Court of the United States, to be unconstitutional. That would be make it a dead letter. In no part of the Union could it be executed in the face of such a decision. But should it be persisted in, the next step would be for the United States to enforce obedience to its own law. Any State resisting under such circumstances would be in rebellion, and must be reduced to submission to the law, just as Washington suppressed the Whisky insurrection. This is the operation of our system. Nullification of the fugitive slave law, therefore, even if formally enacted in any state, would be no justification of secession. It is not a breach of contract, so long as the Federal Government, the party bound, is faithful to its duty. These liberty laws, objectionable as they may be, are not the real cause of the difficulty. The border states which suffer from the loss of slaves, are not in favor of secession. The complaint of breach of contract comes from states which suffer little or nothing from this source. We do not see, on a careful consideration of the matter, how any conscientious man can justify disunion on the ground that the North has proved unfaithful to the national compact. The great majority of the people of the North are in favor of the faithful execution of the law, and the Federal Government, their constitutional organ, has never failed to discharge its duty in the premises.

Another ground of complaint is that the South has lost its equality in the Union; or that they are denied equal rights. This complaint has the more force on the popular mind from its vagueness, and from its appealing to a sense of justice. A denial of equal rights to any part of the confederacy would be indeed a just ground of complaint. This grievance is presented in different lights by our Southern brethren. It sometimes means one thing and sometimes another. It often has special reference to the territories. These are the common property of the country. The North, South, East, and West, have an equal right to their possession and occupancy. Hence it is inferred that if immigrants from the North are allowed to take every species of their property into the territories, immigrants from the South have the right to take every thing which the laws of the South declare to be property. To deny this is to deny equal right in the territories. To this it is answered, 1. That there is no restriction peculiar to the slaveholding states. The people from those states may take into the territories every thing that the people from the North are allowed to take. They are placed on terms of perfect equality in this

respect. 2. That the restriction with regard to slaves, which bears equally upon all, whether citizens or foreigners, whether from the North or from the South, is not founded on any assumed superior claim of the North to the common heritage of the country, but simply on the principle that slavery is a municipal institution, and therefore can exist only where there is some law to create and to enforce it. Carolina can not justly claim that her slave laws should have authority in France, or England, or in the Northern states, or any where else beyond her own territory. Whether this reasoning be correct or not, yet since the doctrine that slavery is a municipal institution was the common faith of the country when the Constitution was adopted, and when the Southern states entered the Union, as it was held by all our presidents and statesmen until the time of Mr. Calhoun, with few, if any exceptions, it can not now be justly regarded as a grievance. 3. It may be further answered to this complaint, that all difficulty on this score was avoided by the Missouri Compromise, and might be removed by a restoration of that agreement. It is at best a theoretical difficulty, as the South has neither freemen nor slaves to spare for the territories. Their slaves are too valuable where they are, to send them into regions where their labor could be turned to little or no account.

At other times, by equality of the states is meant an equal control in the administration of the government. In the past history of the country the South has been dominant. Although in a minority as to population, it has shaped the whole policy of the country. A compact minority in almost all governments holds the balance of power. The Germans, although not more than one third of the people, secured the control of the state of Pennsylvania through a great part of its history. And so the South, by throwing her weight into one party or the other, has hitherto secured the ascendancy. A protecting tariff, a national bank, internal improvements, were the policy of the country so long as the South was in their favor; when she turned against them they were abandoned. This state of things is passing away. By the inevitable progress of events, the sceptre is changing hands. The more rapid increase of the free states in number and in population, is more and more reducing the relative importance and power of the South. This result has been long foreseen. Southern statesmen have predicted that the time must come when the South could no longer control the policy of the country. Not to command, however, is in their estimation to submit. Not to be masters, in the logic of the extremists,

is to be slaves. And hence the frequent and fervid declamations addressed to the people, against the tyranny of the North, and the inevitable servitude of the South, should it remain in the Union. The thing complained of is not the irresponsible power of a majority. The founders of our government were fully convinced that no despotism could be more intolerable than a pure democracy, where the majority had unrestricted power. Our national legislature is restricted within very narrow limits by the Constitution. It has not the political omnipotence of the Parliament of Great Britain, which can change the dynasty, abolish the peerage, or the church establishment, and model at pleasure the institutions of the country. Our Congress has no such power. Its authority is limited by a written Constitution. It is held in check by the distribution of power, and by the legislative authority vested in two houses—the one composed of the representatives of the states without regard to their relative size or importance. In every way, therefore, that human wisdom could devise, the minority is protected from the tyranny of the majority. Nor is the equality claimed by the disunionists, the equal rights of the states one with another; for this is now enjoyed and secured to the fullest extent. The thing claimed is this, viz. that the slave interest should have equal political control with all the other interests of the country combined. This is what is meant by equality. Less than this is declared to be inconsistent with their safety and honor. This is the idea which, by the teaching of Mr. Calhoun, has taken thorough possession of the minds of a certain class of Southern politicians. The correctness of this representation is proved beyond question, by the nature of the means proposed to correct the inequality complained of, or dreaded. These remedies are all directed to the natural, peaceful, and normal operation of the Constitution. They require that the Constitution should be changed in order to secure the equality demanded. Thus it has been proposed that the number of slaveholding states shall always be equal to that of the free states; that every new free state admitted into the Union should be counterbalanced by a new slave state. Thus the equality of the representatives of the slave interest in the Senate—which has controlling power in the government—with the representatives of the free states, would be preserved. Another proposal is, that there should be two Presidents—one chosen by the North, and the other by the South, and that their concurrence should be necessary to the validity of any Presidential action. Still another proposition is, that the Constitution should be so altered as to make a majority of the whole of the

slaveholding states, and a majority of the free states, necessary to the election of a President; and further, that no law should take effect unless sanctioned by a majority of representatives from both sections of the country. These are so many devices to make one equal to three. They amount to an avowal on the part of their advocates, that slaveholders can not live in any political community which they do not control. The propositions above referred to all assume that the slave interest must be dominant; that nothing shall be done without its consent; no officer, whether civil or military, judicial or executive, shall be appointed; no law enacted, no measure adopted, without its approbation, and consequently for its benefit. This supposes that the interest of the slaveholders is antagonistic to all others, and is so important that it may rightfully be dominant, or at least coördinate and limiting. It assumes that three hundred and fifty thousand shall equal twenty millions. As this is a physical and moral impossibility under our present Constitution, it is proposed to alter it, or failing that, to dissolve the Union. This is the light in which the claim to equality, as interpreted and urged by the disunionists, presents itself to the people of the North. It is an unrighteous and unreasonable demand. It is demanding far more than the Constitution, which we have all sworn to support, ever contemplated. Equality of all classes in the eye of the law, equality of the States as to rights and privileges, equal protection, equal liberty, equal facilities of advancement, equal access to all places of honor and power—in short, constitutional equality in its fullest extent, is what all are willing to concede. But that one particular interest, one special class of the community, should have equal weight and influence with all the others combined—that three hundred thousand should equal twenty millions—is, at least under our present Constitution, an impossibility. And if this is the ultimatum of the extreme South, disunion is inevitable. Our present system gives every security and advantage to the slaveholding class, which can be reasonably demanded. The Constitution permits the representation of slave property, while no other species of property is allowed a representation in the national legislature. Florida, with its forty-seven thousand of white inhabitants, and its twenty-three millions of property, has as much influence in the Senate of the United States, as New-York, with its three millions of inhabitants, and one thousand millions of property. Is not this enough? There are only twenty-five thousand slaveholders in South-Carolina, and yet they have really as much control of the Government as the two million five hundred thousand

people in Pennsylvania. Of the eighteen Presidential elections which have been held since the adoption of the Constitution, twelve resulted in the choice of slaveholders, and six in the choice of non-slaveholders. Of three hundred and seven principal appointments under the Constitution, two hundred and four have been held by slaveholders. Surely, the complaint of want of equality on the part of the slaveholders, is of all others the most unfounded.

We have thus endeavored calmly and fairly to estimate the grievances alleged by our Southern brethren. We have endeavored to show that the people of the North are not responsible for the defamatory language of the abolitionists ; nor for any attempts to create dissatisfaction among the slaves. We have endeavored to prove that the constitutional compact with regard to the restoration of fugitive slaves has not been violated ; because the Federal Government, the only constitutional organ for the performance of that duty, has never refused or failed to perform it to the extent of its ability ; and because, even if any state attempted to nullify the fugitive slave law, the Constitution provides redress, first in the judicial, and then in the military power of the government. And, finally, we have endeavored to show that the complaint of the want of equality has no rational foundation.

It is however assumed that any state has the right to secede from the Union, whenever it sees fit. It matters not, therefore, whether these grievances are real or imaginary, if the cotton states believe that their interests will be promoted by secession, they have the right to secede. This is the ground taken by the leaders of the secession movement. They desire a dismemberment of the Union ; they wish that the cotton states alone, or in connection with the other slaveholding states, should be constituted into an independent nation. Complaints of injustice or inequality, predictions of aggressions, are only the means employed to arouse the public mind, and to make the people willing to sever the tie which binds them to the other states. Is, then, secession one of the reserved rights of the states ? Is any state at liberty to withdraw from the Union whenever she sees fit ? The question does not concern the right of revolution. Revolution and secession are very different things. The one is the overthrow of a government, on the ground of the abuse of its powers, by those who are legally and *de facto* subject to its authority. It is admitted to be illegal. It is an act of violence, as much as homicide, and is, like homicide, to be justified only by necessity. The other is claimed to be a peaceful, orderly process, a mere dissolution of a partnership, which is binding only

during the consent of parties. The leaders of the secession movement regard the Union as a mere partnership; a treaty between sovereign states, which may be dissolved by any one of the parties, by giving due notice. That this is a false view of the case is evident:

1. From the very idea of a nation. It is a body politic, independent of all others, and indissolubly one. That is, indissoluble at the mere option of its constituent parts. As the Abbeville District can not secede at pleasure from the state of South-Carolina, so neither can South-Carolina secede at pleasure from the United States, provided the United States constitute a nation. That these states do constitute one nation, as distinguished from a number of nations, bound together by treaty, is proved from the fact that they in their collective capacity have all the attributes, and exercise all the prerogatives of a nation. They have national unity. They have one name, one flag, one President, one legislature, one Supreme Court, one navy and army. The authority, legislative, judicial, and executive, of the general government, extends to every part of the land, and is every where, within its sphere, supreme. That the states are independent and sovereign, within constitutional limits, in the management of their internal affairs, is no more inconsistent with the unity of the nation, than the like independence of municipal corporations in England is inconsistent with the national unity of Great Britain. Our Constitution, says Mr. Madison, is neither a consolidated government nor a confederated government, but a mixture of both. "It was not formed," he continues, "by the government of the component states, as the Federal Government, for which it was substituted. Nor was it formed by a majority of the people of the United States as a single community, in the manner of a consolidated government. It was formed by the states; that is, by the people in each of the states acting in their highest sovereign capacity, and formed consequently by the same authority which formed the state constitutions. Being thus derived from the same source as the constitutions of the states, it has, within each state, the same authority as the constitution of the state; and is as much a constitution, in the strict sense of the term, within its prescribed sphere, as the constitutions of the states are within their respective spheres; but with this essential and obvious difference, that being a compact among the states in their highest sovereign capacity, and constituting the people thereof one people for certain purposes, it can not be altered or annulled at the will of the states individually, as the constitution of a state may

be at its individual will." (Letter of Mr. Madison, quoted by Amos Kendall, Esq., in the *Washington Star*.) The United States, therefore, under the Constitution, are one people; they are one nation, in virtue of a common Constitution within its sphere, in the face of all other nations, just as any state is one, in virtue of its constitution. But if a nation, there is no possibility of its dismemberment, except by rebellion or revolution, unless by common consent. The very idea of a nation is, that it is one, independent, organized political community, whose separate parts are not severally independent of each other, but constitute an organic whole. The word *right* has both a legal and a moral sense. No constituent member of a nation can ever have the legal right to secede or rebel. It may have a moral right, in case of absolute necessity. But having no legal right, it exercises its moral right of rebellion, subject to the legal and moral right of the government against which it rebels, to resist or to concede, as it may see fit.

2. A second argument against the right of secession is found in the very words and avowed design of the compact. The contracting parties stipulate that the Union shall be "perpetual." A perpetual lease is one that can not be annulled at pleasure. A perpetual grant is one which can not at will be recalled. A perpetual union is one which can not be dissolved except on the consent of all the parties to that union. Secession is a breach of faith. It is morally a crime, as much as the secession of a regiment from the battle-field would be. If the country were at war and one state should withdraw her contingent, on the ground that her officers were not put in supreme command, or that their rations were not to their taste, she would retire dragging her standard in the mire of ineffaceable disgrace. It seems almost too plain for argument, that if the several states, or the people thereof in their sovereign capacity, have pledged themselves to a perpetual union, and ratified their plighted faith by an oath, no one state can secede without incurring the twofold criminality of breach of faith and violation of an oath.

3. A third argument against the right of secession is drawn from the historical fact, that the right was at first desired by some of the states and formally rejected. New-York wished to adopt the Constitution on condition that she might be permitted to withdraw should she see fit. Madison wrote to Hamilton that such a conditional ratification of the Constitution was worse than a rejection. New-York, therefore, concluded to come in on the same terms with the other states, with the express understanding that there was to

be no secession. These facts have been recently presented in all the papers, and need not be enlarged upon. It is plain, therefore, from the history of the adoption of the Constitution, that the right of secession was denied. It was on this understanding that South-Carolina and all the other states entered the Union. For one or more of them now to withdraw, must therefore be either justifiable rebellion or a breach of faith.

4. This may be said to be *res adjudicata*. All parties are committed against the doctrine of secession. When the New-England states, under the pressure of the embargo laws and of the evils to them of the war of 1812, sent delegates to the Hartford Convention to consult about the means of redress, the measure was condemned with one voice by the dominant party as tending to secession. The *Richmond Enquirer*, then in the height of its influence, the recognized exponent of the principles of the Jeffersonian party at the South, elaborately proved that no state or number of states had the right to separate from the Union unless by the consent of the other states. In 1814 that journal held the following language: "No man, no association of one state or set of states, has a right to withdraw from the Union of its own account. The same power which knit us together can unknit us. The same formality which formed the links of the Union is necessary to dissolve it. The majority of the states which formed the Union must consent to the withdrawal of any one branch of it. Until that consent has been obtained, any attempt to dissolve the Union or distract the efficiency of its constitutional law, is *treason—treason to all intents and purposes.*" What was true then is true now. And treason by the law of God and man is one of the greatest of crimes.

5. The manifold absurdities, abnormities, and evils which flow from the doctrine of secession, afford a sufficient proof of its unsoundness. These have of late been abundantly presented in the public prints. The United States gave fifteen millions of dollars for Louisiana, for the express purpose of securing command of the Mississippi river. According to the doctrine of secession Louisiana may secede, and the whole advantage of the purchase be lost. Ten millions were paid for Texas, thousands of lives and millions of dollars were expended in the Mexican war for her security, and the acquisition of California. Five millions were paid for Florida, one hundred and twenty millions have been offered for Cuba. It is absurd to suppose that our government can be founded on the theory of secession, and yet the people be willing to spend such enormous sums for territory to which they would acquire no title. If the right exists,

it belongs to all the states and at all times. The country may be engaged in a perilous war, and one half the states may legally secede and leave the remainder to bear the consequences. Suppose Louisiana or Texas had seceded in the rear of our army during the Mexican war, and cut off our resources. Would that have been a legal procedure? Or if the whole people should join in making the Pacific railroad, may Missouri and California at its termini secede, and keep it all to themselves? Such are some of the consequences of this theory. It is refuted by the *argumentum ad absurdum*. Secession, as Mr. Madison says, is revolution, and revolution is rebellion, and rebellion is at least illegal. Whether in any case morally right, depends on circumstances. If not justified by intolerable oppression and injustice, it is one of the greatest of crimes. That the Southern states are not oppressed, is plain from their own declaration. They boast of their prosperity and power. They claim to be the richest portion of the Union. They contrast their \$200,000,000 of exports with the \$100,000,000 exported from the North. Georgia has doubled her taxable property in the last ten years. The same general prosperity prevails throughout the South. Of oppression, therefore, there can be no pretence. As to injustice, the only things complained of are the difficulty thrown in the way of the restoration of fugitive slaves, and the territorial question. These grounds of complaint have been considered. The North has not broken faith with the South as to fugitive slaves. The Federal Government, which alone has the right to restore them, has never refused to do so. The difficulty is not in any breach of faith. It is in the nature of the service. Men at the North are willing to let the General Government do the work, but they do not choose to be made slave-catchers themselves. The present fugitive slave law could not be executed efficiently at the South, except by federal officers. We would like to see Senator Chesnut or the Hon. Mr. Rhett called to join in the pursuit of a fugitive slave. They would do what men here do. They would say, The work must be done, but let those, whose business it is, see to it. Neither oppression nor injustice can be pleaded in justification of disunion. Disunion was determined upon for other reasons; these complaints are used to inflame the public mind. We do not doubt that many excellent men, many sincere Christians, at the South have been brought to believe that secession is legally and morally right. But it is no new thing in the history of the world that great crimes have been thought right. There never was an *auto da fe* which was not sanctioned by the ministers of religion. The greatest crimes have been pepe-

trated by those who thought they were doing God service. The fact, therefore, that good men approve of secession, that they pray over disunion, that they rise from their knees and resolve to commit the parricidal act, does not prove it to be right. It only proves how perverted the human mind may become under the influence of passion and the force of popular feeling.

This is the light in which we think this subject ought to be viewed. Is disunion morally right? Does it not involve a breach of faith, and a violation of the oaths by which that faith was confirmed? We believe, under existing circumstances, that it does, and therefore it is as dreadful a blow to the church as it is to the state. If a crime at all, it is one the heinousness of which can only be imperfectly estimated from its probable effects; but these are sad enough. It blots our name from among the nations of the earth. The United States of North America will no longer exist. All the recollections which cluster around those words, all the bright hopes attached to them for the future, must be sunk forever. The glorious flag which has so long floated in the advance of civilization and liberty, must be furled. We lose our position as one of the foremost nations of the earth—the nation of the future—the great Protestant power, to stand up for civil and religious freedom. All despots will rejoice, and all the friends of liberty mourn over our fall. We write thus in the apprehension that the whole South should secede. If the movement were to be confined to South-Carolina, it would be simply absurd. The attempt to make a nation of a state, with a white population less than half that of Philadelphia, without any thing to distinguish them for wealth, intelligence, moral power, or culture, from the other states of the Union, would be madness.* But the loss of a single plank may cause the noblest

* In speaking thus, we are only repeating the sentiments of a leading Carolinian. In 1851, the Hon. W. W. Boyce addressed the following protest against secession, to the people of South-Carolina: "South-Carolina can not become a nation. God makes nations, not man. You can not extemporize a nation out of South-Carolina. It is simply impossible; we have not the resources. We could exist by tolerance, and what that tolerance would be, when we consider the present hostile spirit of the age to the institution of slavery, of which we would be looked upon as the peculiar exponent, all may readily imagine. I trust we may never have to look upon the painful and humiliating spectacle.

"From the weakness of our national government, a feeling of insecurity would arise, and capital would take the alarm and leave us. But it may be said, Let capital go. To this I reply that capital is the life-blood of a modern community, and in losing it, you lose the vitality of the state.

"Secession, separate nationality, with all its burdens, is no remedy. It is no redress for the past; it is no security for the future. It is only a magnificent sacrifice of the

ship to founder. The secession of South-Carolina may draw after it that of Georgia and the other cotton states. This is possible; although how those states can contemplate with complacency the position they must occupy in a confederacy by themselves, is more than we can tell. They can exist only by sufferance. Any great naval power, as France or England, could at any moment, by interrupting their commerce, reduce them to the greatest distress. They would attract to themselves all the slaves of the country, and then how could they exist in the midst of an anti-slavery world? It is only in the event of Virginia, with her venerable name, her political power, her commanding influence, joining in the secession, and drawing with her all the other slaveholding states, that the full measure of the evils of disunion would come upon us. Then, it is difficult to see how the irritation arising from conterminous independent states, the one slaveholding and the other free, should fail to produce collision, and collision lead to civil war and servile insurrection. It is the possibility, or probability, of such horrors following this secession movement, that makes us view the matter as so worthy of condemnation. As to the mere prosperity of the North, we see no reason why it may not do as well without political union with the South, as Canada does without a like union with the United States. The extent and resources of the country above Mason and Dixon's line, are far greater than those of almost any modern empire. The time may probably soon come when Canada and the Northern states would be peaceably united in one great confederacy, and the free portion of the country would have a career before it scarcely less glorious than ever. All this supposes disunion to be peaceable. As we fear this is impossible, we look upon disunion as only another name for destruction. A Southern paper says: "The first fugitive that escapes after dissolution, will be

present, without in any wise gaining in the future. We are told, however, that it is resistance, and we must not submit to the late action of Congress. Now, I would like to know which one of these measures we resist by secession. It is not the prohibition of slave-marts in the District of Columbia. It is not the purchase of the Texas territory. It is certainly not the admission of California. Which aggression, then, do we resist by secession? These are all the recent aggressions which we resist now by secession. Secession, gallant as may be the spirit which prompts it, is only a new form of submission.

"For the various reasons I have stated, I object, in as strong terms as I can, to the secession of South-Carolina. Such is the intensity of my conviction upon the subject, that, if secession should take place—of which I have no idea, for I can not believe in the existence of such a stupendous madness—I shall consider the institution of slavery as doomed, and that the Great God in our blindness has made us the instrument of its destruction"

equivalent to a declaration of war." One of the most distinguished advocates of secession tells the people of South-Carolina not to deceive themselves with the expectation that disunion does not mean war. It seems to be the general impression, North and South, that rushing a state out of the Union, without preliminary action on the part of the other states, the sudden and violent disruption of the ties which bind together the complicated system of our national and state governments, is hardly possible, especially in the present state of public feeling, without hostile collision. And the first conflict will be like a spark in a magazine of powder. The responsibility, therefore, assumed by those whose who are urging on secession, which all parties have united in denouncing as treason, is indeed fearful. No part of the Union is free from guilt in this matter. The North has its sins to answer for. But if the views presented in the foregoing pages are correct, the blood and misery which may attend the dissolution of the confederacy must lie mainly at the door of those who for selfish ends labor to effect it, who wish for disunion as a means of prosperity. What is to be the effect of this state of things on the church and the interests of religion? How are those churches to be held together, whose members are nearly equally divided between the North and South? The papers already announce the introduction of a resolution into the Synod of South-Carolina, for the dissolution of its connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. If we are to be plunged into the horrors of civil war and servile insurrections, no tongue can tell how the cause of the Redeemer must suffer throughout our whole land. It seems impossible that Christian men can blind their eyes to these probable consequences of disunion. The eloquent appeal of Dr. Dabney, of Virginia, made through the columns of the *North-Carolina Presbyterian*, to the Christians of the South, can hardly fail to produce a salutary impression. And should the President, as is generally anticipated, earnestly recommend in his message to Congress, a convention of the states, that disunion, if it must come, may at least be peaceably effected, the public sentiment of the country would demand that his counsels should be heeded. Under those circumstances, if Christians at the South do not protest against immediate action, we shall conclude that God has given us up.

But is disunion inevitable? It is of course impossible by any concessions or compromise, to arrest the course of those who desire disunion for its own sake; who believe that the Southern states will be more secure and prosperous in an independent con-

federacy than under the present Constitution, no matter how faithfully it may be administered. But we believe that this class is very small. It consists of the Garrisonians of the North and the professed disunionists at the South. The former desire the dissolution of the Union, because they are persuaded, as are thousands, North and South, that such dissolution would be the doom of slavery. The others desire it for their own ends. The mass of the people would gladly preserve the sacred edifice, cemented with the blood of our fathers, if we could only be reconciled and live together peaceably. The two great difficulties which stand in the way of this harmonious union, are the fugitive slave law, and the territories. As to the former, the constitutional claim of the South is undoubted, but the difficulties in the way of carrying into effect that provision of the Constitution are almost insuperable. These difficulties do not arise from state laws, or from the supineness of the General Government, but from the laws of human nature. The compromise which has been proposed on this point is, that the North should pay the full value of every fugitive slave. This we are persuaded the North would gladly do. How it should be done, may be a question difficult to answer. The ends to be accomplished are, that the payment should be prompt and without contention. Neither of these ends could be secured if the payment is to be sought from the separate states or counties. It must be made by the General Government, and may be reimbursed from that portion of the price of the public lands already deposited with the states; or, as the public lands are common property, their proceeds may be distributed among the states, and the amount necessary to pay for fugitive slaves deducted from the portion due to the North. Any objections to this scheme are trifling compared with the importance of the object to be attained. As to the territories, let the Missouri Compromise be restored, the abrogation of which is the immediate source of all our present troubles.

To the restoration of the Missouri Compromise we do not see that any objection founded on conscientious principle can be urged. 1. The whole North with quiet consciences acquiesced in that compromise. Why should its restoration be opposed? 2. Although it was repealed under the plea that the Act of 1820 had no constitutional authority, yet it may be made perfectly binding and secure as a voluntary compact; or, if necessary, by a constitutional guarantee. 3. Its restoration does not imply any renunciation of the principle that slavery rests on the *lex loci*. It leaves that question just where it is. It only stipulates that south

of the latitude $36^{\circ}30'$ slavery shall not be prohibited either by federal or territorial legislation. 4. No man's conscience, therefore, as it seems to us, who accedes to this measure, can charge him with being responsible for the introduction of slavery by legal enactment into territory now free. 5. The border states and conservative men generally at the South would be satisfied by this concession. The choice, therefore, seems to be between compromise and all the evils of disunion. Should this choice be submitted to the people, who can doubt that the vast majority of them would joyfully vote for the proposed measure? Certain it is that the party that puts itself clearly in the wrong is lost. And especially if the leaders of the Republican party fail to secure the approbation of the moderate, intelligent, and religious men of the Middle and Northern States, by refusing all compromise and assuming a defiant attitude towards the South, they will ruin themselves, and, we fear, the country. May God grant our rulers wisdom, fidelity, and moderation.

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