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**The duty and Obligations of American Citizens in
Relation to the Union,**

AN ORATION

PRONOUNCED IN SOMERSET, KENTUCKY,

ON FEBRUARY 22, 1860,

BY

ROBERT W. LANDIS,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church.

S O M E R S E T :

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1860.

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SOMERSET, KY, FEB 24th, 1860.

REV. R. W. LANDIS, D D:

SIR: At a meeting of the citizens of Somerset and Pulaski county, held on the 23d inst., the undersigned were appointed a committee to wait on you, and tender to you the thanks of the citizens generally, for the wise and patriotic Address delivered by you on the 22d inst., and to request of you a copy of said address for publication.

We are not willing that sentiments so full of wisdom and healing efficacy as those uttered by you, should be confined in their circulation to those who heard them, or depend for their perpetuity on mere recollection alone, but with the same spirit of patriotism which they breathe, we desire to send them broad cast over the land, believing, that in other communities, as well as ours, they will meet a ready response, and draw patriotic hearts together around the altar of our country. Very Respectfully, your ob't. serv'ts.

JOHN G LAIR,
W B. MOORE

SOMERSET, KY, FEB 25th, 1860

REV. R. W LANDIS:

SIR: At a meeting of the "Magoffin Guards" holden this morning, the undersigned were appointed a committee to request of you for publication, a copy of your excellent and patriotic Address, delivered on the 22d inst.

You Sir, had been selected by the "Guards," as the Orator of the day, which selection met with the full concurrence of every patriotic heart.

Upon the part of the "Guards," permit us to tender to you our sincere thanks for your very able, patriotic, and well directed Oration; and in particular, for the high encomium passed by you upon the "Citizen Soldierly"

Your Obedient Servants,

FRANK J. WHITE, Capt.
M B PERKINS,
R S BARRON,
JAS M SANDIFER,
BENJ MILTON

SOMERSET, Ky., FEB 25th, 1860.

To the Committees from the Citizens of Somerset, and Pulaski county, and from the "Magoffin Guards"

GENTLEMEN: Your letters under date of the 24th and 25th inst., requesting for publication a copy of my remarks on the 22d inst., have just been placed in my hands, and you will please accept my thanks for the manner in which you have referred to them. Though the remarks were offered in the discharge of what I deemed my duty as a citizen of the Republic, and express only the sentiments which I regard as proper in the present crisis, I entertained no expectation that they would be considered of sufficient importance to be employed as you propose to employ them. But as they speak the convictions of my understanding, and the feelings of my heart, and define the position which I devoutly believe that we, and all American citizens are called upon to assume; your approval is highly gratifying to me, and I hereby cheerfully comply with the wishes you have expressed, and submit the manuscript to your disposal. Very Respectfully, yours,

ROBERT W LANDIS

To Messrs Capt John G Lair, W B Moore, Esq, Capt Frank J. White, M B. Perkins, and others.

ORATION.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fellow-Citizens & Citizen Soldiers;

IN a country and under a government like ours, nothing is more proper than the custom of perpetuating by Anniversary observances, the memory of those events associated with the past in our history, which have tended to the development and establishment of our national greatness. The idea, moreover, is as universal as our race; and is found associated not only with civil and military history, but with religion itself; and even with individual personal history. Hence, from early times, the days named Christmas and Easter, were observed as commemorating the birth and death of our blessed Lord; and still earlier the feast of Dedication and of the Passover, were celebrated by the Jews. And as respects personal history, the anniversary of a birth-day, is always impressive; and from very early times we find the birth-day of a Monarch regarded as a season of festivity. Thus England celebrates the birth-day of her existing sovereign; and the day of her deliverance from the gun-powder plot; and other days which recall to mind interesting events in her national history. In like manner we have our seventeenth of June; our fourth of July; our nineteenth of October; our twentieth of December; our eighth of January, and twenty-second of February. Such seasons, rightly observed, cannot but have the effect of keeping freshly before the mind, not only the occurrences to which they immediately refer, but kindred events associated with them; and the results which have followed—and hence, what can be more proper than that American citizens should celebrate the birth-day of the *Father of their Country*?

In our day it would be a reflection on the intelligence of any well-informed audience in the civilized world, to undertake in their presence, a Eulogy on Washington; and before an American audience, it were not only idle but ludicrous. Sir Christopher Wren, the great architect of St. Paul's in London, is still proudly remembered as scarcely inferior in genius, to Michael Angelo, the architect of St. Peter's in Rome. Travellers, however, on visiting St. Paul's, are disappointed to find no monument erected therein to the Artist. But in scanning the vast interior, the eye presently lights upon the inscription, *If you seek for a Monument, look around you.* So we may proudly say of Washington: *If you wish for a eulogy, look around you.* Contemplate the condition of our country when he was called into the field and to the helm of State; and then view it now. He, in his unaffected modesty, would have shrunk from claiming the honor of these results. He, and his gallant compatriots, felt that they were but the instruments through whom an Almighty and benign Providence accomplished them. Nor would we claim more than this for him and them. His memory and deeds are indissolubly connected with those of his fellows in the camp, field, senate, and government. But God raised him up as the guiding mind who was not only to lead the nation

onward to freedom, but who was likewise to enstamp upon his country the features of his character. This pre-eminence was, moreover, cheerfully accorded him by his co-laborers while he lived; and results have justified them; and we fondly hope will justify his country and the world in so regarding him to the end of time. We therefore repeat the remark: If you would see the mind, the soul, the aims of him whose birth we this day celebrate, look around you. View the noble monuments of freedom existing in our country; view our national greatness; view our national prosperity. In that *Farewell Address to the American People* to which you have just listened, you find him fully anticipating that greatness, and prosperity, for the nation to whose welfare he consecrated the unwearied labors of his life.

But national greatness, alas! is not our theme to-day. That *Farewell Address* likewise evinces that the Father of his Country foresaw, not only our then coming glory and prosperity as a nation, but also the fearful perils which should at times environ us in the midst of all; and hence those solemn counsels and admonitions which were uttered from the very depth of his heart of hearts. We have realized the first; and for long years have been rejoicing in a great and prosperous country, but we are now brought to realize also the last; for perils, fearful perils, environ us; perils which we must encounter unless we would prove ourselves unworthy of the inheritance bequeathed us; and perils of such a character, moreover, that the result of the encounter, whatever it may be, must tell for weal or woe, and for unnumbered years, upon the generations which succeed us. There is, therefore, no mistaking our duty as citizens of the Republic, upon this day consecrated to the memory of Washington. The interests of our country demand the earnest and prayerful consideration of all her children; and demand that around our noble inheritance every heart should rally with the firm resolve to meet the crisis as true men should meet it; and that until it is met, fully, and in all its extent, we shall regard all other objects, all party lines, all controversies not involving this issue, and even life itself, as objects of but secondary importance. We have not only a sacred blood purchased inheritance bequeathed us by the noblest generation of men the world has ever seen; BUT IT HAS BEEN BEQUEATHED US IN TRUST FOR THOSE WHO COME AFTER US. And he who, for any earthly reason whatever, would betray that trust, let his name forever be as the name of Benedict Arnold; yes, let him be *anathema maeanatha*.

In a representative government, which certainly is the most perfect of all human forms of government, there is, and must of necessity be, in the very nature of the case a liability to abuses of various kinds; for what creation of human devisement can claim the attribute of perfection? There is and must be, for instance in a country so extensive as ours, and on the part of distant local interests; a liability to be brought more or less into collision. There has ever been likewise, a proneness on the part of many, to insist upon the doctrine, that the representative is the embodiment of the will of his constituents, to this extent, at least, that a refusal to acquiesce in all his aims and proceedings, is often equivalent to a forfeiture of consistency and of party prerogatives and principles.— Hence, we find that multitudes in our political party organizations; oftentimes openly refuse, or hesitate to assume the position which, in times like the present, a sacred duty to their country demands, and they

thus hesitate from the pusillanimous fear, that by so doing, they shall forfeit their position as Democrats, Republicans, and what not. And while the true and unselfish representative of his constituents, being anxious only to serve his country, will scorn to take advantage of so unworthy and so unamerican an idea; the mere demagogue, whose aims are selfish; and to whose personal aggrandizement the interests of country and of constituents are all subordinate, knows well how to take advantage of it to promote his ends. And there need be no hesitation in affirming that to this fact is mainly to be attributed the perils which have now awakened such universal apprehension in relation to our country, and the permanency of our Union.

There are, however, causes, incidental and exciting, which have been regarded as a basis for such operations; but such causes have always, more or less, existed, and have only now become perilous from the fact that men who claim to be leaders of the people, have sought to make their low, selfish pursuit of self-aggrandisement identical with the welfare of our country. This asseveration may be truly and soberly made and reiterated; and is justified fully after the most careful and candid scrutiny of the existing state of our national affairs. A general denunciation of our Senators and Representatives, would be both arrogant and indecent. There may be, and doubtless are, some as true patriots now in Congress, as our country may ever hope to produce. But yet, it must ever hold good, that "by their fruits ye shall know them." It matters not what a man's professions are, either in religion, politics, or anything else, if his deeds give them the lie. It is by his deeds that he should be, and must be judged. These are the true exponent of the man; of his real aspirations, aims and pursuits. And hence, it is obvious that when any man, no matter who, shall clearly and unambiguously attempt to foment animosity, and develop into life and action, supposed or real antagonisms between different sections of our confederacy, he is not seeking his country's good, whatever else he may be seeking; unless on the supposition that he has not sufficient common sense to know what is for his country's good; and so, is occupying a position which he is wholly incompetent to sustain. And in either case, it is certainly time that his constituents took their affairs into their own hands, by granting him an effectual permission to retire permanently to the shades of private life.

Soon after the close of our Revolutionary struggle, a man, whose name deserves not to be mentioned, attempted to arouse our gallant, patriot army, to deeds of rashness and violence, because Congress did not at once remunerate them for their services; and he urged them to regard as their enemy, the man who should counsel longer forbearance. It is impossible to tell what might have been the result of his treasonable attempts had not Washington happened in camp at the time. You have, perhaps, read his noble address on that occasion. His counsels recommended forbearance and patience; and the excited soldiery followed them; and though suffering greatly from actual destitution, returned peaceful to their homes. And with their full concurrence and approbation; the man who sought thus to lead them into rash proceedings, has had his name deservedly assigned to a position not much lower than that of Benedict Arnold on the roll of infamy.

Now, in a crisis like that which at present seems to imperil the existing interests and welfare of our country,—what is the obvious and primary

duty of every American citizen? The question appertains not to position or standing, but concerns the man in public or in private life; whether he occupy the Presidential or Gubernatorial chair, or the halls of legislation, or is found attending to his own private affairs. It is a plain and simple question; and certainly the solution need not be difficult. Can any man seriously believe that in any now occurrent, or soberly anticipated emergency, the dissolution of our confederacy can be an alternative in the mind of a true hearted American patriot? Or that such a procedure can in sober thought, be a remedy for any existing or justly anticipated evils? I shall not attempt to dwell upon the unutterable horrors necessarily resulting from such a catastropae—human language itself must fail in the effort to depict them; but I hesitate not to say, Gentlemen, that the man who, in view of the love entertained for the Union by the great mass of the American people; and in view of the yet untried and undeveloped powers and resources of the Government to redress all unconstitutional grievances; would understandingly announce this alternative in view of any emergency that has yet transpired; or of any emergency which is on any probable grounds anticipated; not only is not the true friend of his country, but deserves to be regarded as her foe. It is an alternative the adoption of which nothing of the kind can be even pretended to justify. Suppose, for illustration, that one of the men, either north or south, who is ever insisting on this alternative, should insist that, in a certain other contingency, he could have no other alternative but to go home and cut his father's throat, ravish his mother, and murder his wife and children? and should affirm that circumstances were rapidly driving him to the adoption of this alternative? You may bring into account all the supposed and supposable grievances, and causes of provocation, tending to develop the alleged emergency; and yet would any man who is not an idiot, or the basest of miscreants, admit that the perpetration of such a crime should be the alternative in any contingency whatever? And how much worse would such a crime be, than that of breaking up our confederacy, and involving the country in all the unspeakable horrors consequent upon so atrocious a procedure? I therefore, repeat it, that the man who will insist upon such an alternative in any actually existing, or seriously anticipated contingency, is not the friend of his country, but deserves to forfeit her esteem and confidence forever. We owe it to ourselves, fellow-citizens; we owe it to our country, in the present crisis—and we owe it to those who are to come after us, and whose interests are now in our keeping; fearlessly to make this avowal, and to stand by it regardless of all consequences—that the man who intelligently, and for any existing or justly anticipated reason, would seriously advise or attempt the dismemberment of this Confederacy, is a foe and traitor to his country, and should be so regarded by every American patriot. Bring up all the grievances, real or supposed, which have been asserted to involve the necessity for such a step; and what right has any man to assume that they cannot be redressed under the legitimate administration of constitutional prerogatives? Or that the people will ever permit any Administration to trample upon the Constitution itself? No man ever has had, or ever can have, the right to assume anything of the kind, until those prerogatives have been fully exercised, and have been found to fail; and until the people have evinced a heedless disregard of the duties they owe to Liberty and the Constitu-

tion. And therefore, no man has, or can have the right, as matters now stand, to assume the alternative of dissolution in case either of the adoption, or non adoption of any specific policy whatever. If wrong or injustice be attempted, the just presumption is, that the country will set it right—for it is not to be presumed that any existing grievance when properly brought before the people of the Republic, will not be ultimately and fully redressed; nor that dissolution can redress any wrong that will not be righted under the just exercise and administration of constitutional powers.

In considering the question as to the duty of the government in case a portion of the confederacy should attempt its dissolution, we must, of course, admit the fact that the people possess the undoubted right to change or modify the Constitution—and that this is a first principle in all Democratic organizations: as in any of our States the people may change, modify, remodel, or re-establish a State constitution. But then suppose a single county or two in one of the States should undertake such a procedure on the plea of oppressive State legislation, and absolutely refuse to acquiesce in the State government? Can any one admit such a right? or doubt what would be the duty of that government in such an emergency? If any one should, let him advert to incidents in our national history which have established sufficient precedents in all such cases. It is not competent to any minority thus to change, much less to dissolve a constitution; and it were the extreme of folly to pretend such a thing. The State, in such a case, neither has, nor can have any alternative but to regard every attempt of this kind, as rebellion and treason, and to treat its authors and abettors, as rebels and traitors. Should a minority see proper to seek, even at the point of the bayonet, a remedy for alleged grievances, let them do it; but this certainly gives them neither right nor authority to break down the Government, and abolish the Constitution. These assuredly, are first principles. And in the light of them, the present issue should be considered. No State, and no dozen of our States, either has, or can have any such right. And if they insist on possessing and exercising any such power or authority whatever, they must be met just there, and at that point—and every friend of the Constitution and of the Union, should resolve to meet them just there.

The point is not to be conceded. If they insist on it, they, of course, have the full liberty to do so: But if they venture to insist on it by attempting to overturn the Constitution, and imperilling the interests of the majority of their fellow citizens along with their own; they must take the righteous and inevitable consequences of such a procedure. As patriots—as men true to their country, to posterity, and to God, we have no other course to pursue, but to regard and treat all such attempts as treasonable and rebellious. To concede the opposite principle would be a great absurdity, and perfectly suicidal both to constitution and country. And it is, moreover, what the Secessionists themselves would never concede to a minority in their own district, if it were adverse to their operations, and could be put down. And then, further, the principle stultifies itself. Suppose, for instance, that several States, claiming the right to do so, should determine to break up our Constitution by departing from the Union. There would still be found in each of those states a minority of the citizens utterly opposed to such a procedure; and in favor of the Constitution and Union: a minority which, on the very principle

contended for by the Secessionists, has the right to oppose them, if need be, at the cannon's mouth; and which is, of course, entitled on every just and equitable ground, to ask the General Government to aid them in maintaining their rights. And, by parity of reason, the Government is bound to respect their rights, and to sustain them in their legitimate exercise. So that on this ground alone the Government may justly and constitutionally protect itself against all such proceedings aiming at its subversion. And then still further, it is self-evident that our Government possesses the right to protect itself from being subverted, or overthrown; and is justly entitled to employ all legitimate means for its preservation. On these principles I cannot here expatiate; but as they are undeniable, it is obvious that the friends of the Constitution and of their country, are bound at every hazard, to put down by arms, if necessary, all attempts aiming at its overthrow. True, a crisis like this would be unspeakably sad and dreadful; but in such an extremity there is left no other alternative. And here, gentlemen, let us take our position, and calmly abide the issue, regardless of consequences. God in his Providence has established our confederacy, and cemented its parts together with as noble blood as ever flowed in human veins. And as its interests at the present time are committed to the keeping of the generation now upon the stage of life, we are called upon to stand by it to the death. Life is a mere bauble compared to the mighty interests involved; a bauble which we should not for a moment hesitate to cast aside, if brought into competition with those interests; and ere we should consent that those interests be seriously imperilled; or be willing to inherit the deep and damning infamy we should so justly deserve, if, for the sake of life, or any earthly good, we should surrender the claim which they, who are to come after us, have to receive inviolate at our hands the blood-bought inheritance which we have received in trust for them. If death, or infamy like this, be the alternative, the wretch who would choose to live deserves not the name of an American. He is only fit to be the degrading tool of mere designing demagogues; and deserves no higher destiny than to live and die a slave.

But, fellow-citizens, while we insist on these things; and should ever stand ready, at every hazard, to insist on them; it would be unpardonable to pass, as if unworthy of consideration, the circumstances which have tended to develop sectional strife, and upon which men, who cloak their ambitious and selfish aims under the specious pretense of zeal for their country, have seized for the purpose of carrying into effect mere partizan purposes.— Let us briefly consider these grievances alleged to exist both at North and South; and in view of them examine whether a remedy for all or for any of them may be rationally hoped for by a dissolution of the Union.

The disposition which has been exhibited by individuals at the North to meddle with the internal rights and policy of the Southern States, is, and has long been a righteous ground of complaint. There is no right more sacredly guaranteed and guarded by the Constitution of our confederacy, than the right of each State to regulate its own internal police, and administer its own private affairs. To trifle with this right, or to treat it as unworthy of regard; and yet claim an adherence to either the letter or the spirit of the Constitution is base hypocrisy; and the man who is guilty of it thereby forfeits all claim to the protection of the Constitution and of the Government. But let us be careful not to confound a

claim to such interference with the undoubted right to free speech and free discussion on any and every subject relating to our country. The one right is as sacred as the other, and equally guarded by the Constitution; nor can it be for one moment admitted that the right of a State to administer its internal affairs can in any sense absorb or abolish the right to freedom of speech which is the inalienable possession of every member of the body politic. They are perfectly distinct; and in their legitimate exercise, can never come really into collision. But when men will impertinently intrude into a neighbor's family affairs, of which they know little or nothing; and insist upon making them a subject of discussion; the annoyance may be undoubtedly great; but such things occur everywhere; and patience and rebuke are the best resource under impertinences of that sort. But to attempt a remedy by destroying our nation and dissolving the Union, would be about as rational as for a man to cure the tooth-ache by chopping off his head. Evils which cannot be remedied without rushing headlong into evils seven-fold greater or into hopeless ruin, are to be borne patiently, until the time for a just retriue arrives. We count the suicide, if, sane, a coward, who from apprehension of evil here, will destroy his life; and rush unbidden into the presence of God; and into the retributions of eternity. Under the Divine Government evils like these, whether national or personal, will be legitimately redressed, if redress be patiently sought; and when we have no choice but thus to seek it, or to rush into irretrievable ruin, we may certainly recommend the less evil of the two.

There are other sources of annoyance, both at the South and North, which have tended to produce the present state of things in our nation. I say, both at the North and South—for that man is a mere pretender to patriotism whose interest in his country's welfare is bounded by sectional lines; and we should utterly and forever repudiate, as the merest pretenders to patriotism, the whole of that herd of mere office-seekers who claim to be "Northern men with Southern principles;" or "Southern men with Northern principles." Under our Constitution, I neither now know, nor ever have known, nor ever will know, a North or a South; an East or a West. I have pledged myself to sustain the Constitution of my country, and the blood-cemented Union of the States; and as a citizen of the Republic, acknowledge myself opposed to any measure, and to any man that would trample upon either; let the measure or the man come from the North or from the South—from the East or the West. The true statesman and patriot, will, without respect to any sectional division whatever, seek the enforcement of the Constitution; and respect alike, the constitutional rights and prerogatives of all. He will listen to, and respect the complaint of the South that many at the North openly resist their guaranteed right to recover their fugitive slaves. And he will equally regard the complaint of the North, that many at the South are seeking to disgrace our common country, by an attempted revival of the African Slave-trade; the most execrable piracy that ever the sun shone upon. And so too, of the fifty other sources of grievance which have been the subjects of complaint. In all such, and similar cases, he will stand forth the determined advocate of the Constitution, and of the guaranteed rights of all who are under it.

At the present time, the crisis of all the alleged antagonisms, seems to be maturing the more rapidly, from the fact that a Presidential election

is approaching. And while we repudiate, and utterly denounce the sentiment that the election of a President by a constitutional majority, having views of public policy, with which the minority do not coincide, would furnish any ground for the dissolution of the Union; and while we openly pledge ourselves that, whoever may be chosen to the office of Chief Magistrate of the Republic, in a constitutional way, shall receive from us in the lawful discharge of his duties, the same willing obedience and full support which we have ever given to his predecessors, and sustain and protect him in the lawful discharge of those duties, from all enemies within and without—at home or abroad: we should not lose sight of the fact, that nothing of these alledged grievances, both at the North and South, will be forgotten; or fail to have the worst possible construction put upon it by representative party demagogues. What meanness is so debasing; what villainy so execrable; what iniquity so inhuman; that party hacks have not stooped to it for effecting political purposes! Lying; and slander; and knavery in all its forms; and brutalizing vice; are, under such circumstances, even regarded as virtues, if they only tend to the elevation of a political aspirant; or to crush and defeat an antagonist. The impression made upon the mind of a continental European gentleman, who was in our country during a recent Presidential canvass, was expressed by him in these words: “*The Americans select as candidates for the Presidency the greatest rascals in the country.*” And such would seem to be the fair impression upon any candid mind, who would peruse our partizan discussions at such a time. Well may we expect, therefore, that in the approaching canvass, the mere demagogue will make the most of the existing causes of sectional complaint; and that if able to do so, he will, in order to carry his point, recklessly seek to fan the embers into a flame, that shall consume the goodly edifice of our Constitution and Union. Already, both, at South and North, we hear it said by partizans of this sort, that if the Democrats elect a proslavery man, and if the Republicans elect a candidate to carry out their principles, the Union must be dissolved—*statements which evince beyond all rational doubt the utter unfitness of either party to be entrusted with the interests of this great nation at the present time.* And then from the extreme borders of the land, we hear it announced by some of the officials, that the States there, are already prepared to dissolve the Union—an announcement, which, however true it may be, when understood of mere party demagogues, can never be true of the great body of conservative citizens there, while they remember that those States have suffered the very least of all the confederacy, from the alleged grievances; no, not all of them together a hundredth part of what has been suffered by Missouri, or our own State, or Virginia, or Maryland. The ambitious demagogues therein, may aspire to pre-eminence in offensive dictatorship, and in treason to the Constitution and Union; and to a fanaticism as despicable as that of Wendell Phillips and Garrison, and their coadjutors in the North; but among the honorable and patriotic and considerate men who compose the great body of the inhabitants of those States, they will meet with as little sympathy as they would meet with here. And we doubt not, that the patriotic men there, stand ready, with their conservative brethren all over the Union, to unite for the rescue of their country; and to dismiss to private life all those whose miserable demagogism has been trifling with, and imperilling her welfare.

It is always unfortunate for the peace of the country when mere politicians and partizans imagine that they themselves are the people. For their own aggrandisement they seek to "obfuscate" the minds of their constituents—and when they, to a certain extent, succeed, claim that they, in their low, selfish operations, are representing the people. But men, who, for any reason, and under any circumstances, are capable of blundering in this way, ought surely not to expect that an intelligent people will be willing to entrust the interests of the country to their hands. In all such cases, the people have a sacred duty to perform: they must take the interests of the country into their own keeping. And in the matter before us, fellow-citizens, our duty is plain. To the men who, in their boundless self-conceit and arrogance, presume to say, that they will, on such and such contingencies, dissolve the Union; we must reply by saying, both by our words and by our actions: "*No you don't dissolve the Union on any such contingency! Attempt it, and we shall very soon dissolve you! If you, as individuals, don't like the Union, go out of it; and go where you please; there is room enough for you elsewhere in the world. But while we remember the mighty outlay of treasure and of toil and of blood, that it cost to establish the Union; and the mighty interests involved in its perpetuation; your attempt to dissolve it, will be fatal only to yourselves. We have an interest in this matter as well as you have. You may imperil your own interest if you choose; but woe to you if you attempt to imperil ours!*"

I cheerfully admit that in the original formation of our Government, and in the adoption of the Constitution, it was entirely optional with the States to enter the Union, or not. They were at liberty to refuse, and had the right to do so, if they saw proper. And we may further admit that were those original States still the only existing parties, they might stand, as yet, in a very different relation to this whole question from what they do now. But such is not the fact; and were the whole of them now disposed to subvert the Union and Constitution, they could have not the shadow of either moral or legal right to do so. It would be a most absurd idea, that because parties may have a right to enter into contract, they necessarily have the right, also, to dissolve the contract at pleasure, and without regard to the interests of others, which may have become involved therein. The idea has nothing to sustain it in morals; and is repudiated alike by ecclesiastical and by civil jurisprudence, and by the laws of nature and of nations. And for any State, or any number of the States of our confederacy to assume it, is to assume a preposterous absurdity as the basis and warranty of their operations. And if such persons expect that the people of our country will submit to have their rights and welfare trifled with and imperilled on grounds like those, they have made a calculation which it will hardly be safe to act upon.— And I call upon you, fellow citizens; and ye, citizen-soldiers; I invoke you by the revered name and sacred memory of Washington; and of our venerated ancestors who so freely shed their blood to procure the blessings we now enjoy; I invoke you by the memory of our noble fathers who in a second war with England, vindicated our right to this inheritance; I invoke you by the remembered deeds of our brethren who so lately maintained upon the many well fought fields in Mexico, the reputation of our country, and the unsullied honor of her flag; I invoke you, by the welfare and happiness of those who are to come after us, and

who have the right to receive at our hands this sacred inheritance as untarnished and as uninjured as we ourselves received it: I invoke you by these considerations, so sacred to the heart of every true man, that without regard to party or to person; without regard to sectional divisions, or geographical lines; you stand forth as true men should stand, for your country and the Union.

On this whole subject let us listen to the voice of Washington. In his *Farewell Address*, he says: "The unity of government which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence; the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad, of your safety of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. *But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes, and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds, the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as a palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may even suggest a suspicion that it can, in any event, be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.*" "All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to divert, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency."

Such then is the support given by the Father of our Country to the position which we assume. He knew no North nor South, as respects his country; and regarded every man as his country's foe, who, on any pretext whatever, should seek a dissolution of the Union.

The same sentiments were thus expressed by *Henry Clay*, at a public meeting in Baltimore: "There is one point, however, on which I feel at liberty to express myself fully—I allude to the *Union of the States*. This question is, in my view, paramount to every other. There is none of sufficient importance to be considered in connection with it." Then rising to his full height, his eye flashing fire, he added:

"*In all circumstances, in any and every event, I shall labor for the perpetuity of the Union. Let the storm come from whatever quarter it may, I am prepared to meet it, and to stand by our glorious Confederacy.*"

WEBSTER, in the Senate, also said in referring to the same subject: Peaceable Secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. It is an utter impossibility. Where is the line to be drawn? What States are to secede? What is to remain American?—Where am I to be? An American no longer? Where is the flag of the Republic to remain? Where is the eagle still to tower? Or is he to cower and shrink and fall to the ground?—But the idea must be of a separation, including the slave States upon one side, and the free States

on the other. Sir, I hold the idea as a moral impossibility. We could not separate the States by any such line, if we were to draw it. We could not sit down here to-day, and draw a line of separation, that would satisfy any five men in the country.—The world is looking toward us with extreme anxiety. For myself, I propose, sir, to abide by the principles, and the purpose which I have avowed. I SHALL STAND BY THE UNION, AND BY ALL WHO STAND BY IT.—I shall act for the good of the whole country, in all I do. I MEAN TO STAND UPON THE CONSTITUTION: I NEED NO OTHER PLATFORM. I shall know but one country. I was born an American; I live an American; I shall die an American; and I intend to perform the duties incumbent in that character to the end of my career. I mean to do this, with an absolute disregard of personal consequences.—Let the consequences be what they will, I am careless. NO MAN CAN SUFFER TOO MUCH, AND NO MAN CAN FALL TOO SOON, IF HE SUFFERS, OR IF HE FALLS IN DEFENSE OF THE LIBERTIES OR CONSTITUTION OF HIS COUNTRY.”*

GEN. HOUSTON, after uttering substantially the same noble sentiments, added, “I deny the power of all the ultras on earth to dissolve the Union, or to rend it in twain.—IF IT MUST BE DISSOLVED, I WISH THAT ITS RUINS MAY BE THE MONUMENT OF MY GRAVE, AND THE GRAVES OF MY FAMILY. I WISH NO EPITAPH TO BE WRITTEN TO TELL THAT I SURVIVED THE RUIN OF THIS GLORIOUS UNION.”†

Omitting many equally admirable and pertinent declarations of Senators and Representatives both from the North and South, I will here briefly quote from the remarks of the HONORABLE JEREMIAH CLEMENS (then of Alabama,) who at a public meeting in Huntsville, said: “Restless men,—men of blind prejudices and headstrong passions,—will assuredly say and do things calculated to disturb the harmony of the Republic. It may be that in some States excitement may carry them to the verge of secession. I hope Alabama may not be found among the number.”—Then referring to a visit which he had recently made to the tomb of Washington, he adds: “Clouds and darkness then hovered over the land. Disunion was a familiar word. Most of us had lost confidence in our northern brethren, and were looking forward to a violent termination of the impending controversy. I gazed upon the spot where the remains of that great and good man repose, and asked, To whom will he belong when we are divided? It was not for the South alone he fought; not for the South alone he spurned a kingly diadem. The South, indeed, gave him to the nation, but he gave to the whole land liberty and independence, and all alike are the heirs of his glory. The pilgrim from Bunker Hill, as well as he from Camden, has a right to visit that sacred spot and kneel and worship there. His awful shade would rise to rebuke the section that dared appropriate him to itself. We cannot divide him, nor can we divide the trophies gathered on the bloody fields of the Revolution—Many a soiled banner which once waved above a haughty foe, is now to be seen at the Capitol of the Republic, and the American who can look upon them and not feel his heart beat quicker and his step grow prouder and firmer, is unworthy of the name. All these were jointly won and belong to us in common.”

While such sentiments prevail among the gallant spirits of the Southern States, we shall continue to disregard all the threats, and belligerent in-

* Speeches on March 7, and July 17, 1850. † Speech on Feb. 8, 1850.

mations, of the officials and party-demagogues in these States. We shall never doubt that the true hearts there, stand ready, at the call of their country, to arise in their strength, and if needs be, to quench the flames of treason with the blood of the traitors, who should seek to kindle them into a consuming fire.

During the administration of PRESIDENT JACKSON, and when nullification was so rife in the minds of some; and even by our best and greatest men serious apprehensions were entertained as to the permanency of the Union; it will be recollected by some of you that the General visited New York. After his entrance he appeared upon the balcony of the City Hall; and, as he beheld the countless multitudes of well-dressed, orderly citizens, from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and other States, who had assembled to do honor to the Chief Magistrate of the Republic; and heard the long rolling thunders of their enthusiastic cheering; he, turning to Governor Marcy, said, with quivering lip, "*Nullification will never take root here.*"* And I assure you my friends, that New York and her sister States stand ready to make that declaration good at any time, and in any way that circumstances may require.

But if the crisis must come; if the power of the people to sustain the Government and Constitution by putting down all traitors and treasonable projects against the perpetuity of the Union, must be tested; I say, *let it come! and the sooner it comes the better!* I am no advocate for an appeal to arms; but when our country has no choice but this, or disgrace and ruin, let the appeal be made. In such a contest we shall have Heaven on our side. The God of our Fathers who sustained them amid all their sufferings, and trials, and perils; and by their blood established our freedom, and erected and cemented this confederacy; will not forsake us in the same righteous cause. And while I am assured that Religion, and the whole family of Christian brotherhood, will be true in this struggle, I may be permitted to add that I should be undeserving of membership in the Church which I represent, were I capable of hesitation in a crisis and in a controversy like this. That Church threw the whole of her hallowed influence into the Revolutionary struggle: her ink is found on the charter of our Independence; her Rosborough and Caldwell, when called to yield their lives for the noble stand they took for freedom, cheerfully submitted to death at the hands of the ferocious hordes of England and Germany; and from Maine to Georgia her sons poured forth their blood like water, upon every battlefield of the Revolution, in defense of the dearest rights of man. And should the times ever require, you will find that she will stand by the Union till death. In such a contest her sons have learned to rejoice that they have a life to lay upon the altar of our common country. If the noble and glorious structure of our Union must perish, it shall not perish until we are no longer able to stretch forth a hand in its defense: For the cause of the Union has become quite too deeply identified with the cause of religion and humanity for us to think of permitting it to perish short of this. Nor shall those stars and stripes, beneath which our sires moved on to victory and Freedom, ever be stricken down, till we have ceased to be spectators of earthly scenes

* It is truly gratifying to perceive that the following emphatic declaration of the same old Hero is fast becoming a household word in our country and must doubtless soon stand as an American maxim: "THE UNION MUST AND SHALL BE PRESERVED."

Permit me to conclude with the words of the great American statesman, who, in his reply to Senator Hayne, remarked: "While the Union lasts, we have high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before us; for us and our children. Beyond that, I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant, that, in my day at least, that curtain may not rise. God grant that on my vision never may be opened what lies behind.—When my eyes shall be turned to behold, for the last time, the sun in Heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds; or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let that last feeble and lingering glance, rather behold the gorgeous Ensign of the Republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured—bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory as, *What is all this worth?* nor those other words of delusion and folly: *Liberty first, and Union afterwards*: but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind of the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart—LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE."

☞ At the conclusion of the Oration, the following benediction was pronounced by the Rev. L. Parker, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and by request of the citizens has been furnished for publication:

"And now may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be extended to us, and may the religion of Christ Jesus be the religion of our Nation.—And may the love of God; the God of Abraham, and the God of Washington, who led our armies to conquest, rule in our hearts, and may he be our God, and the God of our children. And may the comfort and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us as a nation, until every malignant and treasonable passion shall die out of us; and we be perfectly united in one common and general brotherhood. And when the trump of Almighty God shall call the nations to judgment, may we, being prepared, be taken up into Heaven, to praise the Triune God, world without end—
AMEN.