

upon him their maledictions. The alarming danger spread over the whole country. The nation rocked like a great ship at sea in the wildest storm. Day after day, and night after night, the friends and enemies of the measure met in forensic battle in the two houses of Congress. All that could be done by threats and bribes, was done; but there stood Douglass in the midst of the fury of the storm, like a great rock on the coast, when the great waves of the sea spend all their force upon it—immovable and steadfast, to the joy of the nation,—thus was this wicked measure defeated, and Kansas was made a free State.

Up to this time, so strong had slavery become, that it dictated nearly all our treaties with foreign Governments; furnished most of our great staples for export, and controlled the great commerce of the nation. Not only so, but it graduated our tariffs, from that of an embargo to a high protective tariff. It also made our laws and appointed all the officers of the Government. Not content with all this, it then invaded our holy religion and demoralized our Churches, and divided them; and then it went coursing up and down through the Bible, seeking rest and finding none. Every page of that sacred book, flashed around it an omnipresent anguish, and it howled in the light of truth like Satan in the presence of Christ the Lord. At last it slunk away into the Mosaic system—hoping to burrow out of sight, and there hide its deformity in the midst of its types and shadows. Vain hope! Its asylum was its sepulchre; and its city of refuge was the city of its destruction, for in going there, it only rushed from light into the sun, and from heat into the devouring fire, and from the voice of God into the thickest of His thunders.

In all that was said and done against slavery, there was nothing said or done by any political party, in any manner, to interfere with it in any of the States where it existed. All that was attempted, was to limit its territorial limits, and prevent its extension into free territory.

Even the old Liberty party, asked in addition to this, only, that slavery should be abolished in the District of Columbia and the traffic in slaves between the States. The Free Democracy of 1848, asked for only the Wilmot proviso—and the Republican party asked no more. No one aimed a blow of interference with slavery in the States.

What more ought slavery to have asked? With the then territorial limits it was not satisfied. Having swept by its besom, State after State, and Territory after Territory into its capacious maw, its greed became absolutely enormous, and then demanded that the entire national domain be declared free to slavery, and that all municipal as well as the national laws should recognize and support the system as a national, humane and Christian institution.

Against these demands, the noble Lincoln and Douglass, then at the head of the two great political parties of that day, entered their solemn protests. Upon this demand, the great Democratic party, in its National Convention at Charleston, S. C., in 1860, split. Douglass led one wing into the contest, and Breckenridge the other; by reason of this division Lincoln was elected President, and by his election the people decided that slavery should be confined to the territory where it was then planted.

But during this time, leading Southern men had been busy with their schemes to dismember the government. Their immediate pretext was their old exploded notions of State sovereignty and nullification as advocated by J. C. Calhoun in 1832-3, and demolished by Daniel Webster in his reply to Hayne. By the prompt action and strong hand of Andrew Jackson, this scheme of nullification was for that time defeated. But it still lived and was nursed like a babe in swaddling clothes, into the full stature of a man, and we find him in 1860-61 a full armed warrior.

During the session of Congress ending March 4th 1861, nearly all the representatives from the South were violent in their language and manners, and threatening in their position toward the Government and the incoming Administration. From day to day the excitement rose higher and higher, until the political heavens were all in a blaze, and the very ground beneath our feet heaving as by the action of a mighty earthquake.

The North, and loyalists at the South, were firm and steadfast; and the enemies of the government had determined upon the destruction of the government.

During the time, a voluntary arrangement was entered upon by a few men of the South, under the lead of John Tyler, for the purpose of another compromise between Freedom and Slavery. The new party, then about to come into power, was anxious to avoid if possible the great approaching crisis. All felt that vital interests were at stake. On one side was our government, our institutions of learning, of religion and of freedom. On the other side was ignorance, demoralization, despotism and slavery. There was no middle ground to stand upon—all felt that there was not; but notwithstanding this, representatives from the free States were appointed, and met John Tyler and his friends in conversation in Washington early in the Winter of 1861, to fix up another compromise. But the South, through Jeff Davis, then a Senator of the U. S.—in his seat in Congress, told Congress and that sheepish convention,—and the people of this great nation both north and south, that "he, nor the South would submit to any more compromises—that if the people of the free States should extend to him a sheet of white paper, and agree that he might write out his own terms of a compromise; he would spurn the offer;—and then with his haughty sneer, he proudly and boastingly said, that the American flag had been repeatedly insulted by the chivalrous South, and it would be again; and that the government dared not punish the insult; that the government had sent the *Star of the West* staggering into Charleston Harbor to provision our garrison there, and that the South had quickly sent her staggering out again."

Soon after this, Davis and his co-conspirators, left Congress for their homes in the South to put into operation their plans of secession; and soon by bribes, and threats, and frauds, they were enabled to control eleven States, to such an extent, that they in some formal manner, declared them out of the Union. Immediately thereupon, they improvised a conspirators' convention, and organized a rebel government, and adopted a constitution with slavery and state sovereignty as the great cornerstones thereof.

Alexander H. Stevens, in March 1861, at Savannah, Georgia, said "that slavery was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution." Mr. Hammond, when a U. S. Senator, from South Carolina, said, "that slavery was the proper condition of all laborers;" and then spoke deridingly of our hard fisted farmers and greasy mechanics, and then classed them, one, and all, with the slaves of the South.

A form of despotism, under whatever form of government they may be practised, tend directly to the degradation of the laboring masses, and will ultimate in their oppression, if not in their slavery; and on the other hand, slavery makes despots and tyrants—but liberty and equality before the law, make great men and women, and fill the land with happy homes, and an educated people, and bless the world with philanthropists and the practical carrying out of a deed-wise, instead of a creed-wise religion.

The issue was then made up, and it was whether the principles of liberty and free institutions should be established and protected until they became pre-eminent in the nation and among the people, or whether slavery, with a proud aristocracy and a practical despotism should prevail in the government and among the people.

When we, or a nation, or a government consent that the poor and weak may be reduced to slavery by the rich or strong because they are poor or weak, we and it thereby consent, that we and it may be reduced to slavery, when by some unforeseen misfortune or calamity, we find it or ourselves reduced to weakness and poverty. Slavery and despotism never did nor never will stop to inquire whether its victims are white or black or whether they are of this or that nationality; but only whether they have the skill and ability to defend themselves, and to maintain their rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The leaders of the rebellion felt strong and confident by reason of the union of their white population. Until the fourth of March 1861, they had constructive, if not actual possession of the Government; and before the new Administration came into power, they had robbed the treasury—sacked our arsenals and navy yards—all the guns and munitions of war had been removed to rebel Territory, and our ships of war had been sent to the most distant waters, from which they could not be recalled for months; and all our Southern Forts seized and our garrisons made prisoners.

Under these circumstances, the spirit of treason and rebellion ran wild and rioted with all the recklessness of a libertine upon the rights, hopes, prospects and happiness of nearly forty millions of people. What could the incoming Administration do? What ought the people expect it to do? Better men—truer and wiser President and Cabinet, were never called to administer Governmental affairs.

Before the new Administration had time to gather up the Governmental reins, eleven states were in open revolt; and on the 13th of April 1861, they opened fire upon Fort Sumpter. Every cannon ball that struck against or went screaming over that fortification vibrated through all ranks and classes of the loyal people of the nation. Never before was there such enthusiasm and patriotic devotion. The whole North flew to arms and was one vast encampment. The thrilling notes of Martial music filled the air. The people came rushing from every valley, hill and mountain, to offer their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honors upon the altar of their country.

The President sent forth his proclamation, commanding obedience to the laws, and at the same time, proffered those in rebellion, full pardon, on condition that they lay down their arms and return like good men and citizens to their loyalty. But his proclamation and his proffer of pardon, were alike spurned, and in the place of obedience and loyalty, came the traitors' yell against the Declaration of our American Independence, against the laws of the land, and against the Government itself.

This news flew upon the wings of lightning, and the nations of the world stood appalled! France and England retired with apparent delight to their secret cabinet chambers to count the cost—to calculate the chances, and to weigh the balances in favor or against themselves, when the great Republic of the world was overthrown. With indecent haste, the rebel power was recognized as belligerents; and everything was done that could be done on the part of these two great nations, to make the rebellion a success.

At first and for a long time, slavery stood forth in all its pride and strength, supporting the rebellion, and yet untouched and unassailed by our Government. Disaster after disaster, if not defeat, followed close, one upon another—at Bull-Run and Balls Bluff and Chancellorsville. Great Britain took note only of our defeats, and to make known her unfriendly attitude, she allowed her merchants and capitalists to supply the rebellion with munitions of war, and to build in her ports and under her protection pirate ships to prey upon our commerce.

But soon after, England heard from the battles of Fort Donaldson and Henry—Pittsburgh Landing—Corinth—the fall of Memphis—the battle of Nashville and Pea Ridge—or Fair Oaks—Gettysburg—Lookout Mountain, the Proclamation of Emancipation—the battle of Knoxville, and of the Little Monitor in Hampton Roads and of the fall of Vicksburg,—and then, England suddenly awoke as from a fearful dream, and paused for reflection, before she allowed the second more formidable fleet of pirate ships, then ready to sail, to go forth to destroy our commerce; and finally she ordered them to be detained, and placed upon them her broad arrow.

In the midst of all these perils and conflicts of both arms and of opinions, the nation elected Abraham Lincoln President for the second time. By his second election, the Proclamation of Emancipation was confirmed—the rebellion doomed, and the fondest hopes of its friends and supporters broken. All Europe stood amazed and confounded.

In the meantime, General Grant with his host of loyal veterans, had marched to Richmond over the slain of 100,000 rebel soldiers, and there he held Lee and his army and the rebel President and government. The great army of the Northwest were victorious at Murfreesboro and at Atlanta. The rebel army under Hood, left their base and marched 300 miles back upon Franklin and Nashville, and was there met by the gallant Thomas and annihilated. During this time General Sherman, with 90,000 strong, marched from Atlanta, through the heart of the South, to the Atlantic coast, compelling the evacuation of Savannah and Charleston. At the same time, Porter with his iron clads, had taken Fort Fisher, and Gens. Schofield and Terry had taken Wilmington. Gen. Wilson was marching from Knoxville southeast, and was cutting off the enemy's supplies from the southwest, Generals Sherman and Schofield

formed a junction, and held the enemy's forces under Johnson. Grant was moving upon the enemy's works around Petersburg and Richmond, the rebel forces and government fled, and were captured.

Such a combination of forces and power was never before brought against any enemy; and such a complete victory was never before won. The heavens rang with cheer on cheer, that went up from the army and navy. The voice of the whole people, both north and south, went up to God like a cloud of incense, in thanks, in praises and in song. Bonfires were lighted in every town and city and upon every corner of the streets. The bells rang out their holy chimes, rockets and fireworks illumined the sky, cannon opened their throats and sent their thunders booming over the prairies and mountains and the wide waters. The whole people rejoiced—the winds caught up all the anthems, and made the heavens vocal with the music of the spheres, and the tall trees raised their mighty arms and clapped their hands, as these demonstrations swept over desert and plain to the Rocky Mountains; and then leaping from Pike's Peak to the snow-clad and cloud-capped heights of the Wasatch range, the shout came sweeping down your great mountain cañons, into this great, blooming and beautiful valley, and was caught up by the loyal masses and prolonged, until its echo was heard from the tops of the Sierra Nevada mountains—extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans; and then breaking against the vaulted sky, the heavens were opened and the voices of the angels in heaven mingled in grand chorus with the children of men, over the redemption and freedom of our nation.

No one rejoiced more or was more happy, and yet more thoughtful than was Abraham Lincoln then the President of the United States. But in the midst of these happy moments, the heavens became suddenly overcast with darkness and gloom. All our joys were as suddenly turned into bitter grief and solemn mourning.

Yes, before the nation had awakened from its intoxication of delight, the news came sweeping along the wires at midnight from Washington, that our great, good and noble President had been basely and cowardly assassinated, and that the lives of all our great Ministers of State had been as meanly and as cowardly sought, by the craven spirit of slavery, as he was about to depart by the command of God into the swine—he was assassinated by stealth—murdered under the cover of night, when he was unsuspecting and surrounded by his family and friends; shot down without a moment's warning, as cowards and assassins always murder their victims; and at a time when his great heart and head were full of kindness towards the conquered foe; at a time too when not only the President but all the people were uttering the prayer, Father, forgive them for they know not what they have done.

Then it was that the people of this great nation wept, as Christ wept over Lazarus—the nations of the whole world mourned, and devils trembled with fear, lest justice, then restrained by that good man, should now leap forth to smite, as an outraged nation and God alone can smite. But let us pity that poor instrument of murder; but methinks I hear that voice of the ancient Prophet, saying, "No murderer shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven or inherit eternal life."

To the conquered people and soldiers of the South, we must be both merciful and just. We must unite them with us in one common interest and fellowship—harmonizing and binding together all sections, all nationalities, all conditions and colors, making of this great nation one people, combining them together as one in interest, one in commercial ties, one in hopes and prospects; and this can be done only upon principles of liberty and equality before the law, and upon principles of absolute justice, and then this nation may be as steadfast as the stars in their course.

Because the heavens are smiling today, and because God is not speaking to us from the cannon's mouth, but rather in gentle and loving whispers, we must not conclude that we can plunge back again into robbery and murder and slavery and despotism, and trifle with His mercies and His justice. God's voice of rebuke at first is like that of a kind and indulgent father's—gentle like the falling dew. It sometime comes like the winds in the gentle breeze among the trees, and always so before the storm breaks upon us in all its power.

A nation to become great and glorious, must become good and just.