

feeds on, until at last, Robespierre really enjoyed the beheadings that occurred so frequently and every day, and would witness them without the slightest compunction of conscience. Not merely single executions, but by the dozen, by the score, by the hundred occurred, until the streets and alleys and sidewalks of Paris were red and slippery with human blood, and this at a time when the populace were highly incensed against the government, and, by a single uprising, could have put an end to it, which they eventually did. Similar scenes, in more recent times, have occurred in the same place, the latest and, perhaps the last, being the frightful scenes which culminated the Franco-Prussian war, of 1870, when crime ran mad and outlawry held high carnival.

The record of the world shows, that occasionally a revolt, which we cannot consider otherwise than perfectly natural, sometimes takes place against constituted authority. I say natural, not only for the reasons set out, but for the additional reason that oppression of the governed by the governing power at times and in places, becomes so acute that it is impossible for the oppressed to endure it any longer, and it then turns upon the oppressor. These revolts are not always, nor at any time of necessity, the result of a disposition not to be governed; neither are they the outgrowth of principles in man, which prompt him at times to look with disfavor upon everything which curbs his temper and checks his disposition; because such movements are oftener than otherwise precipitated by the brightest and best intellects in the places where they occur. Such names as that of Benjamin Franklin, who was not above making jokes, resorting to ridicule and often flippancy, in order to accomplish the purpose wrought by those who have made themselves immortal for all time to come by signing the Declaration of Independence, is a conspicuous example. He was surrounded by a little host like unto himself, bright and shining among whom were Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and even the much-despised Aaron Burr. Each and all of these had an inspiration looking toward the obliteration of tyranny upon this soil, and the establishment of a free, popular and representative government. While the proposition that each had a different idea as to the means by which this could be consummated, is a living fact, they all aimed at a common object—the overthrow of feudal despotism, the setting aside of kingly rule, the absolute destruction of the doctrine that there is any such thing among the human family as the divine right of one person to dominate another to the exclusion of his personal and natural rights. This eventuated the greatest government of any by man that the world has ever seen, or, in the nature of things, that it can see. Necessarily, in the course of events, and with the power in this government which we have inherited, and the divergent opinions of these great men, by the very reason of its distributive qualities, and the mere fact that the superstructure of the state rests entirely upon the citizens composing the state, there must be dissensions and differences all along the line; and these differences and dissensions among us have caused us to organize ourselves, separately, into parties and combinations, and at one time into sections. This does but show the tendency of mankind to be like

himself when left to himself—that is, since no two men are exactly alike in appearance, in taste, in habits, and in characteristics, so no two men are likely to see any political cause or realize any national effect in the same line of thought.

This brings me at once to one of the most magnificent struggles that the world ever witnessed or contemplated—the rebellion of the Southern States against the ruling power of the nation. It was not that the South was desirous of breaking up the national fabric, or setting aside the federal compact; but, because they, or the majority of them, conceived the idea that, under the original terms of the federation, at any time when aggrieved, really or as a matter of belief,—they had the same right to “establish for themselves, among the nations of the earth, that distinct and separate maintenance to which the laws of nature, and of nature’s God, entitled them” that those who had wrought our freedom from Great Britain had. That they were mistaken in this is a matter of record, because they failed; and, as in many other cases, the rule of might is the only one that can be recognized. The rightfulness of their cause is something that even many of those who engaged in the conflict on the losing side, now admit did not exist. The spectacle of so young a nation—the youngest, in fact, on the globe—being divided against itself, contending so fiercely for a mere abstraction, as many of the other nations regarded it, as to a system of government, was one that must have been watched everywhere with the most intense interest, apart from any personal or financial interest in the outcome. There never was in all the history of the world, including the triumphs of Alexander, Cæsar, Leonidas, the Napoleons, the noted German commanders, Wellington, and all the rest, a campaign waged that involved so much of liberty or loss to the human family; that was freighted with so much psychical, intellectual and governmental consequence to our race, as that fratricidal strife. It was in the fullest sense a fight, in which brother was arrayed against brother, father against son, neighbor against neighbor, master against slave. The principle involved must needs be settled. It was a question whether the state was absolute in and of itself, or whether the state constituted an integral part of the federal compact, and the individual was simply an entity of the state, all owing allegiance and paying tribute to the central source of authority. The decision was, that no government could exist, in which the factors composed were themselves so nearly sovereign, as to be equal to the sovereignty of the aggregated power; that the philosophy of government requires, absolutely, that each individual, each community, and each county and each state look still further to some other sovereignty, besides and beyond itself, and acknowledge allegiance to that sovereignty. This was the working out of the celebrated doctrine of states’ rights, finding its elucidation in the bloody field of battle. The statesmen of the nation, from the beginning, had labored with the question rationally, honestly and sincerely, and were unable to reach a conclusion that would be satisfactory to all interests and sections. While all recognized, under the circumstances, the supremacy of the parent government, they disagreed as to the means by which its authority should

be upheld. The slavery question was of course, predominate, and all other ideas of government, or other principles of practice regarding the administration of the nation, were made, simply, so many satellites revolving around the central sun—whether we should have slavery or not, whether the states should be governments, absolute, in and of themselves, or whether the general government should dominate the states. Here, then, was the idea subsequently worked out, previously described.

It is often the case to which history, and all of us who have reached mature years, can bear witness that everlasting things sometimes hang upon slender threads. Following the analogy of this suggestion we find the great struggle which settled the great question relating to our own Government at once and forever, had its origin in a novel written by a then unknown woman. In that production was briefly outlined the sin, the iniquity, the horror of the traffic in human flesh and blood. So vividly was the picture drawn, so clearly were the whole arguments of the plot portrayed, that that novel became a drama in subsequent years and, as you are all aware, is still with us, and promises never to disappear from this stage of action. It inspired men to new thoughts; it incited to new conditions; it removed the scales of prejudice from the eyes of unbelievers. It made the people contemplate the situation as it was, and once contemplating, once conscious, once resolving, meant once and for all to act as an entirety. It is not straining a point to say that “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was the first platform of the Republican party of the United States. Its promptings, the ideas which it suggested, rapidly crystalized into political literature, and this, in turn, caused political action. The south—the slave owning section—considered itself menaced, and it was for the simple reason that the slaves which its people owned had not been imported, or placed in a condition of slavery by themselves, but by those who sought to wrest their slaves from them, and to whom they had paid large sums of money for such slaves. Having thus made a contract with their northern brethren, which they considered sacred and binding, and being themselves naturally men of honor and chivalry, devoted to principle, and with a high sense of regard for the rights of others, they looked upon the proposition to take from them, without process of law, that which they had only acquired by due process of law, as dishonorable and unjust. That they were men of courage, also, their opponents will bear better witness to than anybody else in the world. Their convictions were followed up by such deeds of conspicuous valor and self-sacrifice, such devotion to principle, such regard for home and the fireside and those convictions which they held to be dearest,—that the whole picture constitutes one of the brightest pages in the history of the American republic in the midst of all its sadness. How they fought and bled, and suffered, and died, in squads, or in armies, is a question which notwithstanding all our wealth of acquiring and fostering history we shall never be able to understand. But we can understand the corollary that the essence of the contention was right, that slavery itself was a mere incident. The question was whether slavery should