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THE UNION.

[From the Journal of Commerce.]

The danger which overhangs the country at the present moment is at last universally acknowledged. The day when it could be treated as the imagination of "Union savers," as a "disunion bugaboo" as "bullying," or in any similar manner, (we quote these expressions from distinguished editors at the North,) has passed away. All acknowledge the imminent danger.

But it is more imminent, and the prospect darker, because of the constant determination of men to shut their eyes to it. The leaders of the Republican party, for some days past, have been in a state of pitiable doubt. One day they seem willing to do anything, and the next day, when they imagine their peaceable expressions of yesterday may be taken as yielding too much, they withdraw their implied promises, and threaten fiercely.

The public mind is misled by the leaders, and the state of feeling in the mass of the population is changeable. This all results from a misapprehension of the state of affairs at the South. Men will not look the truth in the face. Republicans, especially, shrink from it, because the future is to them especially dark and threatening.

Let us state the facts in a few words, and look straight at them. The American Union will be dissolved unless the Republicans will agree to amend the Constitution by allowing Southern men to take their slaves into the common Territories and hold them there as property. It may be that the South would be satisfied with that portion of the Territories south of Missouri line. But unless the Republicans at once agree to this, the Union is gone.

We do not say that even this will now be in time to save it. But this is the only chance. It is idle to stop for recriminations; for settling who is to blame; for disputing on old issues. The Union is now in danger, the country is lost, unless the dominant party at once and forever sacrifice what they claim as a principle under the Constitution, by making the converse of their principle a constitutional right.

We have not heard the position of affairs better discussed than in a conversation which we overheard between an ardent Democrat and "Union savor," and an equally ardent Republican. We condense the conversation for the sake of laying before our readers a succinct statement of the necessities of the times.

The discussion began with the accusation that the Republicans had been misrepresented at the South by the Journal of Commerce and other Democratic papers, and that the trouble arose from these misrepresentations.

DEMOCRAT. If we had told the people at the South that you Republicans were in favor of enforcing or, not opposed to the Fugitive Slave Law, and were not Abolitionists, would they have believed us?

REPUBLICAN. Yes, I think so. Why not?

DEM. They would have laughed at us. When the Abolitionists attacked the American Tract Society and endeavored to use its engines to carry the anti-slavery war into the South, did not every Republican newspaper in New York and elsewhere, as far as you know, at use and vilify the conservative men of the Tract Society? When John Brown invaded Virginia, did not the Republican newspapers of New York call him a "brave old hero," a "martyr," and did they not evidently sympathize with him?

REP. That does not show that the Republican party, as a party, have any such sympathies!

DEM. It is hard to separate a party from their leaders. But who passed the Personal Liberty bills in Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and elsewhere?

REP. The Republican party undoubtedly did that in each State. But the Personal Liberty bills are null and void, for they are unconstitutional; and they don't hurt any one.

DEM. I am not sure they are unconstitutional. That in Connecticut certainly is not. But because a law is constitutional, it is not necessarily right. You Republicans are afflicted with an insane notion that what is constitutional, is necessarily right. You claim that electing a president constitutionally is all right and cannot be found fault with. Suppose the House of Representatives should refuse to pass any Supply Bill for his Administration. It would be constitutional, but would it be right? There is no tyranny on earth so notoriously oppressive as the tyranny of constitutional majorities have. But I am not now discussing con-

stitutional questions. Tell me frankly what was the design, the intent, the animus, with which the Personal Liberty bills were passed? Were they not designed to impede the free execution of the Fugitive Slave Law?

REP. I cannot deny that such was the intent, but I think they may be excused as retaliatory laws. South Carolina passed her law imprisoning free blacks, long before a Personal Liberty bill was passed at the North; and under that she imprisoned colored citizens of Massachusetts coming there on ships, and does this to-day. Let her first repeal that act, before she asks us to repeal our Personal Liberty bills.

DEM. My friend, you and your party have harped on that string long enough. The Tribune, the Post, and all your press, have been stultifying themselves about it till it is time it was stopped. Do you know that Connecticut does the same thing, and always did it? And I believe Massachusetts, Vermont and Rhode Island,—and in fact every New England State does it every day.

REP. I don't understand you. I am a Connecticut man and know no such law on our statute books.

DEM. Then I know her better than you. Tell me, if a free white citizen of New York State, poor and sickly, but willing to labor, goes on the Plymouth Rock to-night to Stonington, and lands there to-morrow morning with nothing in his pocket, and with the protection of the American flag over him and the immunity from arrest and disturbance which that Constitution guarantees around him—tell me, if he begins to look around for work, what are the chances that Stonington will let him do it? How soon will the selectmen have him by the shoulder? Much good then may it do him to plead the immunity of an American citizen.—His adversary will haul him up before the judge, and the judge will ship him back to New York that night. Why, sir, I, with my own eyes, once saw an old black man, very old—they called him eighty then—with his old wife, feeble, worn out, dying old folks, who had lived in Connecticut for sixty years, in charge of a constable from North Stonington, shipped at Grotten Bank for Long Island—sweeping, begging not to be exiled, but forced in age and poverty into what was to them literally a foreign land. I knew the old man well; a gentleman with me had known him in New London county forty odd years! I asked old Jim where he was going; his reply was the depth of pathos. They were shipping him and the old woman to Southold, because he was torn there! "Have you any relations or friends there, Jim?" "My sister was alive their forty years ago." Well, sir, they shipped him; and they do that same sort of thing every month in the New England States, where a man is guilty of the crime of being poor! It's no single occurrence. I have seen the thing done myself a dozen times; and ever thought of the Constitution of the United States? Now I undertake to say that when Connecticut steps arresting and exiling white and black citizens for the crime of poverty; when Illinois stops the absolute exclusion of "black citizens of Massachusetts" from her soil; then South Carolina will give up excluding the same blacks from her territory. But let us have done with recriminations. The present danger to the country is, that men will waste precious hours in disputing as to the cause of the difficulty and who got us into it. Let us be patriots and devise a way to get out of it that shall satisfy us all.

REP. Where is the point of danger, in your opinion?

DEM. In this: Southern disunionists are determined to leave the Union. It is useless now to discuss whether they are justifiable, or not. They are absolutely determined, and will break up the country if they can. No concessions will reach them. They are not "bullying," but acting. They don't want you to compromise; they don't ask any yielding. But you Republicans have it in your power to strengthen the conservative element at the South. You may save the Union by making conservative men enough in Southern States to save them. If, as you say, we Democrats have belied you, show the South at once in what we have belied you.

REP. How?

DEM. Are you in favor of enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law?

REP. I am, and always was. But I don't like the obnoxious feature of making me help the Marshal to catch slaves.

DEM. Bah! Almost every law of the land has the same feature. If a horse is stolen and the thief resists, you are bound

to aid the Sheriff. If a pocket is picked and a small mob attempts a rescue, you must help convey a pickpocket to jail.—But enough. You agree to enforce a fugitive slave law?

REP. Willingly. Tell the South that. Dex, I will. Now as to the Personal Liberty bills. They amount to nothing, you say, but is not their animus bad, and ought they not to be repealed?

DEM. I never was in favor of them. They were the measures of ultra men, and I am decidedly in favor of repealing them, and so are a majority of our party. For, you must understand that there is a division in our party. I belong to the conservative wing, and I claim Mr. Lincoln as belonging to that wing. We can and we will repeal the Personal Liberty bills. You may tell the South that.

DEM. Nothing remains but the Territories. Can we agree as to that?

REP. I think not. I will never surrender an inch of soil to become slave territory.

DEM. Then you expect to get rid of slavery by walling it in the South.

REP. I have nothing to do with getting rid of it. I only say that into the Territories, where I have a voice about it, it shall never come. The States may take care of it within their borders.

DEM. But, my friend, you and I must not close our eyes to the future of our country. Suppose the Union to survive, and your principle of free Territories to prevail, do you, dare you, close your eyes to that nation of blacks that is increasing so rapidly in the Southern States? The patriot who looks to the future shudders at the idea of closing slavery within the present limits. What will, in twenty, or fifty, or a hundred years, become of those millions of slaves? Which race will out-grow,—overpower the other? How soon will you have empire of blacks in the South? These are the questions that are vastly more important than the abstract question of the right of Southern men to carry slaves into the Territories.

Have not the Republicans, over and over again, declared that they had no fear of the Dred Scott decision? That you know the immigration into the Territories will take care of that question?—That the whole dispute has been one of abstract principle, and not of practical importance?

REP. So I believe; but it is principle, nevertheless.

DEM. Well, then, has it not been a question of principle under the Constitution? in point of fact, a purely legal question, whether under the Constitution slavery can exist in a Territory or anywhere, except by express legislation?

REP. Yes, Constitution and common law.

DEM. Well, then, let us go back of that, and end the question. I claim that slavery is lawful in every part of the Territories. You claim that it is lawful nowhere in the Territories. Let us draw the Missouri line and agree that it shall be lawful South of that line, and not lawful North of it; always leaving open the omnipotent power of a State to legislate it into its Territory North, or out of it South, whenever a State arises. That will be no sacrifice of your principle. Besides, what if it is the sacrifice of a principle? What is your principle worth? What is its aim, object, basis? Is it not the United States? their good, their benefit, their future interests? Well; it is plain as daylight now, that you can't have both the country and the principle. You must yield the principle, or you lose the country, for whose good you uphold it. Take your choice, then. You may have the country without your principle, or you may have your principle without the country!

REP. Has it come to that?

DEM. It has come to just that. The responsibility of the crisis is on you and your party. We and our party are powerless in this emergency. We fought with you to the end, and are beaten. We foresaw the result, and it has come as we anticipated. With us and our party at the North, the South will not, cannot treat; for they regard us as conquered and powerless. If we offer them terms, they deny our ability to fulfill our promises. The secessionists among them abhor the Union. They tell us that they will go, whatever is done. But you may save the Union now by showing Georgia and Alabama conservative men that you are not Abolitionists; that there is a strong conservative party, even in the Republican ranks; that you are willing to give them all the privileges of copartners in the Union. At least, try this last resort of peaceful men; and when you have made to the South a fair offer of this kind—when you have offered to repeal the

Personal Liberty bills, to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, to make an equitable division of the Territories—then, if the Southern disunionists insist on leaving the Union, it will be time for you to talk with a clear conscience about having done your duty.

REP. The Fugitive Law and the Personal Liberty bills I can agree to. I don't know about yielding as to Territories.—That is, in fact, our party principle; the only principle we all had in common.—Your idea, that we don't yield a principle if we put it into the Constitution, is all very well, but it hurts one's self-respect to give up.

DEM. That's the point, after all, then. The Union is to be lost, and it might be saved but for the self-respect of politicians. God save us, then!

THE WIFE'S RUSE.

"Don't sit up for me to-night, Bertha," said Philip Graham one pleasant evening as he went to bestow a parting on his wife's sweet lips. "I have engaged to take Mrs. Mortimer and Miss Ellen to the opera to-night, and may return late."

"To hear Vestill. Oh, how delightful, I had forgotten that she was to sing to-night. Why may I not be one of the party?"

"You might, I suppose, but I—really you go so little—I did not mention it to them—"

"Never mind, I can go some other time I dare say."

"Oh, yes, go to-morrow night, if you like."

"Very well, that will do."

"Good-night, then, my love," and with another kiss Bertha was left alone.

"Dear, handsome fellow," she sighed, throwing herself down on the low lounging chair by the fireside, "so good and so kind, if he didn't care so much for society; and if that gay widow and her bold daughter would let him alone. The third evening this week that he has spent in company with them. True, I was at that stupid party, but I am sure they engrossed much more of his attention than I did; and others noticed it too. One prim maid asked me if I was not jealous, and that lachrymose Mrs. Prym, who is always groaning, cast up her eyes and pressed my hand in token of sympathy, when I bade her good night. No, I am not jealous; but I wonder how he would like to have me flirt so. I have half a mind to try it, if I only knew any one I liked well enough."

A sharp tinkle of the door bell startled her, and a moment after a tall gentleman, mustached and whiskered almost alarmingly, entered the room. Bertha manifested a little surprise, half of terror, but the words:

"My dear Bertha, have you forgotten me?" had not entirely passed the stranger's lips, ere she was in his arms, exclaiming:

"Leonard! dear Leonard! Welcome home!"

"But where is your husband, dearest?" he asked, half an hour later, when she had asked and answered many a rapid question. "I wonder he can be tempted to leave this pleasant home and sweet wife a single evening."

"He has gone to the opera," she answered hesitating slightly.

"Without you? But I suppose you have some little whim to excuse you—tired of the prima donna, or something of the kind, I presume. You should spend a winter in the California mining districts in order to appreciate your privileges," he said laughingly.

"Is it too late yet? Will you go with me? Let me be your cavalier once more as in old time."

An idea occurred to Bertha; here was an excellent opportunity to put into execution the plan which she was thinking of when he arrived. What would prevent her? Nothing she resolved, and her answer was:

"I shall be delighted I'm sure. I will be ready in a few moments."

Resting gracefully upon the crimson cushions sat the fair Mrs. Mortimer and her fairer daughter. Helen Mortimer, dressed with regal magnificence, and her gorgeous attire suited well the dark style of her beauty. A smile of triumph shone in her flashing eyes as she listened to the flattering remarks of Philip Graham, whose very distinguished appearance and polished manners made him a most agreeable companion, and to whose good offices she trusted for admittance to circles from which her bold gaiety and freedom of manner might otherwise debar her.

As for Philip Graham, though he never would have dreamed of such a woman for the quiet atmosphere of home, yet he joy

ed to while away an hour in her society, little dreaming that pain or anxiety was caused by his conduct, since no word or act of Bertha's hinted as much.

"See, Graham," exclaimed Miss Mortimer, "is not that your wife in the box opposite us?"

"Bertha, I declare! How came she here? and with a stranger too!" said Philip, looking in the direction indicated.

"Then you don't know him?" said Miss Mortimer. "Very elegant in appearance, and very much devoted to his fair lady, I should say; some old lover I presume."

"Excuse me, Miss Mortimer, my wife is too ladylike for indelicacy," he answered sternly.

"Offended, Philip? and with me?" she said, turning her eyes pleadingly toward him. "Pardon me, I did but jest."

She laid her ungloved hand upon his arm. But the arts which had charmed and dazzled the young husband had lost their power, and he only answered politely her expression of regret.

Bertha met his gaze of surprise smiling, but soon seemed absorbed in the music, and the remarks of her companion whose interest in her comfort was sufficiently apparent. He seemed well known among the audience, too; for the watchful Philip noticed many bows and smiles of recognition.

There is Mr. Golding, who knows everybody; I will ask him the name of your wife's attendant," said Mrs. Mortimer, who had marked with surprise the discomposure of Graham, whom as she told her daughter afterwards, she had supposed too much a man of the world to care for his wife.

"Mr. Golding, pray tell me the name of the gent eman opposite—the one with the magnificent beard and dark eyes?"

"Who! Why, I declare! it is my old friend, Leonard Percy. He must have arrived to-day. He has been four years absent. I must go round and see him. I see he has found Mrs. Graham already. I congratulate you, sir, he continued, turning to Philip.

"Congratulations! For what?" muttered Philip in surprise, a dim idea entering his brain that Mr. Golding meant to insult him.

The opera was over at last, and resisting Helen's alluring glances, and Mrs. Mortimer's earnest invitation to come in and spend an hour at cards, Philip hastened homeward in time to see a carriage drive away from the door. Bertha was already unbending her tresses when he entered her chamber, and in reply to his questions she only answered carelessly.

"Yes, I had an opportunity, and thought I would improve it. You know it looks so stupid for married people to be always together in public. Leonard is an old friend of mine, and I am glad he has returned. I shall enjoy his society very much."

She was only repeating words which Philip had used many a time when praising the beauty and grace of some new acquaintance; but they did not seem very satisfactory now, for he only muttered "humph," in a discontented way, and was silent.

Bertha saw the success of her scheme, and laughed mischievously as she laid down to slumber, and dream, perchance, of the sleighride she was to enjoy with her friend on the morrow. Philip had engaged to ride, too, with Mrs. and Miss Mortimer; and so it chanced that the two parties met on the crowded thoroughfare, and he had just time to catch a laughing glance and a wave of the little hand from his wife as the sleigh dashed past each other. He spent that evening at home, but not alone with his wife; Percy was there, and Bertha chatted with him, played for him, and they sang together songs replete with love and sentiment—songs which he reminded her they had sung so often together in the "olden time." At last, angry with himself, his wife, and his guest, Philip left the room, excusing himself on the plea of business; but adding, "that two such old friends must have so much to say to each other, that a third person would be almost an intruder." Mr. Percy looked surprised, but Bertha answered smilingly:

"Oh, yes, Leonard, and I have plenty of subjects of conversation."

"Leonard, indeed," growled Philip, on his way to the library. "Confound the fellow, what does he mean with his old songs?"

He remained alone till the visitor departed, and could hardly believe his own eyes when he saw through the half open door Percy imprint a kiss upon the brow of his wife, which she received as quite a matter of course.

"Pray do all your friends take their departure in that loving manner?" he asked as she entered the library.

"Oh, no! but Leonard is a privileged character, and, besides, I am endeavoring to bring my notions of propriety to a more modern standard. I hope to become accustomed to these improvements in time, and to take them as easily and gracefully as some of your favorite ladies do—Miss Mortimer, for instance. I have noticed that you rarely meet or part with her without some harmless liberties."

It was true that in the fascination for the bold beauty he had often praised her gay manners to his wife, but it was strange how different these things looked from a low different these things looked from a different point.

"But Miss Mortimer is unmarried; and besides it was all a joke, our meeting and parting in that way," he answered.

"Very well, Percy is unmarried, and we will call our parting a joke, if you please," was the reply.

"As you will, but I don't admire such jokes, I assure you."

"What, jealous, Philip? and I have only been in Percy's company three times. Let's see—once at the opera, once sleigh-riding, and this evening."

"No, I am not jealous, but I don't see what has come over you. Don't you know that you will ruin your reputation if you go on in this way? With men it is different; they are not expected to be so exclusive in their attachments. Society has claims upon gentlemen which they must fulfill."

"True, doubtless; and these same 'claims of society' extend to the ladies, I suppose, and we ought of course to emulate the generous, self-sacrificing examples of the 'sterner sex.'"

Philip could not but think, that however willing he might be to sacrifice himself upon the altar of society, he did not wish his wife to devote herself to its claims; but he could not say so with those mirthful eyes watching him so closely, and he remained silent.

When he returned to dinner, the next day, he found his wife absent, and a note informed him that she had gone with Percy to spend the day at her father's country seat a few miles from the city, and that "if he pleased," he might take the evening cars, spend a few hours at the 'homestead,' and return with them.

"If I please!" Well, I don't please to do any such thing. How changed she is since Percy's coming, to leave me so, when she has never visited her old home alone before during our two years of married life."

But the quiet hour alone in the dining-room was favorable for meditation, and he finally resolved to seek his wife, and confessing the errors his conduct had shown him in their true light, endeavor to persuade her to resume once more the quiet and domestic habits which he saw were now necessary to happiness. He was warmly welcomed by the family at the homestead, but Bertha was invisible.

"She has just come in," said her mother, in answer to his inquiries. "You will find her and Leonard in the south room."

"Here, runaway!" said he, as he entered the room, "why did you not meet me as you did in the days when I came wooing?"

"Certainly would, had I known of your arrival; but Leonard and I were out watching the skaters on the lake. I have never been on the ice before, since the day, six years ago, when it proved so treacherous to me, and when dear Leonard rescued me from the chilling water."

"Dear Leonard? I thought it was your brother who saved you," exclaimed Philip.

"It was my brother, dear Philip. Let me introduce you to my half brother, Frank Leonard Percy. I should have made you acquainted before, but I wished to try some of the pleasures of flirting; no one understands it so well as Leonard—except my husband."

"And he will gladly give up all claims to 'proficiency in the art,' as you call it, if you will promise to let it alone in the future," said Philip, who had been shaking hands heartily with Percy.

"What?" and leave the claims of society unfulfilled, and the widow and the fatherless unconsolated in their desolation?" asked Bertha, her face radiant with mirth and triumph.

"Yes, to-morrow, was the laughing answer; and he kept his word."

One of the attractions at a late agricultural fair in California was a camel-race. Fifteen of the animals were on exhibition, exciting great curiosity.

The population of the State of Pennsylvania, as estimated by the recent census, is about two millions nine hundred thousand.