



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Throughout the year since our last meeting, the country has been eminently prosperous in all its material interests. The general health has been excellent; our harvests have been abundant, and plenty smiles throughout the land. Our commerce and manufactures have been prospered with energy and industry, and have yielded fair and ample returns. In short, no nation in the tide of time has ever presented a spectacle of greater material prosperity than we have done until within a very recent period.

It is alleged as one cause for immediate secession of the Southern States are denied equal rights with the other States in the common Territories. But by what authority are these denied? Not by Congress, which has no right to exclude slavery from these Territories; and certainly not by the Supreme Court, which has solemnly decided that slaves are property, and that the Federal Government has a right to take them into the common Territories, and hold them there under the protection of the Constitution.

It was then met and refuted by the conclusive arguments of General Jackson, who in his message of 1845, and in a communication to the nullifying ordinance of South Carolina to Congress, employs the following language: "The right of the people to be free is a right which no government can justly withhold from them, and which no government can justly withhold from them, and which no government can justly withhold from them."

It is not pretended that any clause in the Constitution gives countenance to such a theory. It is altogether founded upon a false and untenable position, and is a direct and deliberate violation of the sovereign character of the several States by which it was ratified. But it is beyond the power of a State, like an individual, to withhold from another State the rights which it has reserved to itself, and which are secured to it by the Federal Constitution.

What, in the meantime, is the responsibility and true position of the Executive? He is bound by solemn oath, before God and the country, to see that the laws are faithfully executed, and that the rights of the people are preserved. He cannot, therefore, be held responsible for the acts of Congress, or for the acts of the States, or for the acts of the people.

Our relations with Spain are now of a more complicated than ever dangerous character. The long and continued delay in the settlement of the claims of our citizens against the Spanish government, and the refusal of the Spanish government to recognize the claims, and to pay the amount of the same, has become a source of great and increasing annoyance to our citizens.

Our relations with Mexico remain in a most unsatisfactory condition. The two annual messages I discussed extensively the subject of these relations, and do not now propose to repeat at length the facts and arguments presented. They proved conclusively that the claims of our citizens upon Mexico were just, and that the Mexican government was bound to pay the same.

Our relations with Great Britain are of the most friendly character. Since the commencement of the year, the two Governments have been in a state of peace, and the relations between them have been of the most friendly character.