The Lancaster Intelligencer.

"THAT COUNTRY IS THE MOST PROSPEROUS WHERE LABOR COMMANDS THE GREATEST REWARD." — BUCHANAN.

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SPEECH OF HON. JOHN L. DAWSON, OF PENNSYLVANIA, ON FREEDMEN'S AFFAIRS.

February 24, 1864.

[CONCLUDED.]

But it will be said that the proclamation of the 24th of September does not contravene Magna Charta, since it is confirmed by act of Congress. The answer to this is that the act of Congress itself contravenes the provisions of the Constitution, the paramount law. When we turn to article four of the amendments to that instrument we are met by this stern requirement:

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated, and no warrant shall issue but upon probable cause supported by oath or affirmation and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

Article six also requires that

"In all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defence."

The exercise of such arbitrary powers it was which lost Charles I of England the confidence of his subjects, and led to the establishment of new guarantees against such flagrant abuses on the part of the monarch. The practice of a similar tyranny in France, under the *letters de cachet*, had filled the dungeons of the Bastile with innocent victims, until at the commencement of the reign of Louis XVI that hated prison was leveled to the ground in the indignant uprising of an outraged people.

What right, sir, has Congress to authorize arbitrary arrests in the face of the prohibitions of the Constitution? Are these prohibitions without meaning? or were they not on the contrary designed to meet just such exigencies as these in which the country is now placed, when, together with the possession of the physical and political power of the country, a party finds itself under the temptation to resort to usurpation in order to maintain its ascendency? The Administration cannot, as in England, have recourse to the omnipotence of the Legislature to justify this abuse of power. The British Parliament is possessed of a legal omnipotence from the nature of the constitution, which is that of a consolidated Government and a monarchy. Even there, however, the subject has an adequate security against any violation of those great principles of personal security, personal liberty, and private property, which constitute the so much and justly lauded privileges of Britons, because the people themselves, through their representatives in the Commons, make a preponderant power in the Parliament, and the venerable landmarks of the rights of the subject have long been held sacred from encroachment. But in this country the National Legislature has no such large and unlimited powers. A written charter confers expressly all the powers which the Congress possesses, and clearly there is no authority contained in any of its provisions to arrest any one "without probable cause," and "upon oath or affirmation." Neither will the extension by Congress of martial law over the whole country cover the case. There is the same deficiency of authority here as before. Says Chief Justice Blackstone in his Commentaries:

"Martial law, which is built upon no settled principles, but is entirely arbitrary in its decisions, is, as Sir Matthew Hale observes, in truth and reality no law, but something indulged rather than allowed as a law. The necessity of order and discipline in an army is the only thing which can give it countenance, and therefore it ought not be permitted in time of peace, when the king's courts are open for all persons to receive justice according to the laws of the land."

Does this "necessity of order and displine," which this distinguished authority lays down as the only admissible ground for the application of martial law, apply also to *civilians outside of the Army?* Are not the courts as to them, both State and Federal, except in the States in rebellion, just as open now for the prosecution of offences against the Government and laws of the United States as under the condition of the most profound peace? The contrary will not be asserted. There is therefore no necessity for this extraordinary stretch of authority, except in districts, if there be any such, in which the regular administration of justice by the civil tribunals is rendered impracticable by the operations of war; and this is nowhere beyond the lines of the Army, except as to persons in the military service.

The rules and articles of war and the acts of Congress for holding courts-martial (chiefly that of the 14th of April, 1814) by which the Army is governed, were framed chiefly from the English system upon the same subject. Its principles and modes of proceeding are quite different from those of the common law, and in reference to them Blackstone remarked:

"One of the greatest advantages of the English law is that not only the crimes themselves which it punishes, but also the penalties which it inflicts, are ascertained and notorious; nothing is left to arbitrary discretion; the king by his judges dispenses what the law has previously ordained; but is not himself the legislator."

The learned commentator then takes occasion to regret that in being deprived of those advantages and being subject to military law, the soldier is placed in a condition of servitude; "for," said he "Sir Edward Coke will inform us that it is one of the genuine marks of servitude to have the law, which is our rule of action, either concealed or precarious."

Another extraordinary measure inaugurated by the proclamation, and which constitutes the climax of despotic power assumed by the Executive, is the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* during the existence of the rebellion. Having usurped the power of arrest "without due process of law" in the face of the express prohibitions of the Constitution, it was an offence of gigantic magnitude for the President to suspend the operation of this great and important defence of the liberties of the citizen. In those bitter and unscrupulous civil contests which were waged between the party of prerogative and that of the privileges of the people, which inflamed the heart of England in the middle of the seventeenth century, the ancient common-law right of the *habeas corpus* was disregarded by Charles I, as well as by the Long Parliament. This was during the long struggle between the Crown and the people. But after the constitution was settled as to this particular by the Petition of Right, and the 29th of Car. II, no sovereign had afterwards temerity enough to attempt an abuse of this great bulwark of English liberties. It is true that in a few instances within the history of the nation for two centuries back this great writ has been suspended by Parliament, the only power which could legally suspend it. The principle of these was during the transition from the reign of James II to that of William and Mary, in 1688. All through the American war of independence the friends and sympathisers of the American cause were bold in their condemnation of the policy and measures of the Crown, and it was held that this was but the simple exercise of the unquestioned right of the subject. Burke, Fox, and Pitt all thundered in the ears of the court their eloquent denunciations of the tyranny and injustice of Government toward their countrymen in the colonies, and no one ever proclaimed a "military necessity" of silencing them by forcible restraint of their persons.

The remarks which I have made in regard to arbitrary arrests apply with equal force to the suppression of journals which have spoken out in condemnation of these despotic acts of the Administration. Blackstone says, "the liberty of the press is indeed essential to a free State." The liberty of the press was our common-law right as British colonists, and for its protection, together with the freedom of speech and the right of peaceably assembling and petitioning the Government for a redress of grievances, the first amendment was added to the Constitution. These restraints are necessary, it is said, because by the indulgence of free discussion the arm of the Government is weakened, and its ability to carry on the war seriously impaired. But what an argument is this in a country of constitutional liberty, and where public opinion forms the substratum of all our institutions! And what an argument at a time when, above all others, free speech and a free press are most needed to point out and drive back the robbers who are daily carrying off the public treasure! It is an old precept to resist the *beginnings of evil*. It was Rousseau that said, "Liberty might be acquired, but could never be recovered."

In addition to all these aggressions the war policy of the Administration has saddled the country with a debt which at the termination of the struggle will exceed in magnitude that of Great Britain contracted in a century of foreign wars. The aggregate of the appropriations on the 4th of March, 1863, was $2,000,277,000. The appropriations are first or last the real expenditure.

The total of the English debt is a fraction less than $4,000,000,000. The English debt bears an interest of three per cent., while the debt of the United States when consolidated will reach six per cent. This gigantic debt will tax enormously the earnings of industry for generations, while the substitution of paper money for the gold and silver currency established by the Constitution* has destroyed the relation of debtor and creditor; has destroyed legal securities as well as the earnings of industry in ordinary investments. It has increased largely the prices of Government supplies, thus enhancing greatly the cost of the war. It bears severely upon the investments of widows and orphans, and is sacrificing the business of the country in the general ruin of the currency.— This flood of *assignats* has stimulated into still more pernicious action all that crowd of corrupt and hateful influences which follow in the wake of war sharks in that of the pestilent ship. The miserable crowd of contractors and speculators on the sufferings of their country, like so many leeches, are sucking out the lifeblood of the nation, while preaching the unquestioning support of the Administration and all its reckless and abortive measures as the true test of patriotism.

The acts of the Administration under the double influence of Republican and Abolition principles are marked by singular tergiversation and inconsistency. In their Chicago platform, as in all authoritative declarations, they declared it to be their intention not to interfere with slavery in the States, and to administer the Government according to the Constitution.— In the territorial governments organized shortly after Mr. Lincoln's advent to power, in New Mexico, Colorado and Nevada, when they had the power to insert a provision for the exclusion of slavery, no such exclusions was inserted; and although the Crittenden resolutions were rejected by Congress until the first battle of Bull Run, they were passed with great unanimity after that event. Notwithstanding these facts, however, and also Mr. Lincoln's message to Congress exhorting that body to prosecute the war solely for the restoration of the Union, we soon find leaders of the party introducing into Congress bills for the conversion of rebel States into Territories, for an indiscriminate confiscation of estates, and waging the war for the liberation of the slaves.— We also find Mr. Lincoln, under these influences, recommending in his annual message in December, 1862, the call of a Convention to secure the emancipation of the slaves in the States; and, without waiting for such constitutional authority, under the pressure of the Abolition portion of his party, proceeding to issue proclamations of emancipation. Could human weakness and inconsistency further go?

*Daniel Webster says:

"But what is meant by the 'constitutional currency,' about which so much is said? What species or forms of currency does the Constitution allow, and what does it forbid? It is plain enough that this depends on what we understand by currency.— Currency, in a large and perhaps in a just sense, includes not only gold and silver, and bank notes, but bills of exchange also. It may include all that adjusts exchanges and settles balances in the operations of trade and business. But if we understand by currency the *legal money* of the country, and that which constitutes a lawful tender for debts, and is the statute measure of value, then, undoubtedly, nothing is included but gold and silver. Most unquestionably there is no legal tender, and there can be no legal tender, in this country, under the authorities of this Government or any other, but gold and silver, either the coinage of our own mints or foreign coins, at rates regulated by Congress. This is a constitutional principle, perfectly plain, and of the very highest importance. The States are expressly prohibited from making anything but gold and silver a tender in payment of debts; and although no such express prohibition is applied to Congress, yet, as Congress has no power granted to it in this respect but to coin money and to regulate the value of foreign coins, it clearly has no power to substitute paper or anything else for coin as a tender in payment of debts and in discharge of contracts. Congress has exercised this power fully in both its branches. It has coined money, and still coins it; it has regulated the value of foreign coins, and still regulates their value. The legal tender, therefore, the constitutional standard of value, is established, and cannot be overthrown. To overthrow it would shake the whole system."—*Webster's Works, vol. 4, pages 270, 271.*

The great and paramount object of all Governments is the protection of private property. It is the great basis of all civilizations. Without its recognition and stable protection there can be no such thing even as communities. The framers of the Constitution, regarding history as philosophy teaching by example, aimed to insert in that instrument a clause which, even in the midst of the most fearful commotions and party violence, would prevent a re-enactment on this continent of those barbarous confiscations which marked the civil wars of the Romans, and are a stigma upon the history of modern Europe.— They therefore, in the third section of the third article, used this clear and unmistakable language that—

"No attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood, or forfeiture except during the life of the person attainted."

In disregard of this constitutional prohibition, this House passes a joint resolution explanatory of the confiscation act for the purpose of confiscating the fee and making it operative against the innocent as well as the guilty.

Mr. Speaker, I have thus endeavored to state the origin and true theory of the Government, and to assign with fidelity the causes of the present troubles. I have also noticed the measures with which the Administration has undertaken to meet the extraordinary emergency, and have pointed out their unconstitutional and pernicious character, and their utter deficiency in a true policy. Since we have thus far failed in reducing the rebellion with the unconstitutional weapons of restraints upon the liberty of the person, of speech and of the press—of martial law, emancipation proclamations and confiscation acts, it is fitting for us now to inquire whether the armory of government does not furnish others of more potent energy and efficiency. There can indeed be no permanent peace upon those principles. The complete conquest and subjugation of an intelligent and high-spirited people history amply demonstrates to be a work of long duration and uncertain result. Superior resources and physical power may be sufficient to scatter military organizations, but it is quite a different thing to conquer and to subjugate. The history of the Anglo-Saxon race is full of illustrations of this truth. The Normans conquered that race at the battle of Hastings in 1066, but after a struggle of six hundred years the Saxon element had re-asserted itself, and the English Constitution was restored as it was before the conquest. A great standing army would be necessary to keep the South in subjection, and she would occupy a position to the rest of the Union such as Ireland and India occupy to England, as Hungary to Austria, and as Poland to Russia.

This war was inaugurated to put down military usurpation. The calm, just and ever patriotic judgment of a confiding people approved and cheered it on in its progress. It was not intended to be a war against communities, individuals, or their property and rights, but a war in defense of the Constitution, the laws, and for the preservation of the Union. This is still its true and proper object, and to this, if we would look for an early and stable peace, the Administration must return.— The proclamations must be withdrawn, the confiscation acts repealed, and we must get back to the resolutions adopted by Congress after the first battle of Bull Run. Mark well its clear and patriotic import:

"*Resolved*, That the present deplorable civil war has been forced upon the country by the disunionists of the Southern States, now in arms against the Constitutional Government, and in arms around the capital; that in this national emergency Congress, banishing all feeling of mere passion or resentment, will recollect only its duty to the whole country; that this war is not waged on their part in any spirit of oppression, or for any purpose of conquest or subjugation or purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution, and to preserve the Union, with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired; and that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease."

Upon the principles upon which the war is now waged, there is no rallying-point for Union sentiment in the South. It is unusual for an invading army to advance without propositions of peace. Our Army has none. Unconditional submission to an enemy whose declared purpose is the destruction of their rights of property and social system is all that is offered them. Is it surprising that the Union sentiment should be crushed out, that the South should be united almost to a man, and that its resistance should be intensified and embittered with an energy derived from desperation?

Above all things, Mr. Speaker, do I desire a restoration of the Union as it was. It is the grand experiment of civil liberty. Any sacrifice, any concession, any appropriation should be made to prevent its failure. We have a great mission, and no trivial consideration of the negro, or any other, should be permitted to interrupt it. It is our mission to demonstrate the problem of self-government, and to revolutionize other Governments by the silent force of a great example. While the common law and all the privileges and advantages of civilization have been transferred to this continent, nothing but the stable continuance of our admirable system of government is needed to attract within it the people of every clime.

Never were an aggregation of free and independent political communities better circumstanced geographically for the purposes of such a Union. On the scale of magnitude far surpassing the petty States of Greece, Switzerland, and the Low Countries on the Rhine, there was, as between themselves, the happiest adaptation for a common government. Looking on the north and east to New England, there was there no conflict of pursuits with any other section. Her climate was rigorous and her soil sterile, and her only means of development were found in commerce and in manufactures. She was in a position to do the carrying trade for her neighbors, and to work up their raw material. Crossing westward into the State of New York, we find her the possessor of great and peculiar resources, and of the national metropolis, designed by nature as the commercial emporium of the continent. A little further south was Pennsylvania, filled with iron and coal, and favored perhaps more highly than any individual State with a combination of agricultural, mineral, manufacturing, and commercial advantages. To the west, in the great valley of the Mississippi, the production of the cereals was a wonder. But none of the States thus noticed produced rice, sugar-cane, cotton or gold.

These, again, were the peculiar products of the States lying between Pennsylvania and the Gulf, and of those on the Pacific. There was, therefore, among the several States those elements of unity, an adaptation to supply each other's wants and a mutual dependence. They were further tied together by great rivers reaching far into the interior, and facilitating intercourse between remote points. There were on the Atlantic slope the Hudson, the Susquehanna, the Delaware—to omit others of minor name—and there was in the heart of the continent the great inland sea of the Mississippi, flowing due south from almost the Arctic circle, and stretching his long arms of the Missouri and Ohio from the Allegheny to the Rocky mountains. The great chain of the Allegheníes, extending from the lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, seemed also designed by Providence as another physical bond of union. There was in all this evidently the most admirable foundation for union, for that very government, indeed, adopted by our fathers, combining in itself all the advantages of a consolidated empire for all purposes of defence against foreign aggression, and containing within the State organizations every provision to meet the wants of particular localities. Experience proved its great economy and eminent benefits; and the people of every State grew warm in their attachment to it, and wished for its perpetuity.

The North had profited largely by her connection with the South, and by every variety of exchange. She had profited largely by the products of slave labor. New England, with her barren soil and severe climate, had yet, by her manufacturing industry with a tariff protection, and her coastwise and foreign trade, grown rich and more populous than any other portion of the Union of the same area. She had also disproportionate power for shaping the policy of the country to her own advantage in having with a small territory a representation of singular inequality in the Senate. With a total population of 3,135,283 she speaks through the mouths of twelve Senators in the National Legislature; while the State of New York, with a population of 3,880,735, is heard only through two. In view of the superior benefits which the North has derived from the Union, it must be admitted to be the expression of a grave truth that the Cavalier held the cow while the thrifty Puritan steadily milked her.

This war will be prosecuted, and its great purpose should be peace upon the basis of the Constitution. If we fail to accomplish this, through the obstinate and misdirected policy of the Administration we shall have no permanent Government left in the North under the present Constitution. The cohesive power which constitutes the national bond would be gone, and with it would speedily perish the national debt. In the competition for commerce resulting in a line of free ports from the capes of the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande our foreign commerce, too, would dwindle, and the revenue derived therefrom would perish.

It would be impossible in congressional legislation to reconcile the commercial interests of New York and the agricultural interests of the Northwest with the manufacturing industry of New England and Pennsylvania; free trade and protection alike would be obstinately demanded. An unceasing border war would be the inheritance of the States bounded by the line of separation.

It is a still graver consideration that in the event of such a calamity no man of reflection can wink so fast as not to see that a portion of the States must become reunited by the instincts of empire, as well by every consideration of interest, of trade, commerce, and security. Cast your eye over the map of the States, and you see that all the rivers, from the Hudson to the Rio Grande, have their outlet to the ocean through the southern States. The trade of the lakes, which is alone greater than all our foreign commerce, reaches tidewater west of New England, while that of the great basin of the Mississippi, with its tributaries, comprising fifty thousand miles of boatable navigation, can find its way cheaply by the currents alone to Gulf of Mexico. The products of this mighty valley and the cotton of the South constitute the basis of the commerce of New York. It is idle to suppose that she can exist without a union with these grand divisions.

Pennsylvania must have a market for her iron and coal, and the products of her varied industry; while the Northwest is sure to follow her destiny marked by the water-courses, as every producing and trading people that had the power have always done from the days of the Phenicians down to the present time.

While the South has all the resources and geographical advantages which I have described, in all probability it cannot exist alone, even if successful, for any great length of time as an independent power. A union with the Northwestern and Middle States would become a necessity. For the present, perhaps a generation, the vast stake which European governments have in the division of a government based upon the popular will, and in the article of cotton, would secure protection to the Southern Confederacy. The keen eye of commercial and manufacturing capital, with the prejudice against slavery, would, however, render its life a short one. The world at large is too much interested in the growth and supply of cotton to trust, as heretofore, almost exclusively to the South for that supply in the future.— European capital and enterprise, stimulated by the lessons of experience, will, within the next quarter of a century, open up commercial communications, plant settlements, and make the cotton grow in the interior of Africa, Australia, the East Indies, as well as Mexico, Central America and the adjacent isles of the sea. When the supply is thus secured equal to the demand, independently of the South, then will the truce be at an end. An alliance, holy or political, would again send an army on the march, and the "*anaconda*" would then become a stern reality. The policy, then, which governs the war and is carving out the dissolution of the Union, if adhered to, is but laying the foundation for a Union in the valley of the Mississippi as an inevitable consequence and result.

The question of slavery in the Territories led to the disturbance of a harmony which might otherwise have been perpetual. The Chicago platform inaugurated revolution. The States being sovereignties, and the public domain having been acquired by deeds of cession, by purchase and by conquest, in the absence of a judicial decision recognizing the equal rights of the South in the Territories, upon what principle of equity or justice could that equality be denied? A legal, constitutional right, however recognized, it was well known could not have resulted in the spread of slavery; and yet a denial of it is the sad pretext of our troubles. Washington, impressed with a full knowledge of the antagonisms of society and the violence of party struggles for supremacy, at the close of his administration, still doubtful of the permanency of the experiment, warned his countrymen to a constant vigilance for its preservation. Jefferson, with that unerring sagacity which characterized his knowledge of human nature, admonished the people of the whole country that the array of parties upon a geographical line would result in the destruction of the Government.

This war cannot last forever. Sooner or later contending parties must become exhausted, the armies dwindled, credit destroyed, the land filled with graves and clothed in mourning, and an adjustment upon some terms will be the only cure for the evil. The uncompromising obstinacy of Charles I lost him his head; that of James II his crown; that of George III his colonies. Shall these States again be lost by imitating the example? Shall we not rather learn a lesson from that chapter in our history in 1812, when Mr. Clay, aided by Calhoun, pressed the war of that period upon the Administration of Mr. Madison in resistance to the British pretension to the right of search? The war lasted for three years and some months.— There was great sacrifice of life and vast expenditure of money. During that period the Navy upon the waters of the Chesapeake and the Atlantic covered itself with imperishable glory, and our soldiers poured out their blood like water upon the river Raisin and the Thames, at Tippecanoe and Lundy's Lane. And yet Mr. Clay, at the head of the American Commission, met the British Commissioners at Ghent, and there negotiated a treaty of peace without saying one word of the matter in controversy, and which was deemed honorable and satisfactory. Nearly fifty years have elapsed since that period, and the right remains unadjusted to this day. In the meantime our relations with England, social and commercial, have grown more intimate and important.

Mr. Speaker, there is everywhere an anxious and earnest looking forward to a termination of this contest. I believe there is no obstacle so potent against a return to peace as that spirit which has given a new policy and a new object to the war. To refuse, because of the institution of slavery in the Southern States, to adhere to the Union of our fathers is all one if we should refuse to treat with the Ottoman Porte or the Barbary Powers, because the one is the sovereign of a nation recognizing polygamy, and the other the slavery of the whites as well as the blacks. The man possessed with a single idea is of all the most unfitted for a Statesman.— That high character implies a condition of mind which contemplates things as they are, and which forbears the removal of a less mischief when this would be productive of a greater. He must aim in his policy at the production of the best good of society, but will carefully refrain from great, sweeping innovations, preferring to leave the correction of evils to the gentle hand of time, which, as Lord Bacon expresses it, "is the greatest innovator," well assured that no Government can be successful which does not adapt its policy to the various characters of the people to be affected by it, and to its diversities of industry and sectional interests.

Statesmen in every European Government may be impressed with the superiority of republican institutions. They would, however, be deemed infatuated to the last degree, if, taking advantage of some partial indications among the people, they should seek to bring on a crisis. They, with better judgment, adhere to the existing order of things, well knowing the changes, to be beneficial, must be permanent. It was not at a single bound that England, the freest of the monarchies, leaped from the fetters of the feudal system. That was the accomplishment only of centuries of struggles against the power of the barons, under the guidance of enlightened princes, great statesmen, and able lawyers; and after all, some of the most objectionable features of that system cling to her still. France, indeed, attempted, by a single convulsive effort, to shake from her the bondage under which she had groaned for centuries. She succeeded in obtaining a feverish interval of freedom, only to relapse into the old despotism; and now, with her journals silent and liberty prostrate, how much better is her condition than before the revolution of 1789?

It was error, maddened error, as well as treason in the South seceding as a remedy for her grievances. Great revolutions are only justified by great oppressions. The South should have remained in the Union, and fought her battle with the abolition phalanx under the ægis of the Constitution. She laid the foundation of the Government and reared its superstructure, and the broad folds of its flag furnished her ample protection. She would have done this from patriotic considerations and ancestral recollections, and sternly discarded *ignis fatuus* counsels of her Yanceys.

But let New England remember that the South, in rebellion, is but acting out doctrines once maintained in all sincerity by herself. Let her remember that southern slavery was planted by her own enterprise, her ships reaping nearly all the profits of the slave trade, which the Constitution protected till 1808. These reflections should incline, while still prosecuting the war for the support of the Constitution and the integrity of the Union, to moderate our demands according to the standard of justice. Let us all remember that it is an easy thing to destroy; but a long and difficult one to build up. The struggle for the establishment of human rights upon a positive basis of constitutional law has been long and tedious, successful, and then doubtful.

Civilization may be said to have commenced its march on the plains of Judea with the establishment of the Jewish theocracy. Spreading thence to India and Egypt, from the latter it was transported to Greece, where it shown brightly in its classic literature, and its efforts toward a system of self-government. Thence it was transferred to Rome, where it beamed with renewed lustre. Peculiar causes operating in Italy resulted at the same time in the Roman republic. These, the first recorded efforts for a democratic Government, possessed inherent defects, and both, at the period of the Christian era, were absorbed in the imperial despotism of Octavius Cæsar. The Empire ran its career of centuries till at length the hopes of the human race lay buried for a time in the tomb of the dark ages. They awoke again with the revival of learning in the twelfth century, and receiving an undying impetus in the ages of the Reformation, and of discovery which followed. With the exception of the Italian republics, which possessed no enduring vitality, and at a later day those of Holland and Switzerland, monarchy, everywhere, the world over, was the only accepted form of policy.

It was at length, after six thousand years of struggle by the race for the attainment of a perfect government, that our wise forefathers, struck with the favorable conditions for a renewal of the experiment, resolved to attempt it on this continent. Starting with the representative feature and the free principle of the English monarchy, they searched the storehouse of free commonwealths for enduring materials for the new structure. To the selection and arrangement of the political machinery which they needed, they brought qualifications never before equalled by the framers of States. Deep insight into human nature, the profound knowledge of history and of law, and unblemished patriotism were theirs. Their perfect work stands before us; nay, it is to our keeping. Oh! let us not, let us not, I implore you, permit the grand experiment to fail through any remissness or perversity of ours.

It is indeed an easy thing to destroy; but to call into being, whether in material affairs or in those of morals and politics, great and useful works, taxes the highest faculties and resources of man. It is especially so in framing the institutions of government. For this, the learned sage and the man versed in practical affairs must join their anxious and patriotic labors. For the adoption, amid opposing interests, of any system, is needed the long and patient conference, the steady forbearance, the timely concession and compromise. The selfish principles must be held in check. A curb must be laid upon the passions. But for the destruction of the same system it is needed only that we forbear the exercise of the virtues and benevolent affections and give full sway to the selfish principles.

The temple of Diana of Ephesus was the boast of the ancient world. The treasures of kings and all the art skill of the times had been profusely lavished upon it to render it the richest and most magnificent of the structures of earth. Yet the torch of Eratosthenes, infatuated with the ambition of immortality, though it should be one of infamy, was sufficient in a few hours to lay it in ashes.

Alas! that these reflections should find so practical an application in the events of the times. We had a good Government. We possessed already what revolutionists in other Governments set out to attain, and no pretensions to statesmanship should have been admitted which sought to jar the system or break it up.

I have read of a knight of the middle ages who was the possessor of a shield of extraordinary richness and workmanship. The material was of the finest gold, and the device was emblazoned with the rarest skill of the artist. The whole was of matchless beauty.

It was yet disfigured by a single blemish. In an evil hour its possessor listened to the persuasion of an artificer who proposed to remove it by again subjecting it to the heat of the furnace. The experiment was made; but the same heat which removed the stain destroyed also the image upon the shield, and the whole was reduced to a shapeless mass in the crucible. He might make a new shield of the gold, but the one so cunningly sculptured, and so highly prized, was gone, alas! forever.

The people of the United States are in the positon of the knight, and their priceless shield is their constitutional Government. The stain, if you will, is the institution of slavery. In the fires of civil war to which the empirical artists have resorted to remove it, it may be obliterated, but the Government itself, under the operation, will be dissolved. New Governments may indeed be formed of the materials, but that of the American fathers will be no more.

Under Democratic rule, prior to the triumph of the Chicago platform, the nation was at peace, united, prosperous, and happy. Instead of a frightful civil war, desolating the land and filling with strife and bitterness the paths which lead to our dwellings, we pointed with pride to our national power, our commerce, our manufactures, our constitutional liberty; to our national monuments and works of art, which everywhere decorated the line of progress, and were held up as the trophies of a Christian civilization.

But, alas! the change. Bryon, the immortal poet, when writing his immortal verse amid the ruins of the Roman empire, said:

"Alas! the lofty city! and alas!
Alas! for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page; but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside—decay."

In the gloom that covers the land, from the great Atlantis, where the light of the morning sun is first seen, to where his setting rays go down in the western ocean, without some patriotic sacrificer to re-establish the broken columns of a once mighty Government, the time may not be far remote when the genius of American liberty may say, Alas! for the fame of Washington and the memory of Franklin, the eloquent stories of Irving and of Prescott, the eloquence of Clay and of Webster; these may be her resurrection—all beside decay.