

THE LESSONS OF OUR NATIONAL CONFLICT.

ADDRESS

TO

THE ALUMNI OF YALE COLLEGE,

AT THEIR ANNUAL MEETING,

JULY 24, 1861.

By JULIAN M. STURTEVANT,

PRESIDENT OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE.

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A D D R E S S .



FATHERS AND BRETHERN OF THE ALUMNI :

THE distinguished scholar and divine who last addressed you, on an occasion like this, found his fitting theme in the history of our venerable Alma Mater, as recorded in her Triennial Catalogue. The public mind was then in a mood to sympathise with a review of our peaceful past, and to enjoy an effort so tranquil and scholarly to gather up those suggestions of wisdom and hope which may be derived from our former experience, to guide and encourage our future. Blessed peace! How bright is its sunshine, as in memory we contrast it with the stern and solemn realities which now surround us. The present hour seems to me to demand a very different theme. We are now called to learn the lessons of adversity: we must now find strength for an hour of conflict; fortitude to endure and hope to sustain and cheer us in darkness and gloom. It is fit that we remember that all the nations that have ever achieved anything worthy of the grateful remembrance of mankind, have passed through their seasons of national adversity, and that the lessons of those seasons have been even more important to their development, their education, and their greatness, than those derived from seasons of prosperity. It is in adversity, in conflict, in the times of national trial and calamity, that a nation's fallow-ground is broken up, and the seeds of future greatness are sown

and rooted in the soil. Its times of prosperity are only harvest seasons, which would yield nothing worthy of the reaper's sickle without previous "sowing in tears." What would Greece have been without her Persian wars, her Marathon, Thermopylae, and Plataea? What would England have been without her wars of the Roses, and the troubles and terrible conflicts of her great Revolution? Without these the English nation, English character, English freedom could never have been. While they lasted, how deep the gloom in which they shrouded the nation! It was with our fathers in those struggles as it is with us to-day. Peace and prosperity seemed to them a bright and sunny dream of the past; and as they peered into the thick mists which overhung them, they could no where discern any sure promise of their restoration to an afflicted nation. And yet how bright, how glorious a future was before them! How full of freedom and happiness to their children and their children's children, and of blessings untold to the human race!

It becomes us, then, to take courage and hope. We are not the first nation that has seen an hour of darkness and gloom. We have no reason to suppose or to hope that we, more than other nations, can fulfill a great destiny without passing, like them, through a baptism of suffering. And if a great destiny is before us, as we have fondly hoped, we ought to expect to be prepared to enter on that promised land, by passing through the Red Sea, the wilderness, and the Jordan. It ill becomes us, then, as soon as the shadow of a great calamity begins to fall upon us, to lose our courage and abandon our hope. This is an hour rather in which we need all our manhood—a hand to do with unfaltering energy all its duties, and an eye to discern all its lessons.

It has therefore seemed to me that in no other way can we so fitly improve the present hour, as in endeavoring coolly to survey the passing scene, in order to glean up some of those suggestions of encouragement, warning and wisdom, which may give us strength for the present and manly preparation for the future.

There are four vices which have been rapidly growing upon

our American character, which our present adversity is obviously fitted, and I hope intended by a merciful Providence, to correct and eradicate. They are a *morbid philanthropy; an ostentatious and costly self-indulgence; a great lack of the spirit of loyal admiration and reverence for a strong and energetic government; and a disposition in our notions of national policy to substitute the will of majorities, instead of justice and the will of God.* Either of these vices would be a source of great weakness and deformity to any nation; and, all together, if allowed to grow unchecked and uncorrected, they could not fail to produce national disaster, debasement, degradation, and ruin. Let me then respectfully invite your attention to the relation of our present national adversity to each of them.

1. Much of our philanthropy is sickly, and the experiences through which we are passing will render it again vigorous and robust.

We have a notion widely prevalent, and arrogating to itself the claim that it is the only true development of the teachings of the law of God, that even defensive war is criminal, condemned by the morality of the New Testament; that a Christian people has no defense against the exactions and oppressions of men of violence and blood, but argument and persuasion. We have a popular text-book on moral philosophy from the pen of one of the most venerated divines and distinguished educators of our country, which teaches and defends this doctrine. A distinguished philanthropist of our country, known in this and foreign lands, alike for the extent and variety of his linguistic lore, and the fervor of his philanthropy, has proposed to put an end to war in Christendom, by obtaining from every man a solemn pledge never to bear arms, just as it is proposed to banish the vice of drunkenness from human society by obtaining from every individual a pledge never to drink any thing which has an intoxicating quality. Such a pledge of universal brotherhood has been signed by thousands of women, and some men. Many of *us* have been invited to sign it; perhaps some of us have signed it. If we have not, I hardly think it probable we shall do so, just at the present time.

Many persons carry the same notion with them to the reading of the Bible. Many a tender-hearted enthusiast is quite shocked at the Psalms of David, and cannot understand how a good man can have been so vindictive. There are not a few of our reformers who are hurried into the conclusion, that the Old Testament cannot have been inspired of God because of its warlike spirit. They judge of the utterances of those glorious old warriors and prophets of the Lord in the light of the modern doctrines of non-resistance, and condemn them as vindictive and revengeful in spirit.

This same notion is extended not only to war, but to the punishment of crime. Paul, in his good old robust view of things, spoke of the civil magistrate as "he that beareth the sword." But these modern interpreters of the morality of Paul's adored Master, would take away the sword from the magistrate, and represent the taking of human life as exceeding the powers which governments are competent to confer on their agents. They do not seem to perceive that such a denial undermines government itself, that it is a denial of its right to be; for no government can sustain its own existence for a twelve month, when deprived of the power of life and death over its subjects. This morbid sympathy for the wicked is undermining the foundations of society itself; it is affecting disasterously the decisions of judges and the verdicts of jurors; it is disqualifying the minds of millions to receive those doctrines of retributive justice, which lie at the foundation of all government, human and divine, of all social virtue, and of that very Christian religion, from which men profess to derive a morality from which the idea of retribution and penalty is excluded.

It is not to be denied, that such green-sickness as this is becoming quite seriously prevalent among the American people. It is the result of living too long and too much in the cool shade of prosperity, and will require no other treatment than exposure for a time to the hot sunshine of national adversity. From such a change of regimen we expect robust, vigorous health to ensue, except in a few cases, in which the constitution has been already fatally impaired.

It is difficult to conceive of circumstances better fitted than our present to affect a cure of such a morbid condition of the national mind. What will these amiable philanthropists have us do in our present national trial? What for our dear country? What for social order, for freedom, for justice, for humanity, for mercy? What can we do but defend all which is precious in the cherished free institutions of our country *by force of arms*? In times like these it is easy to relearn a lesson, which has been taught again and again in the history of our mother England and her colonial offshoots, that no people can long enjoy freedom, unless they are willing to defend it with their blood. The whole history of liberty in the world teaches the same lesson. To refuse to bear arms in defense of a free and just government, to neglect to exert force for the defence of the innocent, the restraint of the disorderly, and the condign punishment of crime, is for society to abdicate its highest function, and give over this world to the rule of anarchists and despots.

I have not forgotten the blessed prophecies of the divine Word. There is to be a long reign of peace on earth. But it is not to be ushered in by leaving crime unpunished, and unoffending virtue unprotected, and giving up this present world to men of violence and blood, to tyrannize over it to their heart's content; but by effecting such changes in the social, political and moral condition of the world, through the dissemination of freedom, instruction, and a pure Christian faith, as shall render a long reign of peace and justice possible. In the present state of the world it is not possible. Nor are we to expect those peaceful ages to be ushered in, till such a morbid philanthropy, as we have been remarking on, has been effectually exploded; till men shall have so learned in the school of hard and bloody national experience the relations of retributive justice and penalty to all order, to all freedom, and to all government, that they can enjoy long peace and freedom without reproaching as blood-thirsty cut-throats, those ancestors by whose bravery and prowess on the field of battle these blessings were purchased. God will never usher in that golden age of the future, till he has prepared mankind to honor and revere the men by whose labors and sacrifices it shall have been

achieved; till men shall be wise and strong enough, while in the full enjoyment of its holy tranquility, to read the Old Testament, the narratives of its glorious old heroes, the denunciations of its prophets, and the songs of its royal Psalmist, without having their philanthropy shocked. And till the world does so understand the subject of war and retributive justice, we may be sure it is not yet ready to beat its swords into ploughshares and its spears into pruning-hooks.

2. But I must hasten to a second lesson of the times which is perhaps yet more striking and important. It will hardly be denied that our national character was becoming greatly weakened by the prevalence of a spirit of ostentatious and costly self-indulgence. Long-continued and unusual prosperity has a terrible influence to enervate and unman a people. Costliness of living will often, in such circumstances, outrun the greatest prosperity. Men make more haste to spend in expensive magnificence than to acquire. That seemingly impossible combination of Sallust, "*Luxuria atque avaritia*," is presented before our eyes, not only as possible but as actual. In the same communities and in the same persons, the greed of gain goes in even yoke with the greed of costly self-indulgence. Men, and perhaps still more women, learn to regard all things as necessaries of life, or at least of their delicate and favored lives, which the imagination can dream of, or which money can purchase. While one such want remains ungratified, the cravings of desire stimulate avarice to still more insatiable eagerness, till the voices of humanity, philanthropy, piety, and conscience, are all alike silenced or unheeded, amid the ceaseless clamors of these two hostile and yet twin vices.

Of this tendency of great and long-continued prosperity, our country is beginning to afford a very alarming illustration. I trust I am no croaker; but a man may speak the truth without croaking. And it is a truth which challenges denial, that habits of extravagant costliness have grown upon the descendants of the self-sacrificing frugal Pilgrims with very alarming rapidity. They are to such an extent drying up the fountains of our philanthropy, that we may look forward to

the time as not distant, when the great centers of our wealth and population shall surpass even the capitals of the old world in accumulated masses of unfed, unclad, uneducated and uncared for poverty. The lady who in the midst of a profusion of all the costly fabrics which can be procured from the spindles and looms of the civilized world, has "nothing to wear," will be sure to meet the appeals of humanity, compassion and piety, with the plea that she has nothing to spare; and the husband and the father will have nothing to spare. While such imaginations are more busy in devising the ways of spending money than avarice itself in procuring it, men become the worse than galley slaves of Mammon, that women may be no less the slaves of fashion and pleasure.

In this country of ours this evil is more wide-spread and alarming than it ever has been in any other. It is not only true that our prosperity has been unprecedented, both in its greatness and in its continuance, that we have enjoyed a kind of millennium of money-making, but the resulting habits of extravagant costliness spread themselves over a wider surface than in any other country. In those countries in which society is largely aristocratic in its structure, custom for the most part confines such habits of extravagance to the upper classes. The middle and lower classes are in some degree protected from their influence by the proprieties of their rank. But with us the contagion is universal, and can be checked in no class by any other consideration than those of conscience and good taste; and when these fail, it is without a limit. The wife or daughter of a plain American farmer cannot be dressed without the toilet of the Empress of the French. The democratic kitchen-maid emulates the costume of Queen Victoria and her daughters.

It is not only true that such modes of living are wasting our substance and drying up the fountains of our charity and our liberality; but they are in other respects enervating our national character. To persons and to communities long accustomed to such self-indulgent luxury the voice of conscience speaks with little power; self-denial is a thing not to be thought of. A farmer said to a friend of mine, in the very

midst of the great political conflict of 1856, "I do not care who is President, I can raise as much wheat and sell it for as good a price under one as another." And that is the spirit towards which the American people were tending. It mattered not how our government was administered, whether the nation was honored or disgraced by the conduct of its rulers, whether justice or oppression were in the ascendancy, provided only our gains and our pleasures were not interfered with. The merchant who could meet the expenses of his princely mansion, and all the costly gayeties of the season, enjoy his splendid summers at Saratoga and Newport, and, at the year's end, add a satisfactory number of thousands to his capital, thought it out of taste for him to be troubled about politics, and was more indignant at the fanaticism of those who troubled the public mind by talking of the wrongs done to four millions of slaves, than he could be at *any* instance of injustice which did not reach the gains of his counting-house nor the luxuries of his merchant-palace. To a people thus enervated by enslavement to their own imaginary wants, bravery, heroism become impossible and inconceivable. In these later years as I have listened to the stirring strains of our national air, I have felt the blush of shame tingling my cheek almost equally at the words "the home of the brave," as at the words "the land of the free." Both have sounded like a burlesque. We Americans of the present generation have had very little reason to sing of our bravery.

There is great power in a season of national adversity, such as that through which we are passing, to correct these downward tendencies of our national character. Perhaps we have thought that we had nothing to spare; but we are in the way of discovering how great was the delusion. At the trumpet call of our country's danger, we are summoned to place our entire fortunes at her disposal, and our own lives, and the lives of sons, husbands, and brothers. Ah! surely we had much to spare. And the sweet voices of loved ones, of fathers and mothers that have gone, whisper in our ear to withhold nothing in this hour of our country's need. Our own love of

liberty, the liberty of ourselves, and our children, and our children's children, says, withhold nothing.

Ah! in these times we may hope to learn lessons of bravery and heroism, and become worthy to sing—

—“ O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

And in the midst of the sacrifices which we now make so freely for the land of our birth, and the guarantees of our liberties, we shall think of our past self-indulgent lives, and, like the penitent Peter, we shall go out and weep bitterly; and we shall construct our future lives on a nobler and better principle. We shall train ourselves and train our children to habits of self-denial and self-sacrifice. And it may be hoped that by means of the discipline through which we are now passing, we shall become a people that will know how to enjoy prosperity without being corrupted and enervated by it—a people wise enough to possess all the unequalled resources of the good land which the Lord hath given us, and use them in furtherance of all the interests of freedom, humanity and universal civilization. Such a people we must become, self-denying, brave, heroic in the midst of prosperity, or we can never attain to the destiny which divine Providence seems to have marked out for us. The history of the human race in all its degradations and crimes presents nothing so revolting and shocking, as the conception of this nation with all the high and glorious lessons of its past, enjoying the exhaustless resources of North America, and yet using them in corrupting, enervating self-indulgence, and in the unbounded costliness of fashionable ostentation. If we are to become great as our hopes, we must find a corrective of these vicious tendencies. It is devoutly to be hoped we may at least partially find it in the stern discipline of the present hour.

3. A third vicious tendency in American character, which I mentioned, is a lack of admiration and reverence for a strong, energetic, and benignant government.

It is sad to observe how low the sentiment of reverence for established and rightful authority has fallen in our national

mind. We have begun to conclude that the glory of an American is not that his is a free, rightful, and benignant government, but that he is not governed at all; that in this happy country every one does what is right in his own eyes. Instead of reverencing our own government for its strength, we have been inclined to glory in its weakness. We have been sufficiently confident of its durability, sufficiently inclined, like the old Roman, to talk of the "*Capitoli immobile saxum.*" But it has not been because we had any confidence in the strength of the government, or its power to overcome resistance should any ever be offered; but because we thought the government so benignant and so good, and the people withal so intelligent, that there was no danger that it ever would be resisted. In popular impression, in general estimation, we had no government. And when our present chief magistrate was forced to make his way to the national capital unattended and unknown, under the cover of the friendly darkness of the night, we were mortified indeed, but it did not arouse the nation, nor even the party which had elected him. It was not much worse than we expected, and we soon made up our minds to submit to the national indignity, and "go around Baltimore!!"

And this want of reverence for the authority of a strong government was producing disastrous effects on our whole national character. We were evidently in need of some vigorous discipline. The element of reverence for rightful authority was slipping out of the national mind. Our young men were beginning to feel that all authority is despotism, all government tyranny, and all submission and obedience servility. Just in proportion as such views prevail among any people, they become incapable of virtue, or of anything that is truly great and noble in character. That man or that woman into whose character the spirit of cheerful and reverential obedience to rightful authority does not enter as a predominating element, cannot be either virtuous, or great, or noble, or lovely. Such a character is monstrous; a nation of such characters is a nation of monsters, and would be loathed of men and abhorred of God. And those traits of

American character which have exposed us to the severest criticism from enlightened foreigners, have all sprung from this very vice. Any discipline, therefore, which tends to correct this vice, is evidently one which young America does greatly need.

There is one peculiarity in our national history, which created almost a necessity, that we should run for a time into the vice of which I speak. Without an experience which as a nation we have not had, it was hardly possible either for the rest of the world to understand us, or for us to understand ourselves. Our government is in part founded on a new discovery in political science, as truly original as the invention of steam navigation, or the telegraph. Our constitution is called a confederation of States. That is nothing new under the sun. Confederations have been common from the days of the Grecian republics to our own times. But our confederation is in a most important respect unlike all that have preceded it. In a confederation of States properly so called, the central government has States, and States only, for subjects. It can command the individual only by commanding the State to which the individual owes allegiance. In our confederation, if confederation it must be called, the central government is restricted, indeed, to a very limited number of interests; but in respect to those interests, it is as truly national as the government of England or France. It never commands a State; it has no power or right to do so; it commands individuals only. It is therefore unlike any other confederacy. It is unlike any other national government, because, though it governs all the individuals of the entire nation, it governs them only in respect to certain limited and accurately defined interests, leaving them to be governed in all other respects by the several States, as though the central government did not exist. This, I say, is a new discovery, or, if you please to call it so, a new experiment in the science of government.

De Tocqueville, in his work on American Democracy, has stated this point with so much clearness and force, that I cannot forbear quoting his words. He says:

"The human understanding more easily invents new things than new words, and we are thence constrained to employ a multitude of improper and inadequate expressions. Where several nations form a permanent league and establish a supreme authority, which although it has not the same influence over the members of the community as a national government, acts upon each of the confederate States in a body, this government which is so essentially different from all others, is denominated a Federal one. Another form of Society is afterwards discovered, in which several peoples are fused into one and the same nation with regard to certain common interests, although they remain distinct or at least only confederate with regard to all other concerns. In this case the central power acts directly upon those whom it governs, whom it rules, and whom it judges in the same manner as, but in a much more limited circle than a national government. Here the term Federal government is clearly no longer applicable to a state of things which must be styled an incomplete national government. A form of government has been found out which is neither exactly national nor federal; but no farther progress has been made, and the new word which will one day designate this novel invention does not yet exist." p. 138.

This most important feature in our national constitution, is, in the strictest sense, a new discovery, a new invention. But if history proves anything, it proves that new discoveries in government are never made available for the benefit of mankind, except through conflict and blood. It was appointed to the English nation, for example, to demonstrate that a king may reign while the people govern. She has nobly wrought out this problem in the sight of Europe and the world, and a noble step of progress it is in the science of government. But in working it out she has taken from one king his head, and from another his crown, and has sacrificed in civil conflict what thousands of her people, and what millions of her treasure! Nor is there any evidence that, as human nature is, the problem could have been solved at a less cost either of blood or treasure.

Let us not imagine that we are exempt from a law of national progress to which all the past has been subjected. We have incorporated in our constitution a new and an exceedingly important invention in the science of government. We may not expect to render it available for the benefit of mankind till it shall have been subjected to the ordeal of bloody conflict. A portion of our people are tired of the contract. They wish to escape from the Union which our fathers formed.

This, say they, is not a national government, it is a confederation, and will the administration attempt to “coerce” a sovereign State? And the idea of a national government of limited powers has no firm hold of any portion of the national mind; it has not yet been subjected to the ordeal of the sword; it has not yet been written in blood. And the bloody handwriting of the sword is to nations the only intelligible writing. The word “coercion” had well nigh frightened the nation from its propriety. It was because we did not, and, according to the laws of the human mind, as a nation, we could not half understand this grand peculiarity of our constitution.

It is wonderful to observe that the profound De Tocqueville himself, after having stated the case so clearly in the extract we have made, falls, in the subsequent part of his work, into the very same error. He says :

“However strong a government may be, it cannot escape from the consequences of a principle which it has once admitted as the foundation of its constitution. The Union was formed by the *voluntary agreement* of the states; and in uniting together they have not forfeited their nationality, nor have they been reduced to the condition of one and the same people. If one of the states chose to withdraw its name from the contract it would be difficult to disprove its right of doing so; and the Federal Government would have no means of maintaining its claims directly either by force or right.” p. 367.

Again :

“It appears to me unquestionable that if any portion of the Union seriously desired to separate itself from the other states, they would not be able, nor indeed would they attempt to prevent it, and the present Union will only last as long as the states which compose it choose to continue members of the confederation.” p. 369.

This is South Carolina logic; this is the logic to which the partisan watch-cry of “coercion” was addressed—this, too, from a profound philosopher who had previously analyzed the constitution with great discrimination and accuracy, and shown that within the limits of those interests which are committed to it, our government is as truly and completely national as that of France under Napoleon III, and has just as good, exclusive, and perfect a right to collect imposts in the port of Charleston, as the government of England has to collect them

in the port of Liverpool ; and the people have just as much right to cry "coercion" in the one case as in the other. This writer shows that carefully as he has pointed out the inaccuracy of the words Federal and Confederation, when applied to our government, these words have still overmastered *him*, and led his thoughts far away from that great invention in the science of government, for which he has elsewhere given the framers of the constitution ample credit. Even the philosophers are like the rest of us common mortals ; they cannot persistently see a political truth till it has been established by conflict and written in blood.

And so it is with the philosophers and with the unlearned, with foreigners and with ourselves, with the South and with the North ; it will never be clearly seen and felt in the depths of men's souls that a government of limited powers can exert those powers in presence of and in opposition to those states from which it originally received them by voluntary cession, till it has been proved by fierce and bloody conflict. Till our general government has asserted those powers in the face of opposition, and shown its strength by overcoming resistance and trampling out rebellion, it will, as human nature is, almost necessarily be regarded as weak and helpless, dependent on the capricious will of thirty-four sovereign states, and existing for a twelve month only by their sufferance.

While our general government continued to occupy such a position, it could not be much respected either at home or abroad. It is for this same reason that England cannot understand us at the present moment, and displays in speaking of our present crisis an ignorance, which alternately provokes our contempt and our anger. It were best that we spare both, and teach her by *deeds* that we are not a mere confederation but a *nation*, and that it is as absurd for her to talk of "strict neutrality" and the "rights of belligerents" in the present contest, as for us to use similar language in a conflict between her and her Irish, Canadian, or Indian subjects. I say we must teach her by *deeds* ; for deeds are the only sort of instruction which the nature of the case admits of, or which can be effectual.

And by deeds, too, we must instruct ourselves and our own people. Such a national experience as that out of which we have lately come, such a national nightmare, as that from which the booming of Sumpter's cannon was hardly able to awaken us, was only possible in such a dim twilight of some great fundamental political truth, as exists before it has received the sanction of trial by deadly conflict. The giant frauds on our national treasury, the astounding acts of treason committed by many of the highest functionaries of our government, both civil and military, and the still more astounding toleration with which we, the people, endured it all, would have been impossible but for this dim and inadequate perception of this fundamental principle of our government. And this dimness of vision was nearly universal. Few of us saw with any clearness and vividness of perception, that we have a supreme government at Washington. And if we have not a supreme government at Washington, then, certainly, nowhere; for our state governments do not profess to be supreme; they are not such either in theory or in practice. The only effect, then, of such a state of things has been to attack and destroy the very principle of loyalty itself; to set up what claims to be a government, as an object of pity and contempt—a government which could not protect good men, and on which bad men could trample with impunity. It has been perfectly notorious for many years, that in large districts of our country the government could not protect the rights of innocent and unoffending citizens; it could not enforce its own laws; it could not maintain the inviolability of its own mails. In such a state of things it need not be thought strange that the principle of loyalty declined, and that reverence for the government itself was fast fading out of the national mind: such a result was partly a necessity of our national history.

If these things are so, our present national crisis has not come a moment too soon; and we can well afford to meet it at the sacrifice, of no matter how many human lives, and how many millions of treasure. Such a crisis we must meet, and meet soon, or be utterly ruined by our growing disloyalty, and the vices without number which inevitably spring from it.

And we may well hope that it will furnish the very discipline we need. It is to be hoped that we and the world shall find that we have a real government, that there is a power in and over this nation, mild and benignant indeed, but yet a power, which can demand and enforce obedience over every foot of its domain; a power which can overcome resistance, which can trample out even a gigantic rebellion, and make itself felt, feared and honored; a power which can in all parts of this land hold a shield of resistless protection over its friends, and crush its enemies in the dust as easily as one can set his foot on an offensive worm. Such a discipline we certainly do need, and must have, or become the vilest of nations. It will unspeakably bless us: it will make us far more united, homogeneous and capable of virtue at home; and far more loved and honored abroad. The children of an ungoverned family are always objects of dread and aversion to all their neighbors. Just so the people of an ungoverned or an ill-governed nation are always abhorred by the rest of mankind. It is to be hoped we may come out of this great national trial, chastened in spirit, subdued not to traitors or foes, but to authority and rightful government: a people able to live together in harmony and to render ourselves beloved and honored by all mankind.

4. There is yet one more vice of our national character, perhaps even more deep and dangerous than those hitherto spoken of, which we hope our present national crisis may tend to eradicate. I have been speaking of want of loyalty to the government under which we live: I now refer to want of loyalty to right, to changeless eternal justice. As a people, a nation, we have been unmindful of the great truth, that there are principles of right, which limit and sustain all human, all created, all existing power; principles which God himself never infringes, and will never suffer to be infringed by any combinations of created power. We have imagined that democratic majorities may do whatever they please, and especially that an ocean-girt republic, like ours, is strong enough to do all its pleasure; that the *will* of such a people is omnipotent. The public mind has been extensively pervaded with the idea, that to

oppose moral convictions to the legal expressions of such a national will is fanaticism to be discountenanced by the people's contempt and scorn, if not to be punished by the judges. In our own times and before our own eyes men of the purest character and the highest standing have been made a hissing and a by-word for maintaining, that there are laws of justice and laws of God, which are above all human constitutions and enactments, and which as truly limit the power of popular majorities however numerous, as of crowned despots.

And yet there are such changeless laws of God, and neither individuals nor nations can ever for one moment escape from them. God has hedged about every creature he has made with rights, principles of justice, which he will never permit any earthly power great or small to trample on; and the individual or the nation that does trample on them will meet God as an avenger. And great and small are both alike to him; it is just as easy for him to punish the mightiest human power that ever existed, as the feeblest insect; he can crush a nation as easily as a man or a worm. If a nation, however mighty, adopts either laws or customs, by which unnecessary cruelty is inflicted *on a tribe of brute animals*, the displeasure of God is sure to follow. The cruelty of Rome to the wild beasts which she tortured in her amphitheater, for the amusement of her populace and her fashion, was not the least of the causes of her decay and her overthrow. Still more will this law hold, if we perpetrate any injustice on a fellow-man, however low in the scale of humanity. The victim may be the red man of the wilderness, or the tawny African. He that cares for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, will still more care for the humblest in human form. We may rest assured that great as we are, vast as is our national domain, the laws of our national prosperity, and of all national prosperity, are such that neither we, nor any other nation, can permanently prosper while systematic and legalized injustice is practiced towards any creature that bears the image of God. It is as much a law of nature and of nature's God, that such legalized injustice will result ere long in convulsion and revolution, as that a heavy body unsupported will fall.

In the earthquake which is now shaking this nation, God is teaching us, and I hope a great nation will learn the lesson, that the principles of eternal justice are stronger than popular majorities, however vast and terrific: that the Almighty is always on the side of those principles; and that he will never be at a loss for ways of making them respected and honored. We are finding that he is stronger than popular majorities, stronger than navies and armies, however numerous and brave and well appointed, stronger than the North, and stronger than the South. He is teaching us that on that particular question out of which this convulsion has come, it is high time that all men of all parties, and all sections, should throw all questions of expediency and immediate advantage into the back-ground, and that reverentially, and in the fear of God's righteous judgments, we should adjust even that question on principles of everlasting justice,—justice to the white man, and justice to the black man, justice to the master, justice to the slave, justice to *all men*.

It can avail little now to ask what will the South demand, and what will the North concede. Any adjustment on such principles will be delusive and transient, and lead in the future to other and still more terrible convulsions. God made the African, and gave him his rights, whatever it may appear that they are, greater or less, and those rights the nation must respect and defend, or there is no future for us, but one of disruption, convulsion, anarchy and ruin.

In this spirit must we learn to treat every question affecting the rights either of individuals or classes. It is to a free nation, and a free nation only that God has given North America in possession. And a free nation is not one in which the majority rules and may do what it pleases, and all it pleases, but one in which justice is done to every man, and if possible to every brute and every insect. If our nation is ever again to be peaceful and prosperous, if it is to go on and fulfil its great destiny, if every spot on which the soles of our feet tread from ocean to ocean is to be ours, we must become such a free nation. Our freedom must rest on the everlasting foundations of justice—justice to men of all colors and con-

ditions, justice to the rich and justice to the poor, justice to the weak and justice to the strong. I seem to hear the awful voice of the great Jehovah speaking out of the tempest which is hanging over us and saying: "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, love merey, and walk humbly with thy God?" Then, and then only shall we have peace—peace as permanent as our mountains and as abundant as our rivers.

I crave your pardon for detaining you so long. I could not help it. My heart is full of this theme—too full for utterance. I do most earnestly commend it to the solemn consideration of this multitudinous family, the Alumni of Yale. I reverently commend it to our Alma Mater herself. May the long succession of her sons in coming generations and ages, add to the wealth of their learning, and the elegance of their culture, a wise, earnest, religious patriotism. May they ever be taught to love their country for its freedom, for its efficient and successful protection of all the rights of all the dwellers on its soil.

As I stand here to-day and cast my eye down the stream of our national future, what is it which I behold. A victorious and domineering North, holding in forced and unwilling submission a conquered and subjugated South? Nay, down with that hideous and shocking vision—a vision fitted to the past ages of the world's darkness and barbarism, but not to the bright millennial future. It is a vision of beauty, and glory, and blessedness which rises before me, the blessed spirit of loyalty enthroned, as never before, in the hearts of this great continental people; the relation of the white man, the heaven appointed lord of our soil, to the African, hewer of our wood and drawer of our water, adjusted on principles of equity and merey to both; the people of States now alienated, embittered, and in rebellion, beholding the flag of our American Union with all its glorious associations of freedom again waving over them with a joy too deep and heartfelt for any other utterance than that of tears; and a regenerated nation moving on in sublime majesty to take possession of a continent in the name of freedom, of justice, and of God.

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