

had blurred the old man's brain had spared a blessed something in him that won the healing love of children.

"How d' ye, Mote?" he piped in his feeble voice. "They say Lucindy's dead. . . . Jot says she is. 'n' Diademy says she is, 'n' I guess she is. . . . It's a dretful thick year for fol'age: . . .

some o' the maples looks like balls in the air."

Mote looked in at the window. The neighbors were hurrying to and fro. Diadema sat with her calico apron up to her face, sobbing; and for the first morning in thirty years old Mrs. Bascom's high-backed rocker was empty.

Kate Douglas Wiggin.

WHY THE MEN OF '61 FOUGHT FOR THE UNION.

"A historical student soon learns that a man is not morally the worse for being Whig or Tory, Catholic or Protestant, Royalist or Republican, Aristocrat or Democrat, Unionist or Confederate." — FREEMAN, *History of Federal Government*, Introduction, xi.

ONE of the familiar effects of good, honest fighting is the mutual respect of the combatants for each other. It was matter of every-day experience, during our civil war, that the place where prisoners captured in battle got best treatment was nearest the front. There the end of a desperate tussle brought a reaction of good feeling, such that the captor was ready to share his rations and his blanket with the man he had just been fighting. If he who had lost in the game of war met with bitter words or unhandsome acts, it was after he had passed to the rear. This was not because the physical combat changed men's opinions or diminished their ardor in the cause for which they were fighting. The truth is, rather, that the actual struggle with a man as ready as yourself to risk his life for something is a conclusive *argumentum ad hominem* as to his sincerity. His looking straight into the muzzle of your rifle, as he comes on, is a noble sort of demonstration of his honesty which the good soldier recognizes, without troubling himself to analyze the logical process. Of course this implies, also, that the cause for which he is

fighting is not one of mere murder or robbery, but is a political struggle, in which, though penalties of treason and rebellion may be incurred, the actions of the participants are (to use the oft-quoted saying of Lord Coke) proofs that "those things which are of the highest criminality may be of the least disgrace." The absence of disgrace or infamy makes mutual respect possible, and admiration for heroic personal conduct, and so friendship may be built up on the wreck of the battlefield itself.

The conclusion which the generous combatants reach by a quick instinctive process is more slowly worked out by those who are far from the field, whether in space or in time; but they reach it, soon or late, if they are intelligent, and the student of history justifies the assertion of Dr. Freeman, which I have made the motto for this paper. The result comes more quickly when men of opposing views are brought into contact in any such manner as makes them recognize the pure purpose and high conscientiousness of their adversaries. The work of Lee among his college boys at Lexington, during the last years of his life, was a lesson of this sort that many a Northern man has laid to heart with pathetic and tender interest. I hope it is not improper to add that wherever, in all Christendom, there is hearty appreciation of profound learning allied to conscience

and to a refined life, the recent paper of the Johns Hopkins professor of philology will be taken as conclusive proof that good and true and able men could uphold the cause of the Confederacy even in arms, and never doubt in their hearts that they were right. Yet we of the North were equally undoubting as to our own duty and our own cause, and are to-day devoutly thankful for an unwavering faith that the great conflict was the introduction to a glorious chapter of our country's history, which shall lead into an equal faith the children even of those who honestly struggled for disunion. There are things in the past which we deplore; there are fearful problems in the future of which we cannot see the solution; but that the unity of the American people is the necessary condition of human progress on this continent is to us an indisputable truth.

As the story of the experience of an educated young Virginian in search of a political creed shows, in the true historical way, how such an one came to think it right to fight for secession, and as that of the equally earnest and intelligent young Kentuckian makes us understand the stress on the heartstrings which accompanied his decision to stand by the Union, so, perhaps, it may be worth while to follow the actual experience of one in the free States who learned to be active, yea militant, in nationalizing the free-state system.

It is natural that those who took the Confederate side in our civil war should strive to make the point of departure that of the passage of ordinances of secession in the South. They say: "We believed that, under the Constitution as it was, we might rightfully dissolve the Union when continuance in it seemed to us oppressive: you denied this, and we therefore appealed to arms. The whole question, therefore, is whether you or we were acting within the lawful right." They protest that the question of slavery was not the issue, and should not

be made prominent in the discussion. It is, no doubt, true that this view was the one which influenced very many Southern men, and made it possible for them (especially in Virginia and North Carolina) to deprecate the dissolution of the Union, and yet conscientiously to "go with the South." I shall show, by and by, that there was a very different sentiment as to the real issue among the aggressive secessionists of the Gulf States; but it is enough now to say that, whilst this reasoning is good as explaining the morality of the conduct of those who acted upon it, it by no means covers the whole ground as it lay in the minds either of the majority of Northern men, or of the aggressive secessionists to whom I have referred. To these the question was distinctly the nationalizing of slavery or the nationalizing of freedom, and both classes accepted fully Mr. Lincoln's dictum that the Union could not exist half slave and half free. The "right" of secession has been a much-abused term. I never knew a Northern man refuse to admit the right of revolution when a people, or a considerable section of a people, found their political position intolerably and irremediably oppressive. I never knew a Southern man deny that such intolerable and remediless oppression must exist to justify secession. The controversy between the Confederate government and that of Georgia, during the war, was proof enough that no federal government could or would leave it to the whim or to the sole judgment of one State whether it should "nullify" or should "secede" as a mere act of sovereign will and pleasure. The distinction between secession and revolution vanishes in the presence of any grave conjuncture in practical statesmanship, and the fact is patent to him that runs that, except by mutual desire and consent, no "perpetual union" of modern states can be broken up by the forcible act of a part without making a *casus belli* under the law of nations. If

the government is ready to admit that it is oppressive, it will be ready to give redress. If it denies the wrong, the forcible rejection of its authority as tyrannical is a challenge to arms which will not be refused till its decadence has left it at the mercy of any invader. Revolution or secession, therefore, call it which we will, is never undertaken except at the peril of sustaining it by war, and whether successful or unsuccessful, the difference of name would count for nothing. Even if prearranged machinery of dissolution were provided in a constitution, it would not avoid the conflict, if either party thought its safety or prosperity imperiled by the change; for the loss of its safety or the destruction of its prosperity by the act of its neighbor will surely be a cause of war, even between independent states, till nations "learn war no more." It did not need our great conflict to teach this.

Whilst, therefore, an asserted right of secession may be fairly used to explain the moral attitude of men who honestly fought for the South although they did not regard themselves as champions of human slavery, the judgment of history as to the principles at stake in the revolutionary struggle of the seceders must ultimately be based upon the larger examination of the events which led to the attempt at secession. How did South Carolina and Mississippi justify to themselves and to the world the ordinances of secession and the acts of war which followed? That is the only important question. Whether the federal government had the right, under its Constitution, to fight in the war begun by the bombardment of one of its forts is a mere academic question, at which practical statesmen would smile. It required the weakness of a Buchanan, at the head of a cabinet of which half was secessionist, to give any practical importance to the discussion of the right to coerce a State. Our Northern people had accepted the Websterian doctrine of national-

ity, which left them in no doubt as to the theoretic question of power, but they did not fight for that. They elected Mr. Lincoln President with the avowed purpose of preventing the formation of another slave State from any of the Territories of the United States. In doing so, they reversed the decision of the majority of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, where the right to prohibit the spread of slavery had been denied, and the practice of our government from the free-territory ordinance of 1787 downward had been declared unconstitutional. That election, on that platform, was, beyond all quibbling or dispute, the overt act on which the States which led off in secession based their action. They resolved on revolutionary secession as soon as the election proved that the free-state movement was strong enough to accomplish its purpose. They chose to fight for secession rather than abandon the nationalizing of slavery, which had been their great victory in the Kansas-Nebraska legislation, and, like some other great victories, had been their undoing.

Here, then, the two opposing forces were in presence. On this great debate the seceders appealed to arms, and ordered an unnecessary attack upon Fort Sumter, to prevent retreat or compromise. On both sides there were auxiliaries who had their own reasons for action, and who came short of the sharply defined purpose and creed of the leaders. At the South, some, like most Virginians, asserted that there was no sufficient cause for secession, but found the federal government's acceptance of the gage of battle a good ground for joining the seceders. On both sides, many simply "went with their State," and accepted without reasoning the lot of their neighbors and their kin. History will not permit any of these side issues to be made the vital contention of the great struggle. It was, on the one side, slave property protected everywhere, North, South, and in the Territories, by the

mere force of the Constitution itself. It was, on the other, the absolute restriction of it to the States where it existed, at once and forever. The common sense of the combatants on both sides recognized this, and it passed into the homely slang of the time. I have it from an ear-witness that in the heat of a battle, when a South Carolina regiment broke, Longstreet exclaimed, with grim humor, "See those fellows getting their rights in the Territories!"

If it be worth while to clinch the statement I have made by the declarations of the seceding States themselves, the material is only too abundant. That officially adopted by the State of Mississippi has the merit of directness and clearness. It was reported by a committee appointed to draft it, and was adopted, apparently, without opposition. It begins thus:—

"A declaration of the immediate causes which induce and justify the secession of the State of Mississippi from the federal Union.

"In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

"Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery,—the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions [*sic*] of the commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of

abolition or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin."¹

Continuing in imitation of the Declaration of 1776, it makes a schedule of grievances, every one of which directly relates to slavery, and at the head stand the Ordinance of 1787 and the Missouri Compromise of 1819-20.

To this issue, then, we had come in 1861. By what paths did we reach it? To answer fully would be to review at length the history of America; for Von Holst is right in treating the slavery question as the core of our national politics. But perhaps something may be learned from a sketch of the political education of one man among the millions; for the same environment was about us all and influenced us all, though each might show some peculiarities of development.

Among the very earliest of my remembrances of childhood in the city of New York, of which my father was a native, are two scenes. One is of a crowd lining the sides of Broadway, my father holding me upon a merchant's packing-box, that I might see Andrew Jackson, his political idol, pass up the street from the Battery, escorted by the light-horse. The other, not far from the same time, is of being led past Dr. Ludlow's church, which had been gutted the day before, as mob-punishment for antislavery teaching done there. The scenes stand, as childish memories are apt to do, as mere scenes. The before and after are lost; but there they have stood for half a century and more, as vivid and sharp as if of yesterday. There began my political education,—object lessons in the infant school, it is true, without reasoning, a vague admiration and a vague fright and wonder.

A little later came more definite mother's teaching in sympathy with what she held to be philanthropy, with the

¹ Journal of State Convention of January, 1861. Published by State Printer.

devout earnestness of her Plymouth and Old Bay Colony blood. Many a boyish lesson in reading I spelled out from the little tracts published by the American Antislavery Society, illustrated by rude woodcuts of slave auctions or coffee-gangs. I cannot remember the time, since I could think at all, when slavery did not appear to me a blot upon our country, and a national shame and disgrace. Growing older, the education of schoolboy debates and college associations strengthened these lines of conviction instead of obliterating them; for it was impossible for any Northern youth to make a serious argument in favor of slavery. We must remember that even in the South it took a generation after Washington and Jefferson to produce genuine advocates of the system. In the North, the antislavery arguments were commonly met by special pleas, — it was none of our business, the Union must be saved, the party must be kept in power, etc., — supplemented by the charge that abolitionists were incendiaries and amalgamationists.

As young men of that time matured, they were distinctly conscious of the influence of the public opinion of the civilized world. Away from the presence of slavery, there was nothing in our social surroundings or in local opinion to break the force of the judgment of Christendom. The example of England in West India emancipation, at great cost to the public treasury, made us blush for shame, and boasts of our superior progress in free government choked us while we uttered them. When we were reminded of Lord Mansfield's decision, in the Somerset case, that under Magna Charta a slave could not breathe the air of Britain, we became subtle in our inquiries whether an equally great judge could not find equal support for human liberty in our Declaration of Independence; and we asked when we had repealed Magna Charta! To look back candidly, it cannot be a wonder to

any one that such minds, at such a time, in such circumstances, under such agitation, should reach such conclusions. The wonder would be if they had not, for it was a process almost as necessary as a chemical precipitation; certainly it would have been as wild to expect to turn back the tendency to receive the Copernican system in astronomy as to arrest this progress.

But was there not an analogous evolution, in an opposite direction, going on in Southern minds? Yes, to some extent, doubtless, and this made the collision ultimately certain. Exactly what it was must be told by those who experienced it. The change among us seemed to come to this: that there was a general conviction that the system of slavery was indefensible, that it was an incalculable misfortune to the country, that its perpetuation in the republic was an abhorrent thing, that it would be criminal to consent to its extension. Such, at least, may be taken to be the creed of the body of progressive and earnest young men who were to mould the thought and the policy of the Northern States during the critical era.

It would be nonsense to say that in such a movement all were equally advanced. From William Lloyd Garrison to Stephen A. Douglas was a long interval, and there were many in the march lagging far behind Douglas. A few stragglers at the rear were even making for the Southern camp. Others did not clearly know which way they were going, but they were either drifting with the general current, or were caught for a moment in some eddy which seemed to be moving backward. Leaving out of view the small body of radicals who followed Mr. Garrison, we were, about 1855, roughly divided into two groups: those who meant, by political methods, to stop the spread of slavery and so to secure its ultimate extinction, and those who had not yet formed this purpose. Everybody old

enough to recollect anything of that time must bear witness that, for ten years before the formation of the Republican party, the distinctions between Whigs and Democrats were of no political significance in the North, except as they indicated a yielding or a resistance to the antislavery tendency of the public mind. The consciousness that things were not yet ripe for more formal action kept men in the old parties in a sort of provisional way, awaiting events. The radical abolitionists had become non-resistants and disunionists, as a result of their despair of any decisive reform through political action. To preach what they believed, and to be unsparing in denunciation of wrong though martyrdom were the consequence, was then, as in former ages, a powerful propagandism of opinion, though indirect in its effect upon practical affairs. Non-resistance shielded them from the charge of plotting insurrection in either section of the country, for they limited themselves to appealing to the conscience alone. They were more powerful in enlightening men who meant to act than in gathering proselytes to a sect. Civil government is so essentially the application of force to redress wrongs and compel obedience to law that, to most of us, the logical result of non-resistance is anarchy, in the etymological sense, if not in the popular one. For myself, having made my home in the north Ohio district, represented in Congress by Joshua R. Giddings, I found a temporary political domicile among the antislavery Whigs, and cast my first presidential vote for General Scott in 1852. I was distinctly conscious of doing this, not because I was less earnest in opposition to slavery than my friends of the Free Soil party, but because I thus found myself in the group of men most likely to secure the desired result by peaceful means, if peace were possible. The progress of public sentiment was taking care of itself under the tuition of congressional legislation directed

by such men as Davis and Toombs. The only remaining problem was whether men like Crittenden, of Kentucky, and Graham, of North Carolina, could lead Southern men to take a cooler and juster estimate of the future, and consent to some tolerable plan by which time would smooth the path to the inevitable result. We estimated the dashing courage of the South at its full value in either field, political or military, and hoped a conflict might be avoided by any means short of turning backward the wheels of American progress. We had the Anglo-Saxon willingness to wait which was shown from the days counted off by the curfew-bell to those when Charles Stuart faced his judges in Whitehall. We wished our onward steps to be sanctioned by the forms of law, as the Commons of England cared little what prerogative was claimed by the Crown, if the existing grievance which the people then felt galling them were removed at that Parliament. We meant to be friends with time, so sure were we that we saw the future. Looking back at the course of our mercurial brethren, we are fain to apply the words of the latest historian of the French Revolution: "A little gravity a few years earlier, a little well-timed concession to the oft-repeated call for reform, would have spared the *noblesse* the need for showing how courageously gentle blood could face trouble and disaster."¹

I have tried to trace the natural process of evolution by which, in common with what proved to be the controlling element of our Northern people, I had come to the point where we clearly recognized the fact that we were shut up to a simple and single choice. Slavery must become dominant in the whole country, or it must be rigidly confined to the States where it already existed. We chose the second alternative, with full risk of consequences. The statement of this as an evolution does not exclude the

¹ Stephens. History French Revolution, ii. 512.

other truth, that, in reaching this conclusion, men felt themselves under the command of an imperative conscience, and divinely led as by a pillar of cloud or of fire. I have wished, however, not to lose sight of the conscientious purpose, and even religious earnestness, of men who reached an opposite conclusion. To reconcile these things, apparently so conflicting, we have only to remember that in the world of practical action, as in that of physics, the innocence, or even the rectitude, of our purpose gives us no immunity from the consequences of collision with universal law. If we in fact miss our path in the darkness and come to the verge of a precipice, no errand of mercy or of justice on which we are bent will insure us an interposing angel to save the fall. Special providences would not be special if they were the rule. With nations as with individuals, the condition of safety is that we really find and keep the right path. In a friendly review of past differences, we are not so much concerned, just now, with proving that either was right as in recalling and analyzing the conscious motives that brought us to the collision.

The general conviction that justice and right demanded a certain course would not in itself secure action in momentous affairs. Whether we shall submit to what we think a wrong may be a matter of prudent judgment; and even a State, acting as a unit, may reasonably decide that some of its citizens shall bear an injury rather than involve the whole in the consequences of attempting redress. The intellectual process is only a part: there must be motives which rouse the feelings and fire the heart before we come to the fighting-point. Besides the growing appreciation of human liberty, we must look back at the incidents of the long debate, and try to understand their effect upon those who witnessed them. I shall name only those which I myself recollect, and adhere to the plan of telling the effect upon me.

In 1844 South Carolina and some other States had laws imprisoning free colored sailors coming to their ports as part of the crews of Northern ships. The confinement lasted during the stay of the ships in port, and the vessels were made liable for the cost. Massachusetts sent Judge Samuel Hoar to Charleston as her agent and counselor at law, instructing him to make up a record in the United States Circuit Court of such a case in regard to one or two of her citizens, and, should the decision be adverse, take it on error to the United States Supreme Court to test the constitutionality of the law. South Carolina, by formal action of its legislature, forbade him to make the case, and expelled him forcibly from the State. The manner of doing it tended to excite much feeling; but the thing which remained engraved on my own memory, in all the discussion of the years that followed, was the official and authoritative decision of that State that it not only would violate the plain provision of the Constitution guaranteeing the privileges and immunities of a citizen to the Massachusetts sailor, if black, but that it confessed its consciousness of the illegality by forcibly preventing the state agent from testing the matter in court. It ought not to be difficult for a Southern man, to-day, to see the effect this must have had in teaching us that the provisions of the Constitution were to be operative in behalf of one side only, in that controversy. That it should induce a disposition to hew to the line in interpreting counterdemands under the Constitution would be but natural. We were, in those days, making the world ring with our assertions in the *Martin Koszta* case that we would protect, at the cannon's mouth, the personal liberty of one who had only declared his intention to become an American citizen. Is there need to point out the galling humiliation of the Northern States in the contrast?

The Mexican war, following the annexation of Texas, brought a great con-

quest of territory on the south and south-west. Passing by the character of that transaction, let us only recall the fact that, in the foreign policy of the Polk administration, two exciting questions were coupled, — the annexation of Texas, and the claim to what is now British Columbia. The administration was vehement in asserting an equally clear right in both; but whilst the Southern claim was enforced by war, the protestations of the President that the Northern one was indisputable were actually accompanied by a diplomatic offer of the present boundary line, which was promptly accepted by England. The next editions of our school atlases showed the Southern line advanced to the Rio Grande, and the Northern one retracted so as to exclude a territory which Sir Charles Dilke says is equal to France, Italy, Belgium, and Holland united. We stuck another pin there, and learned that territorial acquisitions for slave States and losses for the North best suited those who ruled our national affairs by means of our political divisions.

The unexpected happened. The discovery of gold in California drew to the Pacific coast a great immigration, and California asked admission as a free State. It was opposed and delayed, until a price was extorted in the form of a fugitive-slave law, odious to us in the last degree, and enacted in spite of Northern public sentiment. If an enemy had been planning a scheme to make the South lose its Northern supporters, nothing more effective could have been devised. As the case of the sailors had been the denial of constitutional rights to citizens of one State when lawfully visiting another, this, as we earnestly believed, denied to our citizens at home the benefit of the constitutional right to the protection of life, liberty, and property by a jury trial. We asked ourselves, Have we any rights whatever which can be enforced, if they conflict with the supposed interests of slavery?

The answer was not long coming. The legislation of 1854 adopted the most radical doctrine of Calhoun, — that slaves are property, and must be recognized as such everywhere; and so completely that not the unanimous voice of the people of a Territory could prohibit slavery among them. We seemed absolutely prostrate, and yet we drew a great sigh of relief, and thanked God that the issue was squarely made up at last. The history of that time cannot be understood, there can be no approach to an understanding of it, without trying to realize the effect on Northern people of the absolute knowledge that the day of compromises was past. Up to that time, the votes cast for a distinctly antislavery party in any election precinct were hardly enough to take them out of the list of the "scattering." After it, the only party issue was the maintaining or reversing of the decree that slavery was nationalized.

I purposely omit the details of exasperating incidents, in order to bring out clearly the progress of Northern opinion, and the steps in the formation of an irrevocable purpose to tolerate slavery nowhere in the national domain except within the States where it was already established, and to give to freedom elsewhere all the benefits of the constitutional presumptions in its favor which belonged to the principles of the common law. We knew perfectly well that the Calhoun school drew sound logical conclusions from the doctrine that slavery was right and good for the country. We were equally sure that we were now on the proper line of action, if slavery were wrong and bad for the country. I shall not retract the admission that men might be conscientious in taking either side, even at this point: I will only insist that one or the other was grievously mistaken. Both might perhaps exclaim, in the words of Coleridge (whom I suspect we all read forty years ago more than we do now): "I know not what antidotes, among the com-

plex views, impulses, and circumstances that form your moral being, God's gracious Providence may have vouchsafed to you against the serpent fang of this error; but it is a viper, and its poison deadly, although through higher influences some may take the reptile to their bosom and remain unstung."¹

The years from 1854 to 1860 were full of fierce political excitement, to say nothing of the bloodshed in the border war upon Kansas. At least two or three things were demonstrated. The most important was that, in spite of Kansas-Nebraska bills and Dred Scott decisions, the territorial question was settled in favor of freedom. The tide of westward migration from the North was large enough and courageous enough to take and hold Kansas. The Indian Territory filled the gap between it and Texas, and west of both these it was already apparent that mining industries were likely to be the dominant ones, and California had shown what class of settlers the mines would attract. It was also plain that fugitive-slave laws hurt the system of slavery more than they helped it. Lastly, it was proved that the North had both the ability and the will to make national legislation conform to the facts thus stated, by the repeal of obnoxious laws. This result the Calhounists themselves had brought about, and the amazement now is that they should not have known they were doing it.

Such was the situation when Mr. Lincoln was elected and when secession began. There was much noisy outcry about Northern aggression, but it is a curious fact that in the Mississippi declaration of independence, to which I have already referred, the schedule of grievances does not name a solitary act of either the executive, the legislative, or the judicial department of the federal government since 1820, and no act of a separate State except the personal liberty bills in two or three of them;

¹ The Friend, Essay XIII.

and for each of these a dozen laws of Southern States, more injurious to the North, could be quoted. The grievances are all literally variations of one note, — the progress of public opinion in the North unfavorable to the slave system. The control of the federal government had steadily remained in Southern hands, and the South had the initiative in every piece of legislative, executive, or judicial action which was the subject of agitation or cause of excitement. It is still a mooted question whether the secession of the cotton States was a finality, or only a political move to force Northern consent to an amendment of the Constitution giving it the Calhounist interpretation. The latter was at the time the more common opinion among the supporters of Mr. Lincoln. The initiative of Virginia in calling the peace conference was interpreted as part of such a plan. The systematic absence of initiative on the part of Republicans in Congress, during the last winter of Mr. Buchanan's administration, was the result of this opinion. It was hard to believe that there was any other purpose than to produce a reaction in the North by a show of that secession which had been so often threatened. The common belief, South as well as North, had seemed to be that nothing was so likely to destroy slavery as war. The dread of negro insurrection had been chronic in the South, and the panic over the raid of John Brown and his dozen men proved that the apprehension was as great in 1860 as ever before. But suppose the separation had been peaceful and final (the most favorable view for the South), wherein would Southerners have been the gainers? They went out one by one, separately, leaving the corporate nation, the United States, still existing and powerful. They could have no territory for expansion, unless they meant to win it by war. No civilized nation would have made with them a treaty for the extradition of fugitive slaves. It was

so evident nothing could be gained which was not secure in the Union that we could not believe disruption was seriously intended. My belief still is that this diagnosis was right, and that the revolution ran away with its leaders, as has happened in other times and places.

Amongst Northern people, the secessionist leaders were at this manifest disadvantage, — that they had taught their sympathizers among us to denounce disunionism in antislavery men as a traitorous crime; and even among the unthinking, there was an attachment to the Union which became a contagion of patriotism when the struggle really began. Still, there was as yet no apparent unanimity nor visible promise of it, and the only thing that could be said was that we who had elected Mr. Lincoln were quietly but very seriously determined that he should administer the government under the Constitution as it was; reserving full freedom of decision and of action in the possible phases of secession after he should be peaceably inaugurated President. The contingency of war did not go undebated. We avoided public discussion of it as far as possible, but among ourselves it was often said that there might be worse things than war. The most active among us had accepted John Quincy Adams's doctrine, — that if the champions of slavery appealed to arms, the war powers of the government could deal with that system quite otherwise than under the limitations of peaceful legislation. We meant, even after secession began, to leave it to the secessionists to strike the first blow; but so much had been said about the supposed impossibility of kicking the prudent and thrifty North into fighting that many a peace-loving man, who felt a quiet assurance in his heart that he could fight if need be, was more than half persuaded that the fight was a necessary condition of future good neighborhood, whatever might be the outcome of it.

Our militia system, excepting in the way of independent uniformed companies in populous towns, had gone utterly to ruin. We did not keep up so much as an annual cornstalk muster and parade. In the powdery condition of affairs, it was not thought politic to agitate the question of a better military organization; but for more than a year before the war I had myself been giving such leisure as I could command to the study of tactics and military history, and I am sure many others had been doing the like. We pored over Napier, after our young families had gone to bed, trying to understand how Hill and Graham and Picton acted under the Iron Duke in the Peninsula. It was no cursory reading, but downright analytical study, map in hand, determined to find out something of the "why" and the "how" of it. In the pauses, when we thought of such scenes of horrid strife as possibly reproduced in our own land, faith pictured beyond the sulphurous war-cloud a country gloriously redeemed, and ready at last to command the admiration of the nations who had sneered at her pretense of liberty.

When the guns opened upon Sumter, it was a great shock, with all the effect of a surprise, in spite of our efforts to anticipate it. We could hear our hearts beat as if it were the echo of Anderson's replying cannon; but I think there was not one moment's hesitation as to our duty, or one doubt as to either the righteousness or the transcendent worth of our cause. So we of the North went into the fight, at least such of us as were antislavery men, bred in the bone. The grand outburst of devotion to the flag, from east to west, brought in hosts of men whose mental history would be quite different from that which I have drawn; but they came, led out of Egypt by "black John Logan," who had been Douglas's lieutenant, and out of Massachusetts by Butler, who had supported Davis in the Charleston convention.

That settled once for all the question whether we were strong enough to nullify the acts of nullification, and to restore the Union. The heroism of Southern men made the contest a long and an arduous one, and there were times when on-lookers might well think we had undertaken an impossibility; but "the stars in their courses fought" with us, and our success was a predestined page in the world's history.

When I was once permitted, good-humoredly, to rally the eminent historian of Federal Government upon the sub-title of his book, which runs "from the formation of the Achaian League to the disruption of the United States," he neatly turned the criticism by saying, "That your leg is reset does not prove it was not broken." True, and there were many sharp "knitting pains" for a long time, to remind us of the fracture. But we were young, as the lives of nations are counted, and the elastic recuperation of youth is such that we may hope, by God's blessing, we shall stump about as sturdily in coming centuries as if there had been no fracture; nay, may hardly be able to tell which leg was broken. An honest effort to understand each other will help, not hinder, the wished-for consummation, if we make it tolerantly, though we may have to admit, for a while at least, that we have not got beyond Coleridge's paradox in the essay from which I have already quoted, where he says "that the only true spirit of tolerance consists in our conscientious toleration of each other's intolerance." Even in that spirit, I venture to think it may be profitable to make the experiment.

It may possibly be worth while, too, for conscientious Southern men to revise, in the light of experience, their old judgment upon the social system which is gone. I make the suggestion with diffidence, not as questioning their former sincerity, but only by way of calling attention to the well-known fact in human nature that the complex character of our

motives to action often makes us assume something to be proven because it is included in a larger belief or a more earnest faith. A hot and generous defense of a friend makes us the champion, for the moment, of even his errors. I have been told that the theoretic defense of slavery as a good institution, which found its way into so many public speeches and state manifestoes, was not so generally accepted by mothers of families, among the refined and Christian women of the South. This might result not merely from their instinctive sympathies and their lower estimate of commercial profit and loss, but from a deeper natural insight into the sacredness of family relations, and a perception of evils to both races, more easily seen from the standpoint of a matured and cultured woman. This idea has had force with me because of an incident in my own military experience.

In the campaign in middle Tennessee in the late autumn of 1864, my headquarters tents were pitched, for a day or two, upon the grounds of an ample mansion belonging to a widowed lady, a near kinswoman of a former President of the United States, and of several officers of rank in the Confederate army. I lived under canvas, in accordance with my habit, and saw little of the family, though I tried to make the military protection of my own little camp secure the safety and quiet of those, also, on whom I was a necessary intruder. We had to move, however, in the night; and late one afternoon I visited the lady to inform her of this, and to save her from some natural anxiety and fear which the movement of troops at such a time would excite, since the household was one of women, with only their servants about them. After explaining what would occur, and giving some advice as to the conduct of her household, the conversation turned upon the unfortunate condition of non-combatants in her situation; but I gave such comfort as I could

by the assurance that her son — whom I knew to be in Hood's army, in front of us — would understand her situation, and would be watchful to protect her as soon as we were known to be gone. The sincerely friendly tone of the personal discussion led, perhaps, to greater frankness than she at first intended; but as I rose to leave, with some hearty words of grief at the woes "this cruel war" was bringing to her, and which were sadly apparent in her tone and manner, she surprised me by replying, "General, I am unwilling you should go away without knowing my belief that what we are suffering is the judgment of God for the sin of slavery." The courteous note which her son sent to me in Nashville, when a flag of truce came to our lines, and in which he thanked me for what he generously called my kindness to his mother, did not prevent either of us from doing our military duty in the hot fight when Hood's lines were stormed, a few days later; but I have loved to believe that the influence of that stately lady made more easy the work of reconstruction for at least one family, when the cruel war was over. I do not say *ex uno disce omnes*, yet the gleam of such a light out of the darkness of conflict is persuasive evidence that this was not the only beacon on the Southern shore.

Our retrospect will prove useful only so far as it shall indicate a basis for mutual help in the future, by means of a better mutual understanding of our past. I venture to add some suggestions on two or three points wherein the present attitude of Northern men seems to be misunderstood.

It is often said by Southern men that, by the war, we were committed to the complete centralization of the government. I think this a mistake. An indissoluble federal union seems to many of us entirely consistent with decentralization of practical power. Even in the separate States it may be, and I think is, desirable to bring responsibility and

power as closely home to the people as possible, in the counties and in the towns. When the essentials are settled which fix the character of our national republicanism, it is entirely safe to say that home rule in all local matters will not be met with prejudice on the part of intelligent Northern men. Within such limits, the "non-interference theory" of government, of which Charles Astor Bristed once wrote, is not unpopular; and whether they would think us consistent or not, our Southern brethren might be surprised to learn how many of us still claim to be "strict constructionists."

The great problem of the future for the whole country is, of course, the race question. That emancipation came by the violence of war implied the absence of opportunity for considering all the embarrassments and dangers which should follow. It boots little to-day to debate upon which side was the greater ignorance of the conditions of the tremendous problem; but we may hope that a rational study of its actual elements will develop earnest effort to make true freedom harmonize with true progress. No intelligent Northern man can desire a relapse of any Southern State into a less civilized and enlightened rule. No intelligent Southern man can desire to destroy the new foundations laid in universal liberty. The world has seemed, of late, to appreciate as never before the persistence of race tendencies and characteristics, and to acknowledge that they must be taken account of wherever large bodies of different stocks are in presence of each other, mutually interacting in political organizations. German and Czech, Magyar and Slav, Turk and Bulgarian, Englishman and Irishman, each and all are wrestling with the practical question as well as we. We cannot look to political parties for help, because, by the law of their existence, such parties follow, and do not create, the progress of enlightened public opinion.

The work must be done by earnest and right-minded people who will investigate and agitate, and so instruct the intellect and the conscience of the nation. Let it be understood that there are millions of people willing to learn. Who will teach us? Social evils of so large a kind can be explained and described only by those who experience them. There is no "high *priori* road" to their comprehension. They who find a system working badly can point out its faults and suggest reasonable remedies. Both sides must be heard, and out of the discussion may come intelligence as to the true situation and practical remedy. In our dealings with the Indians, we have judged always from the standpoint of our own covetousness, with scarcely an effort worthy of the name to understand them, or to make our expansion accord with their continued existence. They have simply disappeared before our advancing frontier. The shameful story ought not to be repeated in the case of the negro; and who can find a solution of the difficulty, unless the *élite* of the South, in cultivation and in conscience, apply themselves to the task?

There is one other cause of discontent which ought not to go unmentioned. No one could observe without admiration the quiet and uncomplaining way in which the Southern people endured the enormous losses of the war, and applied themselves to rebuilding their ruined fortunes. In addition to the devastation of the land, and the loss of property given or loaned to the Confederacy, their paper currency lost its value in a day, and added hundreds of millions at a stroke to the debit side of an account already frightful with the array of former riches that had taken wings. All this, however, was the natural result of such a conflict, and could be accepted with the patience with which brave men meet the inevitable. This actual situation included obedience to the laws which were the guarantee for the national debt, and

for those pensions which were pledged to the soldiers of the national army during the progress of the war. But many a Northern man and many a Northern soldier has felt that the extensions of the pension system since that time, by national legislation, could justly be regarded as ungenerous by the people of those States which had their own long lists of maimed and crippled and broken-down, for whom provision could not, in the nature of the case, be made. Had we done it by taxing ourselves in the several States, it would only have been a question of statesmanship and of local finance for ourselves. It became something quite different when the burden was put upon the national treasury, to which, under our system of indirect taxation, the reconstructed States contribute their full share.

The providential compensations which balance the good and the ill in this world may here be found curiously exhibited. For if disinterestedness in patriotism, sturdy self-reliance and thrift, honest personal pride, temperance, and industry are the wealth and glory of a people, then these lavish extensions of a reasonable system of public bounty have done harm, and not good, and have lowered the tone of the appeal which, in any future crisis, the government may have to make to its citizens. Would it not be a strange logic of events if those who have had the Spartan training to undergo, and have had to give and not receive, should outstrip us in the noble education of patriotism?

Peace societies may also see some compensation in our policy, and other nations may look on with complacency, if not with pleasure; for if ever heavy bonds were given to abstain from war, they are surely given by a people which has, for an indefinite time, adopted the system of paying nearly twice as much per annum for its disbanded armies as the greatest military power of Europe pays for its standing ones.

Jacob Dolson Cox.

A POLITICAL PARALLEL.

To one who studies the present political situation so far as it relates to the preliminary canvass for the presidency, many points of close similarity to the condition of things prior to the nominations in 1844 will present themselves. In the subjoined attempt to institute an historical parallel between the two periods, it is our purpose to avoid a discussion — even a consideration — of political principles as such. They will be referred to only as it becomes necessary to introduce them, in alluding to the position of parties with regard to them, as elements of the situation itself. That is to say, the point of view here taken is, as far as possible, that of a foreigner studying the political problems of this country without being interested in them, unable to see that moral questions are involved, and treating them, as well as the candidates who profess or reject these principles, simply as pawns in the game. It will be well, in order to avoid confusion, first to present in some detail the history of the preliminary canvass of 1844, and then to call attention to the points of its resemblance to the present situation.

Van Buren had been defeated in 1840. Log cabins and hard cider, the Democrats thought, had been more interesting and attractive to the people than the principle of the sub-treasury. The defeat had mortified the Democrats as much as it had amazed, distressed, and annoyed them. They could not find words to express their contempt for the victorious Whig canvass. They well-nigh lost faith in the infallibility of the people, which had been a cardinal point of their doctrine so long as the people returned Democratic majorities. That doctrine was to be saved as an article of faith only by holding that the people had been seized with a temporary madness,

and that they would fully recover their senses before the next election. Like the good political fighters the Democrats were, they were determined not only to win the election of 1844, but to win it with the candidate who had suffered by the humiliating defeat of 1840. It was a favorite expression — one of which Mr. Ritchie, editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*, a leading Democratic newspaper of the day, was the author — that the party had been “wounded” in the person of Mr. Van Buren, and that it could vindicate itself fully only by replacing him in the presidential chair.

The canvass of 1844 began before Harrison had taken the oath of office. When Mr. Van Buren declared, after his defeat, that he could not consent again to be a candidate, there was a loud and apparently unanimous chorus of disapproval and dissent. He was assured that he had no right to refuse the Democratic party the privilege of vindicating itself by reelecting him, and he withdrew his refusal. In doing so he seemed to be yielding to the wish of a united party.

Even when mutterings of dissent showed that all Democratic leaders were not ready to admit that Mr. Van Buren was the inevitable candidate of his party for 1844, the movement was apparently of little consequence. At that time South Carolina was expected to do things that would be called, in the slang of the present day, cranky. When South Carolina presented Calhoun for the nomination in 1844, no one supposed that it signified anything important; it was merely a manifestation of South Carolina’s persistency in never falling in with plans which she did not make. Colonel Johnson, of Tennessee, fancied himself to be a candidate, but scarcely any one else took him seriously. Up to a short