



Our Union and its Defenders:

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF BURLINGTON, N. J.,

ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR CELEBRATION OF THE

EIGHTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE DAY,

JULY 4th, 1862.

By J. HOWARD PUGH, M. D.

PRINTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LADIES' AID SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1862.



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CORRESPONDENCE.

Burlington, July 8th, 1862.

DOCT. J. HOWARD PUGH, DEAR SIR: Having listened, with so much pleasure and profit, to the appropriate and impressive address with which you favored us upon the occasion of the recent celebration of "Independence Day," we feel that we would be failing in duty to those of our fellow-citizens who were deprived of that gratification, were we to allow the occasion to go by and be forgotten, without taking measures to have your remarks placed upon record, and to secure their dissemination among the reading and thinking members of the community. Our own sentiments are so ably and admirably expressed therein, that we wish to have the privilege of presenting them in that shape to all our friends, not only in our own community, but wherever we can reach them—for even by those who assisted at the original delivery, they will bear perusing often and pondering well. We trust they will carry conviction to the misguided, and strengthen the convictions of the wavering. With this view, we would request the favor of a copy of your address, for publication.

Very respectfully,

Your fellow citizens, FRANKLIN WOOLMAN,

THOMAS ROBB,

THOS. MILNOR,

JOHN D. MOORE,

JOHN RODGERS,

N. T. HIGBIE,

M. KNOWLTON,

J. D. ABERCROMBIE,

RICH. SHIPPEN,

WM. R. ALLEN,

JAS. STERLING,

FRED. BROWN.

Burlington, July 11th, 1862.

GENTLEMEN: Your kind and flattering favor of the 8th inst., is before me. You can judge better than I, and if you think there is anything, in my Oration, at all likely to strengthen or enlighten the patriotism of a single American, I shall cordially co-operate with you in publishing it. For, however much I may fear that its usefulness will fall far short of your wishes, yet, I know that no man now has a right to withhold a word, or refuse a deed which he has any just reason to suppose will aid, in the least, the cause of his country. Such reason you have given me in your kind and partial estimate of my effort, and for this I sincerely thank you.

Trusting that our beloved country, so dear to all our hearts, so freighted with all our hopes, may soon emerge triumphant from the fierce struggle with its foes,

I remain,

Very faithfully yours, J. HOWARD PUGH.

To Messrs. WOOLMAN, ROBB, MILNOR and others, Committee.

OUR UNION AND ITS DEFENDERS.



In the ways of Providence, there is always fitness in the smallest as in the greatest things. It is on the Fourth of July, in midsummer, that we hold the anniversary festivals of American Independence. And it is a beautiful ordering of the Providence that rules the seasons and the nations, that the time of these anniversaries is so well suited to the occasion.

For it is fitting, that in the midst of glorious summer days, when the earth lies richest in the sunlight; when the fields are golden with the harvests; when the air is fragrant with the scent of flowers and the new hay; when, in a word, the beauty and the bounty of nature, unite to fill the heart with gladness and with gratitude, we should meet in kindred joy and thankfulness to celebrate our nation's natal day.

For sunshine is the symbol of prosperity, and summer the symbol of peace; and the wondrous bounty of the season fitly typifies the fruits of that civil and religious liberty, to establish which our fathers pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honour. Not that all these anniversaries have been, or will be days of jubilee. Not that the chill and sombreness of winter have not settled, will not settle, upon some. For many stormy years were passed, before the hope that dawned on that July morning in '76 became a full and crowned reality. And then, you remember the day of the grand jubilee proper, the fiftieth anniversary of our Independence, when both Jefferson—the author, and Adams—the

most eloquent supporter, of the declaration, died. And then, you remember to-day one year ago, when the American Congress met in a beleaguered city, within the sound of rebel cannon, with rebel ensigns flaunting almost in the face of the Capitol, met in solemn and determined counsel to devise ways and means to save the nation

from destruction at the hands of its own misguided children. And then, to-day; what shall I say of to-day? To-day, when sorrow sits brooding in a million homes, when the shadow of civil war still rests like a pall upon the nation, when in the beautiful Virginia that Washington loved, his children are grappling in the struggle of death. Still, it is true, that in the eighty odd years of our Independence that have passed, there have been few of these anniversary days that have not wholly been days of jubilee, and with the blessing of God a little longer on our Union armies, there will be fewer yet in the eighty years that are to come; fewer yet, I trust, in all the vast and pregnant future upon which the summer will not smile in poetic fitness, and which a grateful people will not greet with shouts of gladness and with songs of praise.

We have all learned to revere the memory of the men
who framed and adopted the Declaration of Independence.

All men and all nations have learned to regard with admiration the energy, the courage, the fortitude, the exhaustless patience with which our fathers fought the battles of freedom and inaugurated on this continent the "great experiment"

of popular government. No one now dares to question the wisdom of their policy, the lofty purity of their lives and purposes, or the sublime quality of that heroic faith in the final triumph of their cause, which never failed them in the darkest hours of their long and bitter struggle to be free.

There were Tories *then* all around them, as there are Tories *now* in the war we are waging, but there is no one *now* to vouchsafe a word of praise on behalf of the Tories of the Revolution. They have sunk to that oblivion, or have earned that unenviable immortality, which belongs to the lot of all who fail their country in its hour of trial, and have neither voice nor sympathy but for its enemies. Only those who aided the Colonies in their struggle with Britain and remembered now with gratitude. And having been, for

eighty years and more, a great and prosperous and happy people, we feel increasingly, as the years go by, that we cannot venerate the

men too highly, through whose blood and tears, and prayers and blessings, we were made and kept a nation. On a day like this, and in these hours of our history, facts like these have great significance.

It is one of the uses of history to teach us what are the noblest uses of life; what deeds live longest in the memories of men; what motives give greatest strength and nobility to character; what fruition follows godlike sacrifices for truth and duty; what ideas and principles, embodied in life, lift men above the common level and crown them with immortal honours. It is one of the uses of a day like this to turn us back to higher sources of inspiration, that we may be the more manfully fitted for the duties of our time, that we may learn the cost of liberty, and the worth of patriotism, and the sacredness of principle, and the holiness of duty. It is one of the uses of a day like this to teach us that our selfish aims and interests and motives, our lives of luxury and frivolity, of leisure-loving and wealth-seeking, all sink to a level of lowest significance, when contrasted with great heroic virtues such as bore our fathers through the storm and struggle of the Revolution. And when these lessons have been learned by a people, and when in the Providence of God the darkest hours of their history have come; when they are compelled themselves to strike for liberty or see it perish; when they have risen to that height of patriotism that they exclaim with old John Adams in '76, that all that they have, and all that they are, and all that they hope for in this life, they are ready to stake upon the altar of their country; when, filled with such inspiration, they go forth from homes of happiness and peace to fields of carnage and of death, then, above all, does it belong to the uses of a day like this to teach the mourning women of the land, and the children that are fatherless, that these dying and dead soldiers are one with the heroes of the Revolution; that our country's history will embalm their names with equal honour and a common love, and that a grateful people throughout all the long and coming years will "keep their memory green."

And this shall be my theme to-day; to consider whither the nation our fathers left us is drifting; to consider what we are fighting for; and to enquire whether the heroes of the struggle of to-day do not

deserve equal honor with their illustrious sires. Nor have I any doubt of the fitness of this theme for the time and the occasion. For our fathers fought to create a nation. We fight to have that nation live, to keep it one and indivisible, and vain were the struggles of the Revolution, and vain the consecration of days like this to Revolutionary memories, if they failed to bring out into highest

prominence such deeds as those of the past and passing year. Our fathers fought to create a nation. And for eighty years there was no sublimer sight beneath the stars than the nation they created. During these eighty years, this people grew from three to thirty millions, from thirteen to thirty-four States. They developed energies such as the world had seldom witnessed. With marvellous rapidity they levelled forests and builded cities; they tunnelled mountains, and cultivated valleys vast as empires; they made their mountain streams turn mills and factories and bear on their bosoms to the sea, and to all the world, the fruits of this industry and the products of the land. They dug out from the bosom of the rocky hills and from dark subterranean recesses a wealth greater than the Indies, and made the wilderness above them to "bud and blossom as the rose." They grew to be a thinking, toiling, tireless people, and turning from their material successes, they began to manifest progress and proficiency in literature, in science and in art. And all along they conducted a system of government which had no parallel in history, the success of

which was distrusted by many of our early statesmen and by all the world beside. And high above all the evidences of their wealth and power, above all the beauties and beneficence of their soil and clime, rose the crowning fact that these teeming, toiling millions were the freest people upon earth; that they enjoyed, in larger measure than the world had ever known, the privileges and prerogatives that belong to manhood, and that they held inviolably sacred, as their fathers before them, their right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." I know to what criticism these remarks are open. I know somewhat of the faults and follies of this age and nation. I know how prone we are upon days like this to forget our mistakes, our follies and our crimes, and to indulge in strains of national eulogy, and, I

confess, these strains I have rarely relished. I know, too, how common is the autocratic talk that the equal rights, the enlarged liberties, which our institutions secure to the citizen, tend only to license in thought and speech, to fanaticism, to lawlessness, to disrespect of authority, to no-government. And

yet I know that it has not been the bestowment of privileges upon the *many*, but the despotic domination of the irresponsible *few* that has always cursed humanity. And when I remember how seldom in all the world the fundamental rights of man have been ever recognized; how throughout all time the *millions* have been toiling, suffering, dying, to keep a few priests in power, or a few tyrants on their thrones; how the *few*, whom the accidents of birth or fortune have clothed with titles and dignities and powers, fill all the spaces of history, while the patient masses figure only as their suppliants and tools, then I am glad to turn to our eighty years of history, and through all its mistakes and blemishes and inconsistencies, to recognize the great central fact that has struggled upon this continent into endless life, that the *rights* of men *are* equal, that men have higher uses than to become appendages of nobility or parasites of royalty, that birth and blood are nothing, that names and titles are nothing, that all the outward emblems of wealth and greatness are nothing, compared with the rights which all men possess in common, compared with the

qualities with which God may, and often does, endow the humblest born of earth.

And this Nation which our Fathers founded, and which thus expanded into eighty years of such vigorous life; how fares it now? It is racked and rent with civil war. In little more than a year, a hundred new battle-fields have been added to its history. Whole States are given up to desolation. The land is filled with mourners. Hearts are broken to-day, that a year ago beat high with hope, and love, and happiness. Childhood, and womanhood, and tottering age, its props all gone, are mingling their tears and prayers to-day, in the bitterness of a sorrow that will never end on earth.

I believe that the war now waged by our Northern armies is eminently just and righteous, or the world has never seen one. I believe that there never has been a time when the Government could have avoided the conflict without unutterable dishonour, and that it will inherit and deserve the

contempt of humanity if it fail to continue the struggle with the utmost vigor, until every atom of this rebellion is crushed into annihilation. Whether this be the proper view to take of the war, or not, is a question of momentous import.

For, if not, how can we find comfort for the mourners, who have sent forth the idols of their households to die in its cause; or how can we fitly rebuke those who would deepen these sorrows and dampen all patriotic ardor, by their open sympathy with our enemies in arms? Therefore, does it become us to ask and answer the question, "What are we fighting for?" What we are *not* fighting for is apparent enough. We are not fighting for the abolition of slavery.

We are not fighting, as Lord John Russell says, for empire.

We are not fighting from love of power—from vindictiveness or hate. We are fighting simply for our own. We

are fighting to establish, on foundations eternal as our mountains, one grand, stupendous, geographical fact, that the country and people lying between "the St. John's and the Rio Grande, between the Tortugas Islands and Vancouver's Land," compose *one Nation*, and are called "The United States of America."

In a public address I delivered in this city, some years ago, occurred these words, viz.: "All over the land, the politicians are echoing the cry of disunion, but the people do not hear it, or do not heed it; they are busy at their workshops, on their farms, doing daily duty, earning daily bread, and they do not hear it; but when they do—when the talk of politicians begins to shape itself to deeds—they will smother the life out of this disunion cry." I believed then, as I believe now, and as events have proved, if rightly interpreted, that the common sense of the common people—of the American masses—had long ago settled the true

value of the American Union. The intuitions of a people are better than their logic. Their profoundest convictions make the least noise. Not by argument—not by the talk of politicians, nor the expositions of statesmen—but by the benefits and blessings that flow in upon them through the passing years, do men learn to measure best the value of their institutions. The greatest truths sink into the heart silently, like the dews of Heaven. As the influences of home and of Christian example mould and fix the character, so do the influences of good government and beneficent institutions settle the convictions of a people, unconsciously, noiselessly, but most profoundly. And it is often true, that nothing but some great world upheaval can arouse men to a consciousness of their slumbering powers, their sublime beliefs, and duties, and perils. So still, and strong, and deep was the faith of the American people in the perpetuity and inestimable worth of the American Union, that they could not believe it was in danger. But when they saw the

danger, when they knew that rebel cannon were bombarding Sumter, and that the United States flag had been shot from the walls of a United States fort, then they rose. And when Banks was retreating, a month ago, they rose again; and all that they have done, all the treasure they have poured out, all the men they have sent to battle, all the sacrifices they have made, all the evidences they have given of an undying love of country, are nothing, *nothing*, compared with what they yet will do, *before they will let this Union perish*.

Before the bombardment of Sumter, party prejudice and strife were strong as ever. Men differed in opinion, and differed with great bitterness, about all the measures of Government. The cabinet of Buchanan became disintegrated with conflicting views of his policy. This policy was praised by many—blamed by more. Equal differences of opinion met the policy of the new President. Many thought his course too timid and temporizing; many thought it too aggressive and bold, and feared (to use their execrable language) that “it would exasperate the South.” But when the bombardment came, then all men saw at a glance that a Government that could not

feed its own starving garrisons—that could not command its own forts—was no government

at all. They saw at once that the struggle was one of life and death. And then the Nation rose, and then the war began. The latent patriotism of the people, that had been growing and intensifying for three-quarters of a century, burst forth, at last, like a flame; and from that day to this, the only question before us—the question to be decided by cannon, and bullets, and bayonets—has been one of the existence of the American Union. And whenever men now talk about conciliation, and compromise, and peace, while five hundred thousand rebels are in arms, they are men of that doubtful patriotism, which would not shrink to see the great American Union blotted from the list of Nations.

I have my own opinions about the deep underlying causes that have produced this war, and you have yours. But we will not discuss them to-day. They would revive old party issues; they would jar upon the proprieties of this occasion; they would detract from that unanimity of thought and action which should characterize all true patriots in the hour of a nation's agony. The two facts that need to be remembered are, that the South aims to destroy the Union, we aim only to preserve it; and it is not a question of opinion, it is not a question of party, it is simply a question of *patriotism*, upon which side you are. There is no middle ground to stand upon. A man *must* be in favor of one thing or the other, either the prosecution of the war, on our behalf, to a triumphant end, or the destruction of the government.

This is so clear that it were folly to reiterate it, did not some men claim to be neutral. Judge Douglas spoke words of truth that will live as long as his memory when he said “there can be but two classes in this contest, *patriots* and *traitors*.” For the South is not fighting for concessions and compromises, and never has been; it is fighting to establish a new government and to break up the old. It wants no peace but upon this basis. And this basis is one which, by the help of God, the American people will never grant.

And why? First, because they have learned to love their country as it is. Patriotism is among the grandest virtues.

It belongs to the highest elements of character. It gives more lustre to historic names than almost any other single quality. It intensifies life and makes even death glorious and shadowless. But it implies objects. And a country to excite the loftiest patriotism is not made in a day, scarce in a century. It must have a history. In that history must be found the record of immortal names, immortal deeds and a career illustrating and exalting immortal principles. And such a country is ours, and it must include the whole country or patriotism, as we have learned it, is impossible.

Break up our Union and you mar all our history. You

write all backward the lessons of our country's glory that we have learned from earliest childhood. You take from us the only object we had learned to regard with patriotic fervour. It is like taking from one's home the only being that gives it life and loveliness. It is like blotting the sun from the heavens. It is taking from us, at a single stroke, what men, in all ages of the world, have fought for with the most undaunted courage, what no nation on the globe to-day, civilized or not, would ever think of yielding without first risking annihilation. No; we are satisfied with the Union that our Fathers founded. We are satisfied with the eighty years experience by which it has been tested. We are satisfied with the place it has taken among the nations.

We want no new experiments in Government. Especially do we want none initiated upon the fragments of our

own. We know that to the Union we owe all our progress and our power, all that we have, all that we are, all that we can hope to be. We know that it is the flag of our Union that is recognized on every sea and honoured throughout the world. We know that our little, petty, pompous States sink into insignificance when we leave their soil, and that it is the name of an *American citizen* that we prize at home, and that gives us character abroad. It is not "the rocky hills and stone-clad valleys" of New England, nor the rich soil and undulating surface of the Middle States with their great wealth-

bearing mountain ranges, nor the fertile prairies of the West, nor the broad savannas of the South, it is no one of these, but all in one that we have learned to call our country. It is not Adams and Hamilton and Harrison and Webster alone, but Washington and Henry and Jackson and Clay that we have learned to venerate among our heroes and Statesmen. It is not the battle-fields of New England and the Middle States alone, but of Virginia and the Carolinas that make up the glory of our Nationality. It is

impossible to blot these names from our history. It is impossible to erase these memories from our hearts. And it is impossible to educate a people, with such an ancestry, in such annals, and have them enjoy the blessings of such a government for the larger part of a hundred years, and then undertake to break up their government, either by domestic or by foreign foes, without creating a convulsion that will shake the world.

There is another reason why we will not accept the

destructive alternative demanded by the South. It is because we believe that by dismembering the Union and establishing two or more separate governments upon its ruins, *there can be no such thing as permanent peace*. We believe that if you cut the Mississippi in two by the border line of an alien nation, and deny the boundless wealth of the Mississippi Valley all access to the ocean, except under the frowning fortresses of a foreign power you cannot expect to have peace. We believe that to keep our rival systems of tariff and revenue from clashing, along a line extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, without natural defences, through vast regions of wild and thinly populated territory, is an impossibility.

And then there must be settled all the preliminaries of a dissolution—questions of boundary, questions of ownership of forts and public property—questions of division of the national debt, and of individual obligation—questions of river and harbor navigation; and then would arise, under forms vastly more difficult of adjustment all the old political questions that have alienated the sections; and then would come treaties and intrigues with foreign powers, and alliances entangling us with all the petty quarrels of Europe, and keeping us

ever implacable enemies, thus rendering us impotent and without influence among nations. And *this* is the future to which we are invited. Now we have *one* cause of war; attempt to negotiate a dissolution of the Union, and we shall have *fifty*. And the number would be all the more, by reason of the parties with whom we should have to negotiate. For, I maintain that a set of men, who, like the leaders of this rebellion, would destroy a government like ours, upon pretexts such as theirs, could not be negotiated with, without war. And until their pride is humbled, their power broken, until they have been made to endure somewhat of the bitterness of that suffering they pour out so overwhelmingly upon others, until their arrogance and haughtiness are utterly abased in exile or on

the scaffold, there can be no peace upon this continent.

There is still another reason why we will not consent to the disruption of the Union. Because the probability is too great that it would end here, and in all the world, and for a thousand years the experiment of popular government.

Already the South disdains the rule of the people. In a population of ten millions, they have but three hundred thousand slaveholders. Yet, almost every man in power is a slaveholder. Hence, government with them is already in the hands of a class. And then, the tone of their press, and the speeches of their statesmen have aimed for years to degrade labour, have betrayed a growing dislike for the equality of rights demanded by our institutions, and have been coloured with all the assumption and the arrogance of an aristocracy.

And then, the doctrine of Secession, which, thirty years ago, we had supposed was crushed forever under the gigantic tread of Webster's logic and the strokes of Jackson's iron will—this principle of disintegration upon which they would base their government, would sooner or later drive them into despotism. And this principle would not be without effect upon the North, for it has many advocates here already.

Men are as apt in learning lessons of evil as of good. One successful rebellion would become the parent of others.

The theory of our government presupposes the existence of various and diverse local interests, to be controlled by local governments. It is impossible for these interests not to be sometimes subordinated to the general welfare. Establish two confederacies, and the constant temptation would be held out to States with similar local interests, fretting under imaginary grievances, or maddened by party spirit, to strike off from the parent State on the one hand, and form alliances with similarly disaffected portions on the other. The interests of the Western and Southwestern States are quite as closely connected by the waters of the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Missouri, as the interests of either are with the States upon the Atlantic seaboard, and would be quite as likely to be formed, ultimately, into a third and independent government as to remain united with the old. Oregon

and California, washed by the waves of another ocean, and thousands of miles from the central government, would be especially difficult to hold by the North. And the worst future of any such subdivisions would be the necessity that must arise for large and ever-increasing military establishments, both of the army and navy. A frequently recurring

or a prolonged state of war not only eats up the substance and palsies the industry of a people, but it is incompatible with the enlarged liberties we claim for the citizen. The qualities of mind and heart which make the greatest generals are not commonly those which inculcate the highest regard for individual rights. The glare and glitter of military reputation cannot outshine, in all the avenues to power, the less ostentatious merits of the statesman and scholar without imperilling free institutions. We risk little from these causes now. No American general now, were he to manifest within a year more than the genius of the first Napoleon, could undertake to establish a dictatorship over the American people, without immediately falling from the pedestal of power. For we have not forgotten our earliest teachings.

We have not forgotten that the name of Washington belongs to our history. We have been educated in the meaning of his great and glorious life, and no man now can command any large influence in

American affairs, who is not as ready to lay down power as to take it up. But, let this people learn to lean, for half a century, upon the military arm; place them in a position in which questions must frequently arise to be settled only by the sword; agitate the peaceful current of their lives with ever-recurring waves of war; allow their individuality, their liberty of thought and speech, to become absorbed, year after year, in that oneness of purpose, that subordination to another's will, which military law requires, and they will become as ready, as others have before them, to seek rest, stability and peace at the expense of liberty and equality, under the rigour of despotic rule.

There is one other thought I would refer to, in considering these causes, which keep the North so true to the Union. It is this: these same causes must operate powerfully in hastening the return of the South to her allegiance, when once her military power is broken. I speak, now, upon the supposition that her military power can be broken. This I have never doubted, and never expect to. If we crush her political and military leaders, stop for a season the systematic lying by which she has been deluded, give her time to cool and consider, she will cheerfully return to her allegiance.

If her territory were separated from ours by great natural barriers, if she were a distinct and oppressed nationality, like Poland, or Hungary, or Italy, or Ireland; if her people were of a different race, spoke a different language, professed a different religion, and were fighting in a righteous, or at least a reasonable cause,—then we might doubt the possibility of the restoration of good feeling. There is no doubt but that the South is carrying on the war with great unanimity, for war creates its own arguments; but there is no

reason to believe that the masses of the South have ever been convinced that their leaders were right in beginning the war, or that the breaking up of the Union could ever ultimate in anything but disaster to themselves and their posterity. There is great reason to believe that the arch leaders themselves did not contemplate, at the outset, the destruction of this government, with a view of establishing two or more independent ones as a final result. They wanted a new constitution. They could not change the old one in a constitutional

way; they chose to make a new one in an unconstitutional way. They expected the Border States would immediately come under it; they expected soon to absorb the Middle States, and the lower tier of the Northwestern States, and finally all the rest, when these had become sufficiently humbled. They expected to avoid civil war; they thought the North quite too craven and mercenary for that, and, as a chief means of success in accomplishing these ends, they counted upon the aid of a powerful

party in the North. This aid they received, backed by such journals as the *New York Herald* and scores of others, all advocating the adoption of the Montgomery Constitution, until the bombardment of Fort Sumter awoke the loyalty of the Northern masses, and the majesty of the United States Government.

There is every reason to believe that, if the question of disunion had been fairly submitted to the people of the South, before the breaking out of the war, they would have decided overwhelmingly against it. The whole region had been so long saturated and cursed with the political heresies of Calhoun, that their regard for State rights, their feeling of State pride, had diminished greatly that sentiment of nationality so characteristic of the North. But every other reason I have given to-day in favour of the value of this Union, every other reason that can be given, applies with equal force to the South as to the North. They can no more afford to do without the Union, than we can. Neither can do without it, and ever prosper. And once clear away the bitterness of passion, the pride, the rancour and the unreasonableness that belongs to a state of actual conflict, and the

masses of the South will admit the fact. And when men say the Union is already dissolved, because the sections are at war, they exhibit little knowledge of human nature or of human history. Have they forgotten that almost every country on the globe has had its great rebellion—has been scourged with civil war? Do they believe that the animosities now existing between the North and South are any

more bitter, or likely to prove any more lasting, than those engendered by the civil wars of England, or of France, or of Spain? I know these animosities will live long enough—too long; this generation will not survive them. Too much anguish, and passion, and venom for that. But history will reproduce itself here as elsewhere; and when we remember the past, and how soothing are the influences of trade and commerce—how mutually dependent are the products and the industries of the sections—how we are bound together by railroads, and telegraphs, and water-courses, and ties of consanguinity,—there is every reason to believe that, the rebellion conquered, the return of good feeling would be more speedy and more complete than has usually followed the scourge of civil war.

Thus, fellow citizens, have I attempted to show to you to-day what they fight for who fight for the Union—what those forces are that nerve the arms and inspire the souls of the people: 1st, the sentiment of nationality—a love of country, not bounded by State lines, but including the whole country, with its historic names and memories; 2nd, a belief that no permanent peace could follow a dissolution of the Union, and that the wars it would produce would prove vastly more desolating and unending than the one now waging; and, 3d, the probability, the almost certainty, that such dissolution would finally result in the entire abandonment of the democratic principle in government.

I am aware that, in enlarging upon these points, I have told you nothing new. I have, perhaps, told you little from which you would dissent. Times like these make all men thinkers, and on all cardinal points all patriots think alike.

We are crowding years into days. Instinctively we recognize our duties. We learn not now our lessons of highest

wisdom from one another. *Events*, God's teachers and inspirers, are bringing to the surface all our nobler qualities.

The objects we had set before us as being worthy the struggle of a life, have all sunk to a lower level, and higher objects have arisen, demanding self-abandonment, self-sacrifice, and absorbing the whole soul in love of country, in

care for its honour, in sorrow for its misfortunes, in joy for its triumphs, in devotion to its service even unto death.

The prosecution of this war is not with us a matter of choice; we do not regard it as a matter about which we have any right to hesitate or consult our own wishes or interests; it comes to us in the sphere of our highest duties; it prompts us to ask, not so much what we owe ourselves, as what we owe posterity; and we know we shall deserve the just condemnation of history, and the eternal execration of our children, if we do not sacrifice every selfish aim, every social comfort, every domestic tie, every interest of property or life, rather than have this Union divided. Beside this question of union, the question of slavery, deemed so important by many, sinks out of sight. Not but that the latter has important bearings on the war, both in the relation of *cause* and *cure*, but the great issue before us is not one of the good or ill of four millions of blacks, but of thirty millions of whites. The majestic duty of the hour is to save this Union, for ourselves, for our children and the children of those who would destroy it, for the unborn millions of the North and South, the East and the West. Let us, then, honour the dead who die in this cause, and the living mothers who bore them; let us honour the heroes who survive the conflict; let their children be taught to prize the names they inherit, and let it be the joy of the living and the solace of those who mourn the dead, that the men whose names are enrolled on the side of the Government, in the battles of '61 and '62, will live forever in the hearts of their countrymen, side by side with the soldiers of our great Washington. And, moreover, if this war be as righteous as we believe it, it becomes us to counteract, by word and deed, those influences, so widespread, so noxious, and withal so active in diffusing a contrary belief. For there are some men in all sections of the North, some even in the halls of Congress, some men and some women in every community, who stigmatise this war on our behalf as wicked and inhuman; and it would be a shame upon our civilization, a reproach upon our courage, our intelligence and our patriotism, and the moral tone of our communities, if we did not meet these calumnies with fitting rebuke, and if we did not our utmost to prevent a shade of doubt or suspicion as to the righteous nature of this war from polluting our northern air, and from invading those northern

homes made desolate by the news of battle and of loved ones dying amid its terrors. This is no time for half-way measures or half-way men. This is no time for the

deepest convictions of the heart to falter upon the lips, from motives of mere worldly prudence. Things *must* be called by their right names. Deeds *must* be approved or emphatically condemned. Men must *be* what they *seem*. *For* or *against* the Government they must take their stand. Justice, and judgment, and mercy, demand that there be no trifling, no concealment, no equivocation now. Wars have been,

may be again, about which we can differ, *but this is not one of them*.

The President of the United States is exerting all his powers, as it is his duty to do, to save the government from destruction. Greater responsibility never rested upon a ruler, and he has done his duty eminently well. He has a right to the sympathy and active aid of every citizen. In some respects he may have overstepped his constitutional powers.

Men, if true and loyal, may differ from him as to his policy and prerogatives, and their opinions be entitled to respect, but they should praise vastly more than blame. But men, who condemn *him* yet condemn not *the rebellion* he is trying to crush are not entitled to respect. The President, his advisers and agents may err; they are but human, but their *object* is to save the Constitution and Union; the object of the South is the destruction of both, and wherever and whenever you find men who denounce the former fiercely and the latter faintly, whose eyes are so microscopic that they can discover, in the records of Congress and the departments, flaws in legislation and frauds in contracts, and yet cannot see the tremendous fraud and crime of this rebellion; whenever you find men who cry peace, peace, and who mean by peace, and can't mean otherwise, the independence of the South, the submission of the North, the dissolution of the Union and the death of republican liberty, then you have found the deadliest foes your country has in these dark and trying hours.

We shall succeed in crushing this Rebellion. True, tidings of disaster float upon the air. God pity the dying soldier, and the desolate homes throughout the land. If we have lost a great battle the war is just begun. We may lose one battle, we may lose fifty, but we will gain more than we lose, and *will* conquer in the end. We have two men to their one; we have ten times their wealth; we hold the sea, we have infinite resources in reserve upon land; we have a cause that will keep us ever hopeful and defiant, and in the end we *must* conquer. But we have lessons of wisdom yet to learn, and we must learn some from our enemies.

Every dollar of property among them, owned by us, they confiscate and use against us in war. Every dollar of debt owed by their citizens to ours they claim as the property of their government. They tolerate no enemies among them.

Men who do not heartily support them they drive out of their country, or into the ranks of their armies. We have not *dared* to attack them with their own weapons. *They never can be conquered till we do*; and it may be true that we can only learn wisdom in the severe school of defeat and disaster.

But learn it we must and will, and we will teach them, and teach the world, at whatever sacrifice of means and life, that republican liberty in America was not born to die.

We know, and we must teach them, that our life-long enthusiasm for popular government, our life-long hope for its

spread throughout the world, that all the memories that cluster around this sacred day, hallowing our past and brightening our future, are all involved in, are impossible without, the perpetuity of this Union. We know that our lives are worth nothing, that all our aims and achievements are valueless, that we can claim no high standard for conduct or character, that we can find no link to bind us to the immortal men who signed *that* Declaration,^{1} if we are to leave behind us, as a heritage for our children, a Union “divided, discordant, belligerent,” instead of “Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”

{1} The Declaration of Independence which had just been read by JOHN RODGERS, ESQ.

Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation and spelling inaccuracies were silently corrected.

Archaic and variable spelling has been preserved.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OUR UNION
AND ITS DEFENDERS ***

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