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Washington

Conrad, David H.
Address delivered in the
M.E. Church, Martinsburg,
Va., Feb. 22, 1851.

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From
David Holmes Conrad.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN THE M. E. CHURCH, MARTINSBURG, VA., FEB. 22, 1851,

BY DAVID H. CONRAD.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

MARTINSBURG, February 22d, 1851.

DAVID H. CONRAD, Esq:—*Sir:* The undersigned, a Committee appointed for the purpose, respectfully solicit for publication, a copy of the very able and eloquent Address delivered by you this day, before a large meeting of the citizens of Berkeley, in the M. E. Church of this town.

Yours, very respectfully,

NORMAN MILLER,
SAM'L ALBURTIS,
R. V. SNODGRASS,
ALEX. NEWCOMER,
R. K. ROBINSON.

MARTINSBURG, February 22d, 1851.

Gentlemen:—I am flattered by the terms of your polite note just handed me—though I fear my effort to-day is hardly worthy your good opinion; prepared as it was, somewhat hastily and under interruptions. Still, I am sensible that it contains the sentiments of the very large County Meeting, who seemed to approve of it, and I hand you the MS. for publication.

Yours, very respectfully,

DAVID H. CONRAD.

To NORMAN MILLER, SAM'L ALBURTIS, ROB'T V SNODGRASS, ALEX. NEWCOMER and ROBERT K ROBINSON, Esqs.

ADDRESS.

"It will be the duty of the Historian and the sage in all ages to let no occasion pass of commemorating this illustrious man, and until time shall be no more will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of WASHINGTON."

These are not the words of the humble individual who now addresses you—but of the wise Statesman—the liberal jurist—one who, as lord chancellor of England, has presided over the house of lords—*Henry Lord Brougham.*

"He was brave without temerity, laborious without ambition, generous without prodigality, noble without pride, virtuous without severity;---It will be said of him, at the end of a long civil war he had nothing with which he could reproach himself. The continent of North America from Boston to Charleston, is a great volume, every page of which presents his eulogy."

These are the words of the Marquis of Chastelux, an accomplished French Nobleman.

Napoleon the mighty conqueror of Europe, by some regarded as the regenerator of his age, by others as the second Atilla the scourge of God, paid homage to his unsullied name and memory, and when he heard of his death ordered the colours of the French nation to be draped in mourning, because the Great and Good Washington was no more.

Mr. Guizot, the late prime Minister of

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France, says of him in a work bearing his name. "The wise planter was a *great* man." He had in a superior degree *two* qualities which in active life, make men capable of great things.

1st. He knew how to believe firmly in his own opinion.

2d. And to act according to what he believed, without fear of responsibility."

The noble poet of England, a member of the aristocracy by his birth, fired by the contemplation of the majestic simplicity and the noble grandeur of the character of the father of our country links his name in immortal verse with that of Leonidas---

"Not so Leonidas and *Washington*
Whose every battle field is holy ground
Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds undone;
How sweetly on the ear such echoes sound;—
While the mere victors may appal or stun
The servile or the vain;—*such* names, will be
A watchword, till the future shall be free."

My countrymen, we are met this day to commemorate the birth day, and pay heart tribute to the memory, and learn wisdom from the counsels of him of whom---a foreigner and a monarchist has said, "He was the greatest man that ever lived in this world, uninspired by divine wisdom; and unsustained by supernatural virtues."

It would be tedious to collate all the high testimonials to his unsurpassed excellence. The loftiest imagination would have to "imp the tired wing" in the endeavour to reach the height of the moral stature of this God-like man, it is enough for us, this day, to know and to feel, that he was *our* Washington, the father of *our* common country, a native of our own beloved State; that his early manhood was trained in defending the very soil of our own beautiful Valley. Almost within the scope of my vision is the old Braddock road, laid out, and cleared under his directions: the very trees of some of your forests, bear the marks of his surveyor's tomahawk, and the bounds of some of our lands were vocal to his manly footsteps, the names of his family and near relatives are familiar to our ears, in our daily intercourse: *He is not dead!* my countrymen, such spirits never die, for while the immortal spirit is in heaven, the savour of a great and good name, is left upon earth; and the holy inheritance of a high example, and the safe guidance of his imperishable precepts; are in our midst.

I will however in the performance of the duty, gladly assumed by me, this day, endeavor to vary a little from the course usually pursued on such occasions.

I will, avoiding as far as I can, the temptation to pass in review the *striking* events of his life, endeavor to illustrate the character of our great countryman by a few authentic anecdotes of his history, and then come to the more important duty of bringing the present condition and opinions of our people to the test of *his* noble standard--to the touchstone of *his* pure patriotism, parts of which you have heard, read to you, on this day.

The true way to celebrate this day is to commemorate it, as children would honor the memory of a father, and try ourselves by his paternal precepts, and thus see if we be worthy or not, of the noble inheritance which he bequeathed to us.

The most striking thing in the character of Washington—was the balance in his character, *he was a well balanced man.*

When a little boy he made for himself a book containing precepts for his behaviour and conduct, in company, at table, in intercourse with his equals or elders. I wish I had time to read them all to you exhibiting as they do, a marked example of that modest, ingenuous, and decorous deportment, which our fathers inculcated as good manners in children, contrasting, to our shame, (may I not say) with the bold, unlicenced, and disrespectful style which we now a days tolerate in our young people. I extract but three of four of them, to shew the early training of himself, in the ways of well balanced virtue.

"27 Let your conversation be without malice or envy, for it is a sign of a tractable and commendable nature; and in all cases of passion, *permit reason to govern.*

21 Wherein you reprove others, be

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unblamable yourself, for example is more prevalent than precepts.

40 Think before you speak, pronounce not imperfectly, nor bring out your words two hastily, but orderly and distinctly.

55 When you speak of God, or his attributes, let it be seriously in reverence. Obey your natural parents, although they be poor.

56 Let your recreations be manful, not sinful.

57 Labor to keep alive in your heart that little spark of celestial fire, called conscience.'

These with many other more minute but equally striking were recorded by George Washington when he was 13 years old, with various forms of writing as he entitles them; bonds, receipts, leases, deeds, bills of exchange and wills, written in a beautiful round hand, as plain as copper plate.—This is all illustrative of the methodical, careful system of life and conduct, that shewed itself through his life; *a life* embracing the duties of a back-woods' surveyor, a provincial officer protecting a frontier beset by savages; the commander of a nation's army fighting against fearful odds for the noble prize of liberty; the founder of a mighty nation and first Chief Magistrate of the country owing its liberties in a remarkable degree to the wisdom and courage of the same man; the master of servants, and the opulent proprietor of a half a million's worth of lands: in all these, at all times, the self taught lessons of the boy are seen in the high resolves of the Statesman and warrior, and thus the "child was father to the man."

Gen. Washington was a man of *strong passions* and naturally of a *high temper*—in the course of my life I have taken occasion to enquire of many who knew him well—of his peculiarities and traits of character; from the old negro who waited on him when he was studying the art of surveying, to the venerable surviving executor of his will, his own nephew and to the phisician who was present when he breathed his last sigh, in his house at Mount Vernon. But the maxim "In all cases of passion permit reason to govern," adopted when a boy, was a guiding rule in manhood and that same full will, and high spirit, like the strong and expansive—but well direc- the *steam* of the iron Engine, only served to give force and energy and power not for destruction and devastation, but for useful and valuable purpose. I was told by a near relative,* who was a youth at school in Philadelphia at the time of Jay's treaty, that Gen. Washington who had decided to ratify the treaty and was deeply interested in preserving a good feeling between this Country, and the two great foreign powers; learned, that a crowd of disorderly people insulted the British Minister, by hoisting a copy of the treaty on a pole, marched through the Streets with it, and burned it before the house of Mr. Hammond, the then British Minister. This was an insult, whatever might have been the merits of the treaty: what did Washington do? my informant says—that the strong, fierce spirit at first blazed out, but he retired to a private room—locked the door; and my informant *watched him for one hour* through the windows pacing its precincts, until, reason and calm reflection had time to assume the supremacy, and he walked out in his native dignity, ready to instruct the Attorney General, Mr. Randolph, not to proceed with any legal prosecution.

But at other times when the occasion required it, he knew how to bring down his hand upon those who deserved it; and a heavy hand it was; fearful was that anger, when it was once justly roused; summary was the punishment, when he chose to inflict it.

All the prayers and petitions of friends and foes could not avert the doo n of Andre, his known love of Hamilton could not prevent his dismissal as aid-de-camp—when he showed disrespect to his General—nor could the services of Gen. Charles Lee and his high station; stay the sharp reprimand and cutting rebuke, administered on the field of Monmouth, when his positive orders had been disregarded, and his remonstrances met, by something like insolence.

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*The late Judge HOLMES, of Winchester, Va.

Let me mention here a private instance of this high spirit, which would not tolerate wrong, when it was accompanied with insolence.

Gen. Washington's farm lies on the river Potomac, and upon two Creeks, celebrated for the number of fine canvass back ducks that frequented them, particularly, one of them running through his land.

One of those persons called Duckers, who make a trade of selling these delicacies, not content with the river, chose to run up into the plantation; and besides disturbing and endangering his stock, by the murderous discharges of his long ducking gun, drove off and killed off all the ducks, that came up the creek. Being repeatedly warned off as a trespasser upon private property, he not only disregarded the warning, but said that he would shoot the owner himself, if he attempted to interfere with him. Washington hearing of this threat, mounted his horse one day, when he heard the big gun firing away in the midst of his plantation; rode down to the creek, and found the ducker on his land. On seeing the owner, the trespasser sprang into his canoe, pointed his gun at Washington, and threatened to shoot him.

Not a word was said by the General.—The spurs sent his horse down the bank; he rode into the water up to his saddle skirts; took the canoe by the bow, drew it to land, dismounted; and plied his horsewhip over the river pirate's back, until he was thoroughly enlightened upon the law of trespass, and the danger of pointing a loaded gun at a man for defending his own rights upon his own land. The *big gun* was not fired; the only weapon in the action, was the *big horsewhip*.

Another remarkable trait in the character of this great and good man, was his *devotion* to his widowed *mother*, even to the end of her life. After he was the object of a world's admiration, he used to visit his mother, and shewed the same filial obedience, that he did when a boy. When people would speak to her of his high distinction and world-wide fame, she would only say "he was always a dutiful son, I hope he has done his duty as a man."

When he was about to be married, he took his mother's house near Fredericksburg, in his way to the residence of his intended; he had his portmanteau, with the wedding suit, in a wagon, which was to come on after him, while at his mother's the wagon was unaccountably delayed, and he became fearful that some thing had happened and that he might be obliged to make his appearance on so interesting an occasion without the marriage garment. He therefore wished to send a special messenger from Fredericksburg, across by Dumfries, towards Mount Vernon to learn the cause of the delay, and to bring on at least the portmanteau with the clothes. There was no time to spare, it must be done that night, as he wished to go on to his marriage on the next day. It required a careful messenger, and a good horse, and he could not spare his own. There was *one* steed in the stable, that he well knew, his mother's favorite blood mare, but the good lady, he knew like wise, took great pride in, and care of her mare. So he would not venture even to propose it to her, but contrived to effect it without her knowledge; so he proposes to his mother's trusty house servant that *he* should mount the mare, meet the wagon and bring on the clothes; the boy at first demurred; what would old misses say, if she was to find it out? Would Master George stand between him and harm, if she did? Not I sir, you must take the chances, but I'll give you a half joe, if you bring me the portmanteau by to-morrow morning. [I received the story from a friend who was engaged by a distinguished author to procure materials for a life of Washington, and who took it down verbatim from the mouth of the old servitor himself, who died some years since in Jefferson County, a servant of Miss Betty Whiting.] I wish I could tell the story, as it was told to him, but that's impossible. The servant, (whose name I do not recollect, but I think it was Peter) said; he waited till night, put the mare to the road, met the wagon, and returned with the important articles before sun rise, The mare was in a lather of perspiration,

and Peter in the stable rubbing her down most dil'gently, Peter goes on to say I heard old mistress call out "Peter! how's the mare this morning," "oh, beautiful madam, she *fairly shines*." But added he, "if she had come to the stable to see, as she sometimes did, I should have got the worth of Massa George's half joe and a *little more*."

This is a simple domestic anecdote, told by an honest old servant, and yet is it not illustrative of that filial honor which even on such occasions shewed itself, in a wish to respect his mother's feelings.

He was very remarkable for his *sound practical judgment*. Our country is indebted to Washington, for initiating and suggesting some of those great and important improvements, and valuable enterprizes; which have been since his death carried out by others.

In the 12th volume of his writings we find him the first to sketch out the plan of surrendering the *public lands to* the United States, and giving reasons, why the *States* should not engage in land jobbing.

In the same volume, we find him patronising *Rumsey's Boat* which was the first boat ever propelled by steam; he went to see the operation, gave him his certificate and prophecied its final success.

It is a recorded fact, that he saw with that practical precience which was so remarkable in him, that the connexion of the Atlantic cities with the West, would be made by the *Potomac* and the *James Rivers*, the only two on the Atlantic slope that pierce the Alleghanies, and by the lakes from Albany; he examines and criticises all three of these routes, and gives preference to the Southern ones,—here we see, long before Clinton staked his reputation on the New York Canal, long before the James River and Ohio---or Chesapeake and Ohio Canal were begun, this wise man looked forward half a century anticipating these great improvements.

He was a *modest* man, eminently so. When he was publickly thanked in the Virginia House of Burgesses, by old speaker Robinson, for his gallantry in the French war, and rose to return thanks for the honor done him, he blundered, stood confused, and could not utter a word, "sit down Mr. Washington," was the considerate speech of the courteous old speaker. "Sit down sir, your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language that I possess." Another instance of this trait so beautiful a concomitant of more lofty attributes, is in the fact; that although Col. Nichola was depnted by a large body of distinguished officers about the close of the revolution, in the dark days of the confederacy, to offer to him the kingly crown as the only means of securing a stable government, and he indignantly refused it;---stating that he viewed it with abhorrence and must reprehend it with severity:" that the communication should rest in his bosom, and he hoped that he should never hear of a similar proposal: —This fact, which enables us to contrast Washington with Cæsar, and Cromwell, aud Bonaparte; was not historically known, until his papers were looked over after his death. His *modesty* as well as his regard for the feelings of his ill judging frieuds never permitted him, to make it publicly known.

I love to dwell upon these traits of this great man, because they shew him to us, behind the scenes, without the imposing accompaniments of high office and high command, I illustrate them by authentic, but, in some instances, hitherto unpublished facts, because, nothing true of such a man, however apparently trivial, are uninteresting—to *children* the slightest action, or word of a beloved *father*, carries with it interest, and reverence.

But his crowning trait:--his PATRIOTISM; his love of country: and the whole country: was preeminently conspicuous. Sir Walter Scott, in his Life of Napoleon, says:— "Patriotism has always been found to flourish in that state of society which is most favourable to the manly virtues of self-denial, temperance, chastity, contempt of luxury, patient exertion, and elevated contemplation;" and he adds "the public spirit of a

nation, has invariably borne a just proportion, to its private morals."

One would almost think that he had our subject on his pen, when he thus spoke of the patriotism, thus fostered, by the Manly Virtues. Let us pursuing my plan, stop here to illustrate this. Where was Washington, this time 100 years ago? he was then about 19 years of age. He was *here*—fellow-citizens—and *hereabouts*—sleeping in the woods, and laying out the lands on the South Branch, in an adjoining County. Listen to this extract from his diary, and letters of that period. In March, 1748, he was 16 years and a month old; he then begun to lay off these lands, under Lord Fairfax's employment, and he continued at that business until the summer of 1751—for he left it, to sail with his brother Lawrence to the West Indies, for the benefit of *his* health, in September, 1751.

"26th March, 1748.—Travelled up to Solomon Hedges, Esq.: one of his Majesty's justices of the peace, in the County of Frederick, where we camped. When we came to supper there was neither a knife on the table, nor a fork to eat with, but as good luck would have it, we had knives of our own."

This respectable name is still among our people; and though they all could muster knives and forks, and every appliance of civilized society, in these our days—yet our ancestors one hundred years ago fellow-citizens, though they lacked these, had what was better—the stern and manly virtues—the nurse of true patriotism.

Again, in a letter to a friend—

"Since you received my letter of October last, I have not slept above three or four nights in a bed—but after walking a good deal all the day, I have lain down before the fire upon a little hay, straw, fodder or a bear skin, whichever was to be had, with man, wife and children like dogs and cats; and happy is he who gets the berth nearest the fire.—I have never had my clothes off, but have lain and slept in them, except the few nights I have been in Winchester" (then called Frederick Town.)

But one century has rolled around since this man—now the beacon light of the friends of Freedom all over the world;—standing out in the annals of mankind, as the Model Man, for all who aspire to be *great among men;* was learning among your mountains and then frontier country, the manly virtues—and the physical hardihood—and the knowledge of a soldier's life—improved and increased in the Indian and French Wars, from 1748 to 1775—that he might be THE *Man* to take command of the American People; and lead them on, to Victory, and Liberty, and Independence.

But *his* patriotism was not circumscribed by State boundaries, for though from his youth he was cherished and honored by his native State, and lived and died upon her soil;—we hear from him no narrow sentiments of an exclusive devotion to her; no scorn or dislike, or sneers towards other States and sections of our country—no desire to stir up bitter sectional feeling, under the pretext of State pride—no declaration that *his allegiance* was *first* due to Virginia, and the *residue*, if any, to the United States. No, my countrymen, his patriotism was too expanded, and his knowledge of our country from Boston to the Carolinas, and from the Atlantic to the then frontier, too thorough to tolerate any such *modern* patriotism.

We have his sentiments on this subject teeming through all his writings, and bequeathed to us in his solemn farewell address, too pointedly made, to admit of any mistake, as to the character of *his* patriotism.

Let us hear what he says in his *inaugural:*

"The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the *Ameriaan people.*"

In his *proclamation* of Sept. 25, 1794, he says:

"When therefore government is set at defiance the contest being whether a *small*

proportion of the United States shall dictate to the whole Union, and at the expense of those who desire peace, indulge a desperate ambition. Now, therefore, I George Washington, President of the U. S., in obedience to that high and irresitable duty consigned to me by the Constitution to take care that the laws be faithfully exected," &c., &c.

In that memorable paper, his *farewell address*, which you have heard this day, a production upon which he bestowed the reflection and labor of months, which was submitted to his most trusted friends written and re-written, and at last modeled by himself, and drawn out by his own hand, published to the world, but *given* to his countrymen as the last best gift of the Father and friend of his country—a legacy that could never be impaired by time, for it looked to the future; a *priceless inheritance* of well matured counsels, and affectionate warnings, that like the Sybilline books of old, becomes more and more valuable, as time turns prediction into fact, and advice into prophecy;—he tells us, that, "citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate (our) affections—that the name of AMERICAN which belongs to us in our *national* capacity must always exalt the just pride of patriotism *more* than by *any appellation* derived from *local* discrimination, because the independence and liberty we possess are the work of joint counsels and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings, and successes."

In a memorandum found in his own hand writing, made in preparing this memorable paper, he says:—"May our *Union* be as lasting as time, for while we are encircled in one band, we shall possess the strength of a giant. Divide and we shall be weak, a prey to foreign intrigues and internal discord, and shall be as miserable and contemptible as we are now enviable and happy."

Now, fellow-citizens, is there nothing in the State of our country to give deeper import to these solemn words? The three millions of 1776 have become the twenty-three millions of 1851. The thirteen Atlantic States have become thirty-one. The emblem of our Union is now mirrored by the morning sun in the waters of the Atlantic, while his parting rays on the Pacific, light up the stars of the flower flag of our country. Washington's fondest hopes for the progress of our country have been more than realized, so far as wealth and comfort, and knowledge, and numbers, and strength, are concerned.—But how is it with our patriotism? how is it with respect to our love of the Union? which *he* regarded as synonymous with *love of country*. His children have become powerful, and wealthy, and exalted in the world. Do they love one another the better for the blessings which the family Union has brought with it? This glorious Constitution uniting the harmonious elements of a national government and a federal Union, which by the wise and compromising spirit of our fathers, has been expansive enough to take in the young and vigorous sister States of the mighty west—is it strong enough to hold us together? to hold us? Why should we be held? Is the "golden link, the silken tie" of fraternal union to be spoken of as the iron band of the despot? Who or what is to *hold* us, if we hold not together ourselves by the grasp of brotherly love, prompted by a sentiment only subordinate to that holy and high principle of fellowship, which, constitutes the communion of Saints: or that holiest and highest of bonds which unites the true worshipper to his GOD!

What do we see and hear, and tolerate daily? We see bold and infatuated men in the *North*, scouting the principles of the Constitution, putting at jeopardy the blood bought liberties of a united people, to gratify the whims of an abstract philanthropy, or rather let me call it—intermeddling fanatacism. The courts of justice, there, are defiled by the intrusive interference of those who openly proclaim, that they will not obey the laws of the land, made to carry out the compromises of the Constitution; and they boldly and impi-

ously swear this by a "*higher law*" than the Law of God—*upon which they have sworn* (!) to support this very Constitution and obey these very laws. The pulpit is desecrated by the bloody counsels of pretended pastors, whose shepherd's crook, is the firebrand and the sword. The consequences of party strife, and the immodest struggle for party power, in those political divisions, which there have almost equally divided the people into two bands, have enabled the foul creature of fanatical abolitionism, and political corruption, to creep in and neutralize the power of both parties. Even legislative bodies, not representing the people, have shot madly from their spheres, to throw into chaos and confusion the beautiful and harmonious revolution of the Federal Constellation.

Do you ask where are the voices and efforts of the sons of revolutionary sires, whose blood mingled with southern blood on every battle field from Boston to Charleston—whose lives and fortunes and sacred honor were staked with ours, in favor of Independence and Union? Alas! alas! They are bartering their birthrights at the hustings, and in legislative halls for free soil votes, some are cowering in spirit under the howling of the foul pack of fanatical incendiaries, and there are but few true spirits bold enough to stand up for the patriotic principles of the men of '76.

This accursed spirit has had its natural effect upon the South, whose institutions, & safety, and prosperity are directly struck at by this wanton and unfraternal course, and the effects there are still more deplorable than in the North, inasmuch, as it has fanned into flame the embers of a hidden, but it seems, not extinguished desire for the actual *dismemberment* of this our glorious confederacy. We as slaveholders and citizens of a southern State, can sympathize with the natural indignation felt by men who perceive their rights of property and the safety of their firesides intermeddled with by those who have gotten rich upon the product of slave labor, as the manufacturers, merchants, and maritime carriers of our cotton, rice, tobacco and sugar. But are we prepared to subscribe to the creed of the ultra southern school, which would shatter to fragments, the very Union and Constitution which protects us, put a torch to the glorious edifice and burn up our very Lares and Penates, and bring undistinguished ruin upon all within its walls, because of a discord between its inmates. If there be any *patriotism* in this suicidal policy—is there any *wisdom* in it? But where's the patriotism of it? Does not patriotism imply patience, and self denial, and calm endurance, and a conciliating spirit towards those of our own household? And by what right do these last named disturbers of our political peace claim to divide those whom God's providence hath joined together? Not for a time, but forever? With what shew of justice in the words of General Washington can a "small proportion of the United States dictate to the whole Union, and at the expense of those who desire peace, indulge a desperate ambition?"

Are you prepared to admit the right (so called,) of *secession*? are you ready to allow one State to withdraw from the Union, and make alliances offensive and defensive with England? Can it be sound political ethics that a discontented, or ambitious, or exasperated member of the Union, shall refuse to pay duties on imports, and postage on letters, and deny her support to the government of her choice and adoption? Shall *she* make seperate treatios with foreign nations, and above all others, with our old foe *England;* because she consumes Cotton and would like to send her goods free of duty, into Charleston harbor?

Let us examine a little into this most alarming doctrine, because if such be a constitutional remedy for supposed grievances, it is worse than *nullification*: that exploded doctrine, only went to the length of asserting that a single State could declare a *law*, void, as to that State—while, this doctrine of *secession*, strikes down the government itself; the federal arch is broken, when one stone is forcibly remov-

ed; one breach breaks the entirety of the structure;—and if a State has this right she has the right to enforce it, and defend it by arms; and by what would be then a *lawful* war; the general Government would be a tyranny, if that Government resisted the measure; and South Carolina *is right* in voting money for cannon, and gun powder, and the awful preparations for war. There would be then, no *treason* in *levying war* against the U. States, the term must have some other meaning. The clauses prohibiting to the States the right to make treaties with foreign powers, to make war and peace, and coin money &c, must have been hitherto misunderstood.

The right to *secede* from the Union!—It has been said that *State interposition* has ever since the memorable resolutions of 1798, and '99, of Virginia and Kentucky been recognized as a high and salutary State right. It is not my wish, nor is there any need for my argument's sake to deny it.

The opinions of State legislatures, calmly, and gravely and considerately expressed, should always be entitled to respectful consideration, even by the general government of the Country. I must be permitted however, in passing, to doubt whether there may not have been too much and too many of these declamatory and fierce resolves issued like the annual tax law from our capitol in Richmond, not against the purses, but the nerves of peaceable and practical citizens. Sometimes even to the disturbance of the *nerves risible*, of some of us; at all events the cry of wolf, will in time, render the guardians more insensible to the danger. Some allowance may be made for ambitious young legislators, emulating the fame of a Madison, a Barbour or a John Taylor of Caroline; But still, too much of a good thing, is more than enough of anything; be it ever so good.

But do these celebrated resolutions contain the doctrine of secession, either in terms, or in effect. We presume to deny it. Let them be critically examined with their contemporary exposition and it will be found, that while the ground is taken that a State may *interpose*, may *protest*, may *declare* the obnoxious law *unconstitutional*, may call upon her sister States to *concur with her* in that opinion, yet these, by the masterly report of Mr. Madison himself, (to say nothing of his subsequent clear exposition in the Ingersol letter) are in fact, the "necessary and proper measures" and only measures to be adopted by the resolving State: *to do what*? to induce the other and sister States to use means "strictly within the limits of the Constitution" to bring about a *repeal* of the offensive law, or an *amendment* of the Constitution, and all this we may grant, yet find in it nothing of secession. Is secession the necessary, proper or ulterior measure spoken of. If it be hinted at, as a constitutional remedy, or recommended at all, I should like to see where. No, you will find neither the word nor the doctrine in the resolutions of '98 and '99, we must look elsewhere for them, if it be a rightful remedy.

Will you find it in the Constitution itself? No, no. Was ever a government formed that purposely contained within its charter, the very provision for its destruction? When our fathers declared that "We the people of the United States to secure the blessings of liberty, to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish, this Constitution;" did they mean what they said? and when they voted for liberty and Union for their children, and children's children, to the latest posterity; did they mean to keep the promise to the ear, and break it to the hope? and mean to say that any one discontented State or people, may at her pleasure, tear down the fabric we have reared; and we now for the first time make and ordain and establish a government to last, not forever, not in perpetuity; but for an indefinite term of years, like a lease from year to year, which may be ended at the will and caprice of any one of the parties to the compact? Our fathers were not fools; fellow-citizens, our fathers never fought

and bled, and toiled, and sacrificed and agonized, for that which would have been no less a solecism in political history, than an absurdity in policy.

Will the doctrine bear the test of reason, common sense or the principles of common law, if you please?

Our beautiful government is partly a national, and in some respects a federal government, *national* insomuch as it was ordained by the people of all the United States and voted for by them. *National* insomuch as the constitution and laws under it are the *supreme* law of the land.—National in our treaties, our commerce, our gallant army and navy; and in the *glorious flag* of our common Country under which they have so often, and so gallantly fought and bled. Federal in the character of our Senate, and in the admirable arrangement that all those important powers not granted to the common government are reserved to the several States and the people.

Then as a great *national* government, can a portion of the nation separate from the rest, a *small* portion, can the county of Berkeley secede from the United States? but I am a small portion of this mighty nation, *can I secede*? if I do, I must maintain my independence, with my pistols and shot gun, and I am afraid that Major Gen. Scott's army would defeat me; and I fear if I should be taken prisoner, that a certain consequence might follow, called a *prosecution for Treason*, and I should at last *secede* from the scene of action, like Mahomet's coffin, hanging between heaven and earth: secede from the Union, not with the victor's crown of laurel, but the hempen cravat of a traitor. I am not the man to apply this term to the distinguished individuals, who may advocate even the most stringent measures through State action; my object is conciliation and sympathy, not vituperation; and I say God forbid that there ever should be occasion to enquire into its meaning, but the offence is constitutionally defined, and must have some import.

But let us as we have a good right to do, look further into the soundness of this modern doctrine of the *right* of a State peacibly to secede. If the general government be regarded as a *compact*—a mere federal league; still that cannot imply any thing merely temporary, and it means by the force of the terms a *contract*.—Now there are thirty-one parties to it; can one party without the consent of the rest, impair the obligation of this contract? but still stronger—can one party at its pleasure *annul it*? there are mutual obligations, mutual duties, common property, common rights, and common prospective advantages, depending on the fulfilment of this common bond; if the 30 who are willing to stand by it, feel convinced that *these* will be sacraficed by the annulling of the high treaty, must the will of *one* govern the other 30 parties to it?

Again, is there not a *moral* aspect to this question which rides over calculations and speculations of advantages in trade, and staples and State treaties; and drives off the foul fiend, that would conjure up a strife of brother against brother. Free governmetns which must allow to the utmost, freedom of speech and the press, always have been and always must be turbulent in some degree. The land once of puritans, and witchcraft and blue laws is still worthily held by the descendants of those sturdy ancestors who with so many manly virtues and steady habits, had some queer notions in their ethical code. It is said to be *the land of notions*, and among so many men of many minds, what wonder is it that every wild vagary of the human fancy should find its followers, which the unrestrained liberty of speech and press allows each one to promulgate. The fancies come like shadows over the solid surface of their population, and so depart; and this last one so dangerous, yet so acceptible to the spirit of fanatical speculation, will probably live its day and pass off like its predecessors. Still are they our brethren, still are they in the main worthy of our brotherly regard. The great body of them and the best of them say they will stand up for the laws of the land.

Why should we expect their frenzied free soilers at once to calm down, as the troubled sea at the word of omnipotent power. Make allowance then for the surges after a storm, and see if the atmosphere *there* be not brightening and clearing; the true men are standing at their posts, their *governors* are recommending obedience to that portion of the compromise so especially obnoxious to them, their union meetings are more frequent and more fervent and more numerous every day; reason is resuming her sway and moving over the face of the troubled waters. Brethren of the South! let us like wise and sensible men bide our time; a better day is dawning upon our country, a better spirit is prevailing in the North—they are a law abiding people, give them time to let the waters go down, and how will *we* feel if we precipitate final action for a seperation; when *they* are holding out to us the hand of brotherly attachment. To *dissalve this confederacy* upon which hangs the hopes of nations, would certainly be, to do a *mighty deed*; and "between the acting of a dreadful thing and the first motion," wise men would counsel, caution and "a masterly inactivity," delay.—Time for reflection—yea! time it may be for *repentance;* otherwise, if the deed be prematurely done, we may look back upon the awful results as upon "a phantasm or a hideous dream." But then, alas! too late. *That one little step* may prove to be from the edge of the earth bound cliff, into the dark and fathomless and boundless ocean of civil war, internecine strife, domestic and political ruin, and death.

Yes, my countrymen, there is—*there is a moral* side to this question. The son of the family *cannot* dissever the tie that binds him to the household gods, the bond of the husband to the wife is of adamant; so neither can the States divide the blood and the glory of the revolution—even if they could find a way of dividing the navy and the army: The bright stars and broad stripes of that glorious flag beneath which the soldier and the tar have so often battled for the Union, his whole Country. That

"Flag of the free heart's hope and home
By angel hands to valor given;
* * * * * * * *
Each soldier's eye now brightly turns
To where thy sky born glory burns;
Each dying wanderer of the sea
Still looks at once to heaven and thee,
And smiles to see thys plendors fly,
In triumph o'er his closing eye."

If those bright bands of Union can be torn asunder--if even one symboled star of a nation's glory could be, like the lost Pleiad banished from the holy constellation: Still *how could we divide the bones which lie buried under the hill at Mount Vernon?*

Can we cast lots for Vernon's soil, or chaffer
'mid the gloom,
That hangs its solemn folds about, our common
father's tomb,
Or, could we meet around *his* grave as unfraternal foes,
And shout our burning curses o'er *his* pure and
calm repose.

RESOLUTIONS.

☞Mr. Conrad, as Chairman of the Committee appointed to prepare Resolutions for the Meeting, then read the following Resolutions—which were put to the vote by E. P. Hunter, Esq., President of the Meeting, and unanimously adopted:

We, the people of the County of Berkeley, in Virginia, have come together on this the 22d of February, 1851, to hallow the day, by the public expression of our grateful remembrance of the patriotism, and public virtues, of the illustrious Washington; and to bring to the test of his well-known principles; the mischievous and alarming opinions; the bitter unfraternal spirit; and the course of action threatened by some of our brethren, of other States of this Union:—Therefore we

Resolve—1st. That we deem the Union of the United States, as synonymous with true liberty, independence and future prosperity.

2nd. That we here pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor, to maintain it inviolable; and we will inculcate upon our children as a watchword of duty: that "it *must* be preserved."

3d. That we view with great alarm the prevalence of a feeling in the North, of a bitter and unjust prejudice against us, and our institutions, manifested to the extent even, of disregarding the Constitution and the laws of the land; and we warn the violent among them, that a persistence in this course can only result in ruin to our free institutions, without effecting their avowed objects.

4th. To all *true men* of the North, who stand up for the Compromise of the Constitution, and the laws of the land; we tender our hearts and hands in the spirit of brotherly kindness.

5th. That while we deeply sympathize with our brethren of the South, in feelings naturally engendered by such wanton and unfraternal attacks upon us, and our rights; yet we view with pain and horror, in some of them, a rash spirit of disunion—which would lead to more disastrous consequences than the factions, and fanatical spirit in the North.

6th. That "we stand by the Constitution of our fathers, we stand by the Union as it is"—it was adopted in a spirit of Compromise; and in a spirit of Compromise it should be carried out.

7th. We repudiate the doctrine of any *priority* or *superiority of allegiance* to a *State*—We are the leigemen of our native State, but we owe a like allegiance to our Common Country, whose Constitution and laws, are the supreme law of the land. The glory of Virginia is dear to our hearts; but that glory, took its rise *in* the Union; and has flourished under the glorious flag of the United States of America.

8th. We recognize no such doctrine as "*the peaceable right of a State to secede from the Union*"—Obedience to the Constitution and laws is binding in perpetuity, as our Government is perpetual. The right of *revolution* is an appeal to arms and the God of battles, when civil war and internecine strife is preferable to tyranny.—Secession is nothing more; and we see no cause yet, for this awful alternative.

9th. That although we as citizens of the United States may differ in our political principles and opinions in regard to public measures, and subjects of legislation, yet, while the Union is in danger, we will disregard all party ties.

10th. We tender to the noble spirits of both parties, in Congress, who labored for the Compromise bills our grateful thanks and commendations. We believe they will bring peace to the country. "Blessed are the peacemakers."

11th. We trust that the President of the United States will, in the words of Washington, "in obedience to that high and irresistable duty consigned to (him) by the Constitution, to take care that the laws be faithfully executed"—go on, calmly but resolutely in this duty, and ,'his name will be long in the land."

12th. That while we have a solemn sense of the perils that environ our peace, we look to the future hopefully. We trust that better feelings are beginning to prevail: and we invoke our fellow citizens of all sections of our country; by the hallowed associations of this day; by the memory of the great and good Washington; by all the united glory of our past history; by our reasonable hopes of a noble future destiny, for our Common Country: to cultivate and encourage a spirit of concession, and harmony, and brotherly love, and charity.

13th. That to the best of our opinion, these sentiments of ours, this day exprssed; are the decided views of a *majority of the people of Virginia;* and as such, we desire them to be published.

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