

POLITICAL FALLACIES :

AN

EXAMINATION OF THE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS,

AND

REFUTATION OF THE SOPHISTICAL REASONINGS,

WHICH HAVE BROUGHT ON

THIS CIVIL WAR.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BASIS OF RESTORATION.

RECONSTRUCTION — DISSOLUTION — AMENDMENT — STATESMEN
GONE — TRUE BASIS — THE CONSTITUTION AS IT IS, AND THE
UNION AS IT WAS.

RECONSTRUCTION, an expression often used in the Senate chamber, and of which Senator Hunter was peculiarly fond, presupposes entire dissolution, and is therefore odious in our view. It implies the pulling of the house down, because of such defects as render its tenure dangerous, and the hope of fitting it up by repairs, and thus rendering it tenable, to have been abandoned. It is not, to be sure, exactly like the leprous house of the Hebrew law, when given over by the priest, to be utterly rejected, in all its materials, as useless and forever lost; but the materials may still be partially worked up in a new edifice. Some of them are to be cast off entirely; others, however, may, by the new architects, be so reformed and dressed as to occupy a place suitable to their inferior nature, in

some obscure parts of the grand, modernized structure.

Against all this, our feelings, we confess, revolt, and our judgment very decidedly objects. In the first place, we deny the assumption that the materials are decayed, unsightly, and unsuitable, to any such extent as to endanger the occupants of the building, or to deform its proportions, symmetry, or beauty. We have never believed it perfect in either of these respects. Doubtless some improvements are possible; but it makes abundant provision for these, without utter demolition. The principal defect apparent to our vision meets us at the very vestibule. The portico lacks one gem to perfect its lustre. *There is Union and Justice, Common Defence and General Welfare, Blessing and Liberty*; but we cast our eyes about in vain for that which alone can give stability and beauty to the whole — the Koh-i-noor, whose radiant glories crown the grandeur of the beautiful temple, the Shekinah, is absent. The grand bond of our National Union does not distinctly acknowledge the being of a God. For more than forty years, a 4th of July has seldom passed, on which I have not preached and warned my countrymen of this defect, and told them, if it be not supplied, God would pull down their temple and bury a nation in

its ruins. This warning has been sounded forth from thousands of pulpits in the land, and would have been much more extensively trumpeted, but for the paralyzing influence of the fallacy—which we have already exposed—couched in the demagogue's double entendre, "Religion has nothing to do with politics." This defect has been supplied in the Constitution as reconstructed by the rebels. For this we give them honor due.

But, while we admit imperfection, and go in for amendments, we deny the necessity of reconstruction, and we do not believe it would be wise to proceed with amendments until after the restoration. Let that subject lie in abeyance until all the States return to their place in the Government and in subjection to the Constitution. There are other reasons why it should be so; and especially why there should be no dissolution, and, of course, no reconstruction. Among these we may set forth our defect in architectural skill. We have made little, no progress, in the seventy-three years that have passed since the building was completed. In naval architecture we have indeed shot ahead of our fathers and of the world; in civil and ecclesiastical construction and execution also we have far outstripped that age; and, indeed, in everything belonging to material advancement, the age has

been progressive, and the fathers have been left in the rear threescore years and ten. The truth is, the national mind has been so wholly absorbed in the vast business of physical development and material advancement—we have been so fully alive to the philosophy of material experiment, that the higher studies of man—his nature, his intellectual development, his laws of government, his moral powers—have been relatively overlooked. The consequence is, the race of statesmen has died out, and no new race has arisen to take their places. We have no statesmen. Whither now will you look for a Washington, an Adams, a Jefferson, a Jay, a Hamilton, a Madison, a Franklin, a Pinckney, a Randolph? Manifestly, among the fossil remains of an age gone by. We have no statesmen. Politicians we have in scores; and demagogues, alas! in thousands; but statesmen, oh! my country! where are they?

On the score of ability—abstract, intellectual ability to build up a new system of government—we therefore object to the attempt in this generation. But, if the capacity did exist, still more seriously do we object on the ground of moral qualities—of political integrity. Politics is a grand rascal, and cannot be intrusted with reconstruction. The pure, unsullied patriotism of the

fathers, no man expects to find, and, therefore, no man looks for it. All that is expected now is cunning, chicanery, tact in managing the wires, and skill in the tricks of party—the intrigues of faction.

What, then, is to be done? Nothing—nothing at all; but abide as you are—and you who have departed, return to your own natural position, where your fathers placed you. Exceedingly have I been grieved at a phraseology often used by speakers and writers, inadvertently, no doubt, in most cases. Men talk of conquering the South. My friends, this is all wrong. You cannot conquer the South—ten millions of people, or four millions of white freemen, cannot be conquered and kept down as a conquered people. This phraseology has done immense mischief already, and will produce much more. We of the United States do not desire to conquer the South. All we wish is, that the South return to their proper place—take their seats in the Senate, in the House, in the executive chair occasionally, in the departments, in the navy, in the army, in the customhouse, in the postoffice, in the diplomacy—in every place where the Constitution may and shall place them. Fight the armed rebellion we must; break up hosts in hostile array against the flag we must; but the suppression of

an insurrection is not conquering a country. Let us not irritate our brethren by boasting and bragging about conquering them: we wish only to aid the Southern people, by suppressing the revolt, to return and place themselves under the ægis of the Constitution; there to exercise all the rights and to enjoy all the privileges purchased by the blood and treasure of their fathers and guaranteed by this semi-inspired instrument. Here they have prospered, as we have seen from their own showing, beyond all examples in the world's history; and here still more abundantly will they prosper after restoration. Experience teaches fools, and they are guilty of triple folly who cannot or will not learn even in the school of experience. We have all acquired much knowledge, within two years, that ought, if we be not unreasonably perverse, to lead us back to peace and harmony and love.

Plainly, then, the reader sees the basis of restoration in “the Constitution as it is and the Union as it was.” In our humble opinion, there is no other rock on which the glorious temple of liberty can stand. Should the lightnings of heaven rive it, the building totters and falls; and the hopes of freedom to man pass away as a tale that is told. Humanity, struggling forth from beneath the mighty ruin of representative democracy, will raise her bruised

ed head and stretch forth her feeble hands imploringly, to despotism, seated on his iron throne, and pray for intervention to rescue her from the terrible grasp of a self-governed people.

CHAPTER XXX.

HAPPY CONSEQUENCES OF A RESTORED UNION.

FAMILY CONNECTIONS ALL OVER—BLESSED RETURN—NATIONAL PROSPERITY—CHURCH REVIVED—MISSION AND BIBLE CAUSE REGENERATED.

THE vast breadth of our territory—nearly equal to the whole of Europe; the immense diversities of its soil and climate, adapting it to almost all possible varieties of productions of the soil and the mines; the countless variety of our population, native and imported, insuring and enforcing endless diversities in tastes, capacities, and pursuits; the perfect freedom of locomotion and cheapness of land, attracting enterprise to all quarters—all these have brought about such a perfect intermixture and thorough dispersion of population and readjustment of family ties by intermarriages where no class distinctions exist, as has never been exhibited on so immense a scale since the dispersion at Babel. There is scarcely a country on earth unrepresented on this continent and in these United States.