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TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION. The Argus will be furnished at Three Dollars per annum, if paid in advance. Four Dollars will be charged if paid in six months, or Five Dollars at the end of the year.

The Oregon Argus.

-A Weekly Newspaper, devoted to the Interests of the Laboring Classes, and advocating the side of Truth in every issue.-

VOL. VI.

OREGON CITY, OREGON, JANUARY 12, 1861.

No. 40.

RATES OF ADVERTISING: One square (twelve lines, or less, brevier measure) one insertion..... \$ 3 00

ANNUAL MESSAGE OF PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.

Follow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives: Throughout the year, since our last meeting, the country has been eminently prosperous in its material interests, the general health has been excellent, our harvests have been abundant, and plenty smiles throughout the land; our commerce and manufactures have been presented with ample returns—in short, no nation in the tide of time has ever presented a spectacle of greater material prosperity than we have done, until a very recent period.

WHY IS IT, THEN, that discontent now extensively prevails, and the union of the States, which is the source of all these blessings, is threatened with destruction?—The long-continued and inter-temperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery in the Southern States, has at length produced its natural effects. The different sections of the Union are now arrayed against each other, and the time has arrived, so much dreaded by the Father of his Country, when hostile geographical parties have been formed. I have long foreseen and often forewarned my countrymen of the now impending danger. This does not proceed solely from the claim on the part of Congress, or the Territorial Legislatures, to exclude slavery from the Territories, nor from the efforts of the States to defeat the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law—all or any of these evils might have been endured by the South, without danger to the Union, as others have been, in the hope that time and reflection might apply the remedy. The immediate peril arises, not so much from these causes as from the fact that the violent attacks of the Slavery question throughout the North for the last quarter of a century, has at length produced its malign influence on slaves, and inspired them with vague notions of freedom.—Hence security no longer exists around the family altar. The feeling of peace at home has given place to apprehensions of servile insurrection; many a nation throughout the South retires at night in dread of what may befall herself and her children before the morning. Should this apprehension of domestic danger, whether real or imaginary, extend and intensify itself until it should permeate the masses of the Southern people, then disunion will be inevitable.

Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and has been implanted in the heart of man by his Creator for the wisest purposes; and no political Union, however fraught with blessings and benefits in all other respects, can long continue, if the necessary consequences be to render the homes and firesides of nearly half the parties to it habitually and hopelessly insecure. Sooner or later, the bonds of such a union must be severed. It is my conviction that this fatal period has not yet arrived, and my prayer to God is that He would preserve the Constitution and the Union throughout all generations; but let us take warning in time, and remove the cause of danger.

It cannot be denied that for five and twenty years the agitation at the North against slavery in the South has been incessant. In 1834, pictorial hand-bills and inflammatory appeals were circulated extensively throughout the South, of a character to excite the passions of the slaves, and in the language of Gen. Jackson, to stimulate them to insurrection, and produce all the horrors of a civil war.

This agitation has ever since been continued, by the public press, by the proceedings of State and county conventions, and by Abolition sermons and lectures.—The time of Congress has been occupied in violent speeches on the never-ending subject, and appeals in pamphlet and other forms, endorsed by distinguished names, have been sent forth from this central point, and spread broadcast, over the Union. How easy would it be for the American people to settle the Slavery question forever, and to restore peace and harmony to this distracted country. They alone can do it. All that is necessary to accomplish this object, and all which the Slave States have ever contended for, is, to let alone and permitted to manage their domestic institutions in their own way, as sovereign States; they, and they alone, are responsible before God and the world, for the slavery existing among them. For this the people of the North are not more responsible, and have no more right to interfere, than with similar institutions in Russia or Brazil. Upon their good sense and patriotic forbearance, I confess I still greatly rely. Without their aid, it is beyond the power of any President, no matter what may be his political proclivities, to restore peace and harmony among the States.

THE ELECTION OF MR. LINCOLN NO CAUSE FOR DISSOLUTION.

Widely limited and restrained as is his power under our Constitution and laws, he alone can accomplish but little for good or evil so a momentous question; and this brings me to observe, that the election of any one of our fellow-citizens to the office of President does not, of itself, afford cause for dissolving the Union. This is more especially true if his election has been effected by a mere plurality, and not a majority of the people, and has resulted from transient and temporary causes, which may probably never again occur. In order to justify a resort to revolutionary resistance, the Federal Government must be guilty of a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of power not granted by the Constitution. The late Presidential election, however, has been held in strict conformity with its express provisions.—How, then, can the result justify a revolution to destroy this very Constitution?—Reason, justice, and regard for the Constitution, all require that we shall wait for

some overt and dangerous act on the part of the President elect, before resorting to such a remedy. It is said, however, that the antecedents of the President elect have been sufficient to justify the fears of the South that he will attempt to invade their constitutional rights; but are such apprehensions of continuing danger in the future, sufficient to justify the immediate destruction of the noblest system of government ever devised by mortals?

From the very nature of his office, and its high responsibilities, he must necessarily be conservative. The stern duty of administering the vast and complicated councils of this Government, affords in itself a guaranty that he will not attempt any violation of a clear Constitutional right.—After all, he is no more than the chief executive officer of the Government; his power is not to make, but to execute its laws, and it is a remarkable fact in our history that notwithstanding the repeated efforts of the anti-slavery party, not a single act has ever passed Congress, unless we may possibly except the Missouri Compromise, impairing in the slightest degree the right of the South to their property in slaves in it. And it may also be observed, judging from present indications, that no probability exists of the passage of such an act by a majority of both Houses, either in the present or the next Congress. Surely, under these circumstances, we ought to be restrained from present action by the precept of Him who spoke as never man spake, "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." The day of evil may never come, unless we shall rashly bring it upon ourselves. It is alleged, as one cause for immediate secession, that the Southern States are denied equal rights with the other States in the common Territories.—But by what authority are these denied?—Not by Congress, which has never passed, and I believe never will pass, any act to exclude Slavery from these Territories; and certainly not by the Supreme Court, which has solemnly decided that slaves are property, and, like all other property, their owners have a right to take them into common Territories, and hold them there under the protection of the Constitution.

SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES.

So far, then, as Congress is concerned, this object is not to any thing they have already done, but to what they may do hereafter. It will surely be admitted that this apprehension of future danger is not good reason for an immediate dissolution of the Union. It is true, that the Territorial Legislature of Kansas, on the 23d of February, 1850, passed in great haste an act over the veto of the Governor, declaring that slavery is and shall be forever prohibited in that Territory. Such an act, however, plainly violating the rights of property secured by the Constitution, will surely be declared void by the judiciary whenever it shall be presented in legal form. Only three days after my inauguration, the Supreme Court of the United States adjudged that its power did not exist in a Territorial Legislature; yet such has been the factious temper of the times that the correctness of this decision has been extensively impugned, before the people, and the question has given rise to angry political conflicts throughout the country. Those who have appealed from this judgment of our highest constitutional tribunal to popular assemblies would, if they could, invest Territorial Legislatures with power to annul the sacred rights of property. This power Congress is expressly forbidden by the Federal Constitution to exercise. Every State Legislature in the Union is forbidden by its own Constitution to exercise it.—It cannot be exercised in any State except by the people in their high sovereign capacity, when framing or amending their State Constitution. In like manner it can only be exercised by the people of the Territory, represented in a Convention of delegates, for the purpose of framing a Constitution, preparatory to admission as a State into the Union. Then, and not until then, are they invested with power to decide the question, whether slavery shall, or shall not, exist within their limits.—This is an act of sovereign authority, and not of subordinate Territorial legislation for it; otherwise, then indeed would the equality of the States in the Territories be destroyed, and the right of property in slaves would depend, not upon the guaranties of the Constitution, but upon the shifting majorities of an irresponsible Territorial Legislature.

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.

Such a doctrine, from its intrinsic unsoundness, cannot long influence any portion of our people, much less can it afford a good reason for a dissolution of the Union. The most palpable violations of the Constitutional duty which have yet been committed, consist in the acts of defiant State Legislatures to defeat the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law. It ought to be remembered, however, that for these acts neither Congress nor any President can be justly held responsible, having been passed in violation of the Federal Constitution.—They are, therefore, null and void. All the Courts, both State and National, before whom the question has arisen, have from the beginning declared the Fugitive Slave Law to be Constitutional. The single exception is that of a State Court in Wisconsin, and this has not only been reversed by the proper appellate tribunal, but has met with such universal reprobation, that there can be no danger from it as a precedent. The validity of the law has been established over and over again by the Supreme Court of the United States, with perfect unanimity. It is founded upon an express provision of the Constitution, requiring that fugitive slaves, who escape from service in one State to another, shall be delivered up to their masters. Without this provision, it is well known historical fact that the Constitution itself could never have been adopted by the Convention.

In one form or another, under the acts of 1793 or 1850, both being substantially

the same, the Fugitive Slave Law has been the law of the land from the days of Washington until the present moment. Here the clear case is presented, in which it will be the duty of the next President, as it has been my own, to act with vigor in executing this supreme law against the conflicting enactments of State Legislatures; should he fail in the performance of this duty, he will then have manifested a disregard of the Constitution and laws, to the great injury of the people of nearly one half of the States of the Union. But are we to presume in advance that he will thus violate his duty? This would be at war with every principle of justice, or Christian charity. Let us wait for the overt act.—The Fugitive Slave Law has been carried into execution in every contested case since the commencement of the present Administration, though often, it is to be regretted, with great loss and inconvenience, and with considerable expense to the Government. Let us trust that the State Legislatures will repeal their unconstitutional and obnoxious enactments; unless this shall be done, without unnecessary delay, it is impossible for any human power to save the Union.

THE SOUTHERN STATES HAVE A RIGHT TO DEMAND IT.

The Southern States, standing on the basis of the Constitution, have a right to demand this act of justice from the States of the North. Should it be refused, then the Constitution, to which all the States are parties, will have been wilfully violated by one portion of them, in a provision essential to the domestic security and happiness of the remainder. In that event, the injured States, after having first used all peaceful and constitutional means to obtain redress, would be justified in revolutionary resistance to the Government of the Union.

THE RIGHT OF SECESSION DISCUSSED.

I have purposely confined my remarks to revolutionary resistance, because it has been claimed, within the few past years, that any State whenever it shall be her sovereign will and pleasure, may secede from the Union in accordance with the Constitution, and without any violation of the constitutional rights of the other members of the Confederacy. That such became parties to the Union by the vote of its own people, assembled in Convention, so any one of them in any retro from the Union in a similar manner, by the vote of such a Convention. In order to justify secession as a constitutional remedy, it must be on the principle that the Federal Government is a mere voluntary association of States to be dissolved at pleasure by one of the contracting parties. If this be so, the Constitution is but a rope of sand, to be penetrated and dissolved by the first adverse wave of public opinion in any of the States. In this manner, our thirty-three States may resolve themselves as many petty, jarring, and to be regulated, each one retiring from the Union without responsibility to either party, and an excitement might impel them to such a course. By this process a Union might be entirely broken into fragments in a few weeks, which cost our forefathers many wars of toll, privation and blood to establish. Such a principle is wholly inconsistent with the history, as it was framed with the greatest deliberation and care. It was submitted to Conventions of the people of the several States for ratification. Its provisions were discussed at length in those bodies, composed of the first men of the country. Its opponents contended that it conferred power upon the Federal Government dangerous to the rights of the States; and its advocates maintained that under a fair construction of the instrument, there was no foundation for such apprehensions.

In that mighty struggle between the first intellects of this or any other country, it never occurred to any individual, either among its opponents or advocates, to assert or even to intimate that their efforts were all vain labor, because the moment that any State felt herself aggrieved, she might secede from the Union. What a crushing argument would this have proved against those who dreaded that the rights of the States would be endangered by the Constitution. The truth is, that it was not until many years after the origin of the Federal Government, that such a proposition was first advanced.

It was then met and refuted by the conclusive arguments of General Jackson, who, in his Message of the 18th of January, 1833, transmitting the nullifying ordinance of South Carolina to Congress, employs the following language: "The right of the people of a single State to abrogate themselves at will, without the consent of the other States, from their most solemn obligations, hazards the liberty and happiness of the millions composing this Union, and cannot be acknowledged. Such authority is believed to be utterly repugnant, both to the principles upon which the General Government is constituted and to the objects which it was expressly formed to attain. It is not pretended that any clause in the Constitution gives countenance to such a theory. It is altogether founded upon inference, not from any language contained in the instrument itself, but from the sovereign character of the several States by which it was ratified; but it is beyond the power of a State, like an individual, to yield a portion of its sovereign rights to secure the remainder." In the language of Mr. Madison, who has been called the father of the Constitution, "It was formed by the States, that is, by the people in the States, acting in their highest sovereign capacity, and formed consequently by the same authority which formed the State Constitution." Nor is the Government within the strictest sense of the term, within the sphere of its powers, than the Governments created by the Constitutions of the States are within the several spheres. It is, like them, organized into legislative, executive and judicial departments. It operates like them, directly on persons and things, and like them, it has at command a physical force for executing the powers

committed to it. It was intended to be perpetual, and not be annulled at the pleasure of any of the contracting parties of the Confederation—a perpetual Union between the States; and by the thirteenth article, it is expressly declared that the articles of this Confederation shall be inviolably preserved by every State, and the Union shall be perpetual.

The preamble of the Constitution of the United States, having express reference to the articles of Confederation, states that it was established in order to form a more perfect Union; though this does not include the essential attributes of perpetuity; but that the Union was designed to be perpetual appears conclusive from the nature and extent of the powers conferred by the Constitution on the Federal Government.—These powers—the highest attributes of national sovereignty—place both the sword and the purse under its control.

Congress has power to make war, and to make peace, to raise and support armies and navies, and to conclude treaties with foreign governments; it is invested with the power to coin money and to regulate the value thereof, and to regulate the commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States. It is not necessary to enumerate other high powers which have been conferred upon the Federal Government, in order to carry the enumerated powers into effect.

Congress possesses the exclusive right to lay and collect duties on imports, and in common with the States, to lay and collect all other taxes. The Constitution has not only conferred these high powers upon Congress, but has adopted effectual means to restrain the States from interfering with their exercise for that purpose.

It has, in strong prohibitory language, expressly declared that, no State shall enter into any treaty, alliance or confederation, grant letters of marque and reprisal, coin money, emit bills of credit, making none but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts, pass any bill of attainder, or "ex post facto" law, or laws impairing the obligations of contracts; moreover, without the consent of Congress, no State shall levy any impost or duties on any imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection laws, or if they exceed that amount, the excesses shall belong to the United States, and shall not, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty on tonnage, keep troops or ships of war in time of peace, or enter into any agreement or compact with another State, or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded or in such imminent danger as will not admit of further delay. In order still further to secure the uninterrupted exercise of these high powers against interference, it is provided that the Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitutions or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.—The solemn sanction of religion has been superadded to the obligations of official duty. And all Senators and Representatives of the United States—all members of State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support the Constitution, in order to carry into effect these laws.

The Constitution has established a perfect government in all its forms, legislative, executive and judicial, and the Government, to the extent of its powers acts upon the individual citizens of every State, and executes its own decrees by the agency of its own officers. In this respect it differs entirely from the Government under the old confederation, which was confined to making requisition on the States in their sovereign character. This left it in the discretion of each whether to obey or refuse, and they often declined to comply with such requisitions. It then became necessary, for the purpose of removing the barrier, and in order to form a more perfect union, to establish a government which could act directly upon the people, and execute its own laws without the intermediate agency of the States. This has been accomplished by the Constitution of the United States. In short, the Government created by the Constitution, and drawing its authority from the sovereign people of each of the several States, has precisely the same right to exercise its power over the people of all the States, in the enumerated cases, that each one possesses over subjects not delegated to the United States, but reserved to the States respectively, or to the people, to the extent of delegated powers. The Constitution of the United States is as much a part of the Constitution of each and is as binding on the people as though it had been specifically inserted therein. This Government, therefore, is a great and powerful Government invested with all the attributes of sovereignty and with all the special subjects to which its authority extends. Its framers never intended to implant in its bosom the seeds of its own destruction, nor were they guilty of the absurdity of providing for its own dissolution; nor was it intended by its framers to be the "hazardous fabric of a vision," which, by the touch of the enchanter, would "vanish into thin air"—but a substantial and mighty fabric, capable of standing the slow decay of time and defying the storms of ages. Indeed, many zealous patriots of that day have indulged fears that a government of such high powers might violate the reserved rights of the States, and wisely did they adopt the rule of a strict construction of those powers, to prevent the danger; and they did not fear, nor had they reason to imagine, that the Constitution would ever be so interpreted, to enable any State by her own act, and without consent of sister States, to discharge her

people from all or any of their federal obligations.

REVOLUTION THE ONLY MEANS OF REDRESS.

It may be asked, then, are the people of the States without redress against tyranny and oppression of the Federal Government? By no means. The right of resistance on the part of the governed, against oppression of their government, cannot be denied.—It exists, independent of all constitutions, and has been exercised at all periods of the world's history. Under it, old governments have been destroyed, and under it new ones have been replaced. It is embodied, in strong and impressive language, in our own Declaration of Independence; but the distinction must ever be observed, that this is a revolution against an established government, and not a voluntary secession from it, by virtue of an inherent right. In short, let us look the danger in the face.

Secession is no more or less than revolution. It may or it may not be justifiable revolution, but still it is revolution. What, in the meantime, is the responsibility and true position of the Executive, bound by solemn oath before God and the country to take care that the laws be faithfully executed. From this obligation he cannot be absolved by any human power. But what if performance of this duty, in whole or in part, has been rendered impracticable, by events over which he has no control? Such, at the present moment, is the case throughout the State of South Carolina. So far as the laws of the United States, to secure the administration of justice by means of the Federal Judiciary, are concerned, all the Federal officers within its limits—through whose agency alone those laws can be carried into execution—have already resigned.

NO FEDERAL OFFICERS IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

We have no longer a District Judge, or a District Attorney in South Carolina.—In fact, the whole machinery of the Federal Government necessary for the distribution of remedial justice among the people has been demolished, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace it. The only acts of Congress on the statute book bearing upon this subject, are those of February 28th, 1795, and March 3d, 1807.—These authorize the President, after he shall have ascertained that the Marshal, with his posse comitatus, is unable to execute criminal process in any particular case, the call forth the militia and employ the army and navy to aid in performing the service, having first, by proclamation, commanded the insurgents to disperse and return peacefully to their respective abodes within a limited time. This duty cannot by any possibility be performed in a State where no judicial authority exists to issue process, and where there is no Marshal to execute, and where, even if there were such an officer, the entire population would combine in solid column to resist him.—The mere reference to these provisions proves how inadequate they are without further legislation to overcome a united opposition in a single State, not to speak of other States who may place themselves in a similar attitude. Congress alone has the power to decide whether the present laws cannot be amended so as to carry on more effectually the objects of the Constitution.

The same insuperable obstacles do not lie in the way of executing the revenue laws for the collection of customs. The revenue still continues to be collected as heretofore, at the Custom House in Charleston; and should the Collector unfortunately resign, a successor may be appointed to perform this duty.

Then, in regard to the property of the United States in South Carolina, this has been purchased for a fair equivalent by the consent of the Legislature of the State, for the creation of forts, magazines, arsenals, etc., and over these the authority to exercise exclusive legislation has been granted by the Constitution to Congress. It is not believed that an attempt will be made to expel the United States from this property by force; but if in this I should prove to be mistaken, the officer in command of the forts has received orders to act strictly on the defensive. In such a contingency, the responsibility and consequences would rightfully rest upon the heads of the assailants.

Apart from the execution of the laws, so far as this may be practicable, the Executive has no authority to decide what shall be the relations between the Federal Government and South Carolina. He has been invested with no such discretion in the premises; no power to change the relations heretofore existing between them, much less to acknowledge the independence of that State; this would be to invest the more executive officer with the power of recognizing the dissolution of the Confederacy among the free sovereign States. It has no resemblance to the recognition of a foreign de facto government. Involving such responsibilities, any attempt to do this would, on his part, be a naked act of usurpation. It is, therefore, my duty to submit to Congress the whole question in all its bearings. The course of events is so rapidly hastening forward, that the emergency may arrive when you must be called upon to decide the momentous question, whether you possess the power by force of arms to compel a State to remain in the Union.

CONGRESS HAS NOT THE POWER TO MAKE WAR AGAINST A STATE.

I should feel myself recent to my duty were I to fail to express an opinion on the important subject. The question, fairly stated, is—Has the Constitution delegated to Congress the power to force a State into submission, which is attempting to withdraw, or has already withdrawn, from the Confederacy? If answered in the affirmative, it must be on the principle that the power has been conferred upon Congress to declare and make war against a State.—After much serious reflection, I have arrived at the conclusion that no such power has been delegated to Congress, or to any other department of the Federal Govern-

ment. It is manifest, upon an inspection of the instrument, that this is not among the specific and enumerated powers granted to Congress, and it is equally apparent that its exercise is not necessary and proper for carrying into execution any one of those powers. So far from this power having been delegated to Congress, it was especially refused by the Convention which formed the Constitution. It appears from the proceedings of body, on the 31st of May, 1787, that the clause authorizing an exertion of the force of the whole Government against a delinquent State came up for consideration. Mr. Madison opposed it in a brief but powerful speech, from which I shall extract but a single sentence. He observed: "The use of force against a State would look more like a declaration of war than an infliction of punishment, and would probably be considered by the party attacked as a dissolution of all previous compacts by which it might be bound." Upon his motion the clause was unanimously postponed, and was never, I believe, again presented.

Soon after, on the 8th of June, 1787, when incidentally adverted to this subject, he said any government for the United States founded on the supposed practicability of using force against the unconstitutional proceedings of the States, would prove as visionary and fallacious as the government of Congress; evidently meaning the then existing Congress of the old Confederation.

Without descending to particulars, it may be safely asserted that the power to make war against a State is at variance with the whole spirit and intent of the Constitution. Suppose such a war should result in the conquest of a State; how are we to govern it afterwards? Shall we hold it as a province, and govern it by a despotic power? In the nature of things, we could not by physical force control the will of the people and compel them to elect Senators and Representatives to Congress, and to perform all the other duties of a free State as a member of the Confederacy. But if we are possessed of the power, would it be wise to exercise it under the existing circumstances? The object would be, doubtless, to preserve the Union, yet it would not only present the most effectual means of destroying it, but would banish all hopes of its peaceful reconstruction; besides, in the fraternal conflict, a vast amount of blood and treasure would be expended, rendering future reconciliation impossible.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY CONGRESS MAY AVERT THE EVIL.

In the meantime, who can foretell what would be the sufferings and privations of the people during its existence? The fact is, that our Union rests upon public opinion, and can never be cemented by the blood of its citizens shed in civil war. If it cannot live in the affections of the people, it must some day perish. Congress possess many means of preserving, by conciliation; but the sword was not placed in their hands to preserve it by force. But may I be permitted solemnly to invoke my countrymen to pause and deliberate, before they determine to destroy this, the grandest temple which has ever been dedicated to human freedom since the world began. It has been consecrated by the blood of our fathers, by the glories of the past, and by the hopes of the future; the Union has already made us the most prosperous, and ere long, will, if preserved, render us the most powerful nation on the face of the earth. In every foreign region of the globe, an American citizen is held in the highest respect. When pronounced in foreign lands, it causes the hearts of our countrymen to swell with highest pride.—Surely, when we reach the brink of the yawning abyss, we shall recoil with horror from the last fatal plunge. By such a dread catastrophe, the hopes of the friends of freedom throughout the world would be destroyed, and a long night of leaden despotism would pervade the nation.—Our example for more than eighty years would not only be lost, but it would be quoted as conclusive proof that man is unfit for self-government. It is not every wrong—may it be not every grievous wrong, which can justify such a fearful alternative. This ought to be the last desperate remedy of a despairing people, after every other constitutional means of conciliation has been exhausted. We should reflect that under this free government there is an incessant ebb and flow of public opinion.—The slavery question, like everything human, has its day. I firmly believe that it has already reached and passed its culmination, but if in the midst of the existing excitement the Union shall perish, the evil may then become irreparable. Congress can contribute much to arrest it, by passing and recommending to the Legislatures of the several States the remedy for existing troubles which the Constitution has itself provided for its own preservation.—It has been tried at different periods of our history and always with eminent success.

It is to be found in the fifth article, providing for its own amendment. Under this article, amendments have been proposed by two-thirds of both Houses of Congress, and been ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the States, and have consequently become parts of the Constitution. To this process the country is indebted for the clause prohibiting Congress from passing any law respecting an establishment of religion, abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of petition.

To this we are also indebted for the Bill of Rights, which secured the people against any abuse of power by the Federal Government. Such were the apprehensions justly entertained by the friends of State Rights, at that period, as to have rendered it extremely doubtful whether the Constitution could have long survived without these amendments. Again, the Constitution was amended by the same process after the election of President Jefferson by