

**UNION. - SLAVERY. -
SECESSION; LETTER FROM
GOVERNOR R. K. CALL, OF
FLORIDA, TO JOHN S. LITTELL, OF
GERMANTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

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Union. - Slavery. - Secession; Letter from Governor R. K. Call, of Florida, to John S. Littell, of Germantown, Pennsylvania by Richard Keith Call

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RICHARD KEITH CALL

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UNION.—SLAVERY.—SECESSION.

LETTER

FROM

Richard
Governor R. K. Call,

Of Florida,

TO

JOHN S. LITTELL,

Of Germantown, Pennsylvania.

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PHILADELPHIA:

C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS.

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(... 1820.)

Letter.

LAKE JACKSON, Feb. 12th, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR :

We live in an age of miracles and wonders. Great events are in progress, and I look with amazement and mortification at the developments of every day and hour. We are in the midst of the most extraordinary revolution, and the most stupendous ruin is now in rapid progress that the world has ever known.

A great nation has been dismembered. The bonds of the American Union, the work of Washington, of Franklin, of Madison, and other great sages and statesmen of a glorious age, have been rent and snapped like cobwebs; and the greatest fabric of human government, *without complaint of wrong or injustice*, has been destroyed in a few months—*madly and rashly destroyed*, without reflection, and without loss of life or stain of blood.

Star after star from the once glorious, but now drooping, banner has fallen, others are waning in their light, and the whole heavens are covered with the gloomy portent of universal destruction. When shall this ruin end? Where is the rock which will stand and throw back the mad destructive waves of revolution, and arrest the fearful, fatal, desolating progress of secession! Through the mist of the tempest, I think I see *that rock* rising in *moral* power and sublimity along the whole southern line of North Carolina, Tennessee,

and Arkansas, supported by Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, and above the mad, riotous, and exulting shout of successful secession and triumphant revolution. From that rock I hear a voice, like the voice of God, saying to the raging sea, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Here I trust, is the rock of safety, standing in the centre of the American Union. The extremities may become cold, and lose their sensibilities, their love for our gallant flag, their pride for our prestige and national glory, won on so many battle-fields, and consummated by so many civic achievements; they may retire to the idolatrous worship of their local and sectional divinities, but the American heart will love and worship the God of our fathers; it will continue to beat in the American bosom, in the centre of the American Union; its warm blood will continue to circulate on both sides of the line of slavery, binding together, in national bonds, the kindred affections of one race in different communities.

Here, I trust in God and in the wisdom and virtue of my countrymen, that there is and that there ever will be an American Union, bearing as the emblem of its power and glory, the broad stripes and bright stars, the banner of freedom at home, and the sign and hope of liberty to the world. Here, at least, I hope, a glorious Union of sovereign States may stand forever, to vindicate the success of the representative Republican system, to vindicate the success of the great experiment of popular government, to rebuke despotic power, to disrobe tyranny of its pomp and pride, to rebuke anarchy and riot in the sanctuary of secession; to sustain the cause of law and government, the holy cause of civil and religious liberty; to bless the living, honor the dead, justify the blood of our glorious Revolution, and vindicate the cause in which Hampden, Elliot, and Moore suffered and died; to vindicate the cause in which the hundreds and thousands of victims, through ages and generations, have been sacrificed on the altar of human liberty! May God bless and preserve this

remnant of the great American Republic for all these high purposes, and permit it to stand forever as a perpetual monument to the memory and glory of the patriotic men who shall have the wisdom, virtue, and courage to resist local sectional feelings, to resist the progress of a mad, desolating revolution!

Disunion, under certain contingencies, may be justified; it may become an imperative necessity, but it should be the last resort; like the *rite of extreme unction*, it should be reserved for the last, and administered only in the dying hour of the only remaining hope within the Union. Disunion must be fatal!—fatal to the peace, safety, and happiness of both divisions of the country—fatal to the progress of liberty and civilization—fatal to the pride and glory of the American name.

Every enlightened statesman may see, even through the mist of prejudice, that there is not room between the lakes of Canada and the Gulf of Mexico for two great nations of the same race and lineage, the same language and religion, the same pride, ambition, energy, and high courage, to live in peace and good fellowship together. Every one may see, from the map of our country, that there is no desert waste, no mountain bar, dividing the Northern from the Southern States. Every one may see the great rivers, with their outstretched arms, rising in the Northern States, flowing down the rich valleys through the Southern States, to the Gulf of Mexico, proclaiming the unity of a great empire, and indicating the design of the Creator, that this beautiful land should be forever one country, for one great, united, prosperous people. And why should this unity be destroyed? Why should this beautiful land be divided? Why should this one kindred people become two hostile nations, to exhaust in ruinous wars and battles between themselves, those vast resources, those great energies heretofore so successfully united for the unequalled progress of one country, one great and happy people?

There is one disturbing, one dangerous cause,—the angry controversy arising on the institution of AFRICAN slavery, and unless this controversy can be amicably adjusted *there must be a perpetual end of the Union, an everlasting separation of the North from the South.*

The institution of slavery, then, demands the earnest attention and the unprejudiced consideration of every American citizen. It should be viewed as it is, and not as we might wish that it should be. Not as an abstract question of right or wrong, not as a blessing or a curse, but as an existing reality, for good or evil, thrown upon us by inheritance from a past generation and another government, and for which no man of the present day is in any manner the least responsible. It should be considered as it is, an institution interwoven and inseparably connected with our social and *political system*, as a domestic institution of the States, and a *national institution, created by the American people and protected by the Constitution of the United States.* It should be considered as an institution which *cannot be disturbed in its present political relation to some of the States of the confederacy, without great detriment to all, and without, perhaps, destruction to some one of the parties to this relation.* It should be considered as an institution which *could not now be abolished, even with the consent of all, without fatal consequences to some of the parties holding relations to it.*

The history of African slavery in this country proves all the relations I claim for it, and it is as wonderful as any other portion of our wonderful history. The discovery of America, with its boundless resources, started all the maritime nations of Europe on the great enterprises of conquest and dominion in the New World. To dig the golden treasure from the mountains, to open the springs of vegetable life on the plains and in the valleys, to quarry the rocks, to fell and clear the forest, and make America the home of civilization, *human labor was indispensably necessary.* The climate within the tropics, where the experiment was first made, proved un-

friendly to the success of European labor, and fatal to European laborers. Recourse was first had, as a substitute, to the labor of the natives. Many of them were subdued by conquest, and became slaves to the conquerors. But the brave warrior spurned the fetters of the slave, and when his bow and arrow could not defend his liberty, his proud heart broke, and he died under the degradation and in the humility of bondage. Whole tribes became extinct,—perished and disappeared. And it was in the fatal progress of this destruction of human life, and the ill success of slavery among the native tribes, that Portugal, in 1508, sent from her possessions on the coast of Africa the first African slaves to America. The experiment of African labor proved eminently successful. Here was an animal, in the form of man, possessing the greatest physical power, and the greatest capacity for labor and endurance, without one principle of his nature, one faculty of mind or feeling of heart, without spirit or pride of character, to enable him to regard slavery as a degradation. A wild barbarian, to be tamed and civilized by the discipline of slavery. Here was the discovery of an animal power almost as essential as the discovery of the new continent, to bring forth the vegetable, animal, and mineral productions of America, to supply the wants and relieve the necessities of Europe. And without this discovery, and the application of this great element of laboring power, the discovery of America, with all its boundless, uncultivated resources of wealth, would have been of little value to the civilized world. This fact, so far as it relates to the South, is fully illustrated in the great prosperity of the Spanish, French, and English provinces, during the whole time of the existence of slavery in them, and the sudden and continuous decline of every agricultural and other interest in each and every one of those provinces, from the day on which African slavery was abolished. Every colonial nation availed itself of this great element of laboring power. Spain, under Charles the Fifth, France, under Louis Thirteenth, and