

**STATESMAN EDITION,
VOL. XVI;
CHARLES SUMNER;
HIS COMPLETE WORKS**

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Statesman Edition, Vol. XVI; Charles Sumner; His Complete Works by Charles Sumner & George Frisbie Hoar

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CHARLES SUMNER & GEORGE FRISBIE HOAR

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EQUAL RIGHTS, WHETHER POLITICAL OR CIVIL, BY ACT OF CONGRESS.

LETTER TO THE BORDER STATE CONVENTION AT BALTIMORE, SEP-
TEMBER 8, 1867.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1867. Tennessee, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia were fully represented in what was called "the Border State Convention," which assembled in the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore. The object, in the language of the call, was "to advance the cause of manhood suffrage, and to demand of Congress the passage of the Sumner-Wilson bill." The following letter from Mr. Sumner was read to the Convention.

BOSTON, September 8, 1867.

DEAR SIR,—I shall not be able to be with you at your Convention in Baltimore, according to the invitation with which you have honored me. I ask you to accept my best wishes.

Congress will leave undone what it ought to do, if it fails to provide promptly for the establishment of Equal Rights, whether political or civil, everywhere throughout the Union. This is a solemn duty, not to be shirked or postponed.

The idea is intolerable, that any State, under any pretension of State Rights, can set up a *political oligarchy* within its borders, and then call itself a republican government. I insist with all my soul that such

a government must be rejected, as inconsistent with the requirements of the Declaration of Independence.

Faithfully yours,

CHARLES SUMNER.

A letter from Hon. Henry Wilson stated: "At the last session I offered an amendment, on the 17th of July, allowing all, without distinction of color, to vote and hold office, making no distinction in rights or privileges."

ARE WE A NATION ?

ADDRESS BEFORE THE NEW YORK YOUNG MEN'S REPUBLICAN UNION,
AT THE COOPER INSTITUTE, TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 19, 1867.

And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, . . . and they shall be no more two nations, . . . Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions. — EZEKIEL, xxxvii. 22, 23.

In these days their union is so entire and perfect that they are not only joined together in bonds of friendship and alliance, but even make use of the same laws, the same weights, coins, and measures, the same magistrates, counsellors, and judges: so that the inhabitants of this whole tract of Greece seem in all respects to form but one single city, except only that they are not enclosed within the circuit of the same walls; in every other point, both through the whole republic and in every separate state, we find the most exact resemblance and conformity: — POLYBIUS, *General History*, tr. Hampton, (London, 1756,) Vol. I. pp. 147, 148.

We represent the people, —we are a Nation. To vote by States will keep up colonial distinctions. . . . The more a man aims at serving America, the more he serves his colony. I am not pleading the cause of Pennsylvania; I consider myself a citizen of America. —BENJAMIN RUSH, *Speech in the Continental Congress, July, 1776*: Baneroff, *History of the United States*, Vol. IX. p. 54.

It is my first wish to see the United States assume and merit the character of *one great Nation*, whose territory is divided into different States merely for more convenient government and the more easy and prompt administration of justice, —just as our several States are divided into counties and townships for the like purposes. Until this be done, the chain which holds us together will be too feeble to bear much opposition or exertion, and we shall be daily mortified by seeing the links of it giving way and calling for repair, one after another. —JOHN JAY, *Letter to John Lowell, May 10, 1785*: *Life*, by William Jay, Vol. I. p. 190.

He took this occasion to repeat, that, notwithstanding his solicitude to establish a National Government, he never would agree to abolish the State Governments or render them absolutely insignificant. They were as necessary as the General Government, and he would be equally careful to preserve them. —GEORGE MASON, *Speech in the Constitutional Convention, June 20, 1787*: *Debates*, *Madison Papers*, Vol. II. pp. 914, 915.