

**THE END OF THE
IRREPRESSIBLE
CONFLICT**

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The end of the irrepressible conflict by Anonymous .

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BY A

MERCHANT OF PHILADELPHIA

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

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1860.

The acknowledged leader of the Republican party, made not long ago, at Detroit, a great speech, in which he sought to elucidate the origin of the existing factious and sectional agitation throughout the United States, and in which he also gave his advice as to a proper remedy for that confessedly dangerous agitation. Mr. Seward conceives that during forty years past, we have steadily diverged from the ways of our forefathers; and that this divergence has now become so great, that we are fairly lost in mazes of error, and must, therefore, consult our national safety by a prompt return to old landmarks. He reviews the history of our country, and proves conclusively that, beginning with the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida, each successive addition to our territorial possessions has awakened a fresh and increasingly violent controversy as to the area of slavery—the very controversy that agitates the whole country at the present moment—and he then offers his counsel, and foreshadows the policy of his party in these words:

“My humble advice, then, fellow-citizens, is, that we return and re-establish the original policy of the nation, and henceforth hold, as we did in the beginning, that slavery is and must be only a purely local, temporary, and exceptional institution, confined within the slave States where it already exists, while freedom is the general, normal, enduring, and permanent condition of society within the jurisdiction, and under the authority, of the Constitution of the United States.”

The whole animus of the speech is, not that we have acquired territory too rapidly, but rather that we have given slavery a foothold in our several successive acquisitions. His summary of our consecutive errors, from the

time of the Missouri Compromise to the present exciting crisis, is therefore appropriately made in the following language :

" It was in 1820, then, that the national deviation began. We have continued ever since the divergent course so inconsiderately entered, until at last we have reached a point, where, amid confusion, bewilderment, and mutual recrimination, it seems alike impossible to go forward or to return. We have added territory after territory, and region after region with the customary boldness of feebly resisted conquerors, not merely neglecting to keep slavery out of our new possessions, but actually removing all the barriers against it which we found standing at the time of the conquest. In doing this we have defied the moral opinions of mankind, overturned the laws and systems of our fathers, and dishonored their memories by declaring that the unequalled and glorious Constitution which they gave us, carries with it, as it attends our eagles, not freedom and personal rights to the oppressed, but slavery and a hateful and baleful commerce in slaves, wherever we win a conquest by sea or land over the whole habitable globe."

Mr. Seward's speech is quite long, but almost the whole pith and marrow of it may be found in the extracts above given.

It is a singular fact that all the parties which have made nominations for the next presidential term, *favor the acquisition of more territory*. Both sections of the Democratic forces boldly avow such acquisition to be a leading object in their policy. The nominees of the "Constitutional Union" party cannot have strength, without the support of Democrats of the conservative order; and therefore they acknowledge that they also favor moderate and well-timed enlargements of territory. Indeed, they cannot profess any other policy, unless Mr. Everett is willing to repudiate, or disavow the sentiments of the famous post-official letter which he addressed, some years ago, to Lord John Russell, in regard to Cuba as a necessary eventual possession of the

United States. And then again, if we turn to the well-considered Detroit doctrines of Mr. Seward we find that he says: "In this view I regard it as belonging to the office of a statesman not merely to favor an immediate and temporary increase of national wealth, *and an enlargement of national territory;*" from which language it is plain that *enlargement of territory* is a part, although not by any means the whole, of the policy of the Republican party.

Mr. Seward is certainly sanguine as to the increase of our population, and our consequent need of enlarged domain, under the benign influence of free-soil doctrines; for he subsequently says, in the prophetic grandeur of far-sighted statesmanship: "There is not one acre too much in our broad domain for the supply of even three generations of our *free population*, with their certain increase;" and then, after a brief intimation that for such exceeding "certain increase" he relies in part on immigration, he draws the sweeping conclusion: "Certainly, therefore, we have no need and no room for African slaves in the federal territories."

Now we happen to be of the number of those who have much more faith in the indications of Divine Providence, than we have in the prophetic suggestions of Mr. Seward; and we look at the African question in manner following:

During our days of colonial vassalage, our British brethren saw fit, notwithstanding our deprecations and remonstrances, to encourage the importation of negro slaves into America. Mr. Seward very charitably considers this high-handed proceeding of our trans-Atlantic rulers to have been a voluntary movement of the colonists themselves, to procure an adequate supply of laborers; and, he adds in extenuation of that British slave-trade, to which we owe our present four millions of slaves, these remarkable words:

"It was then thought an exercise of Christian benevolence to rescue the African heathen from eternal suffering in a future state, and through the painful path of earthly bondage to open to him the gates of the celestial paradise."

In this view, it was certainly the highest philanthropy,

and not cupidity, nor lawless violence, that transplanted from Africa to America a portion of the negro race.

Not so thought our revolutionary forefathers. Some of them had visited Great Britain—not, however, so pleasantly as the Swards and Sumners of our day have done, nor to be honored and feasted, as progressive men on the question of freedom for all the negroes in North America. They went on a vastly different errand, and they were received in a very different way. They went to complain of infraction of rights, and to ask redress of grievances. They spoke bitterly of exactions of money from the colonists, of troops quartered amongst them, *of African slaves thrust upon them*; but their remonstrances were rejected, their supplications were disregarded, and they were spurned with contempt from the foot of the throne. It is remarkable that their prejudices were so strong, and their tempers so violent, that they failed altogether to suggest or even to allow that charitable view of the British slave trade which the great Republican expositor of the present presidential canvass has presented. It is quite probable that they were equally misguided by passion in regard to other alleged grievances. We live in an age of progress, and may soon come to be assured by one of our countrymen, that British duties on teas, together with sundry other taxes imposed before 1776, were wholesome checks by the mother country upon colonial extravagance; and that those mercenary troops, about which our forefathers made so much ado, were only an efficient police suitable to an obviously riotous population.

In spite, however, of such possible progress of our chief statesmen in "Anglomania," we commit ourselves to unqualified approbation of our forefathers. They would not submit to coercion by a distant power which ignored their rights. They detested taxes; they detested soldiers; they detested the slave trade. They were nobles and patriots of the highest stamp; men competent to subdue a wilderness, and competent also to repel all intruders on the soil so subdued; and we marvel greatly when we hear any of our coun-

trymen instituting any sort of comparison between them and the Italians and Hungarians, or other effeminate and mercenary patriots of the present day.

But our forefathers were not prophets, nor authoritative interpreters of the designs of Divine Providence in respect to the African race; and therefore, although they generally deprecated the extension of slavery beyond the limits of the original thirteen States, we may reverently and safely disregard their *opinions* on this point. Those opinions were simply the sincere, but premature, reasonings of great and good men who had, as it were, seen Joseph sold into bondage, but who did not know that "God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." As yet, cotton was not in America; and the men of that day were therefore sorely perplexed to divine a hopeful future for a transplanted race, which multiplied so rapidly and was so full of tropical indolence that it could not be self-supporting on the common husbandry of temperate latitudes. That race now outnumbers considerably the three millions of colonists who declared themselves independent of Great Britain in 1776. For each man, woman and child of that race, within the bounds of our greatly enlarged United States, a bale of cotton is annually produced; and the bales of cotton which we export annually average more than half of the whole surplus products or exportable wealth of the Union. Upon that export of cotton repose mainly our shipping interests, our foreign exchanges, our national credit throughout the world. We have a raw material, which African fingers gather, and with which the manufacturing masses of Europe cannot dispense. And we are happy to add, that the condition of our Africans, although they be called slaves, is vastly better than that of an equal number of the laboring population of any part of Europe, although these last be called freemen. And when we speak thus, we admit no exception nor reservation in favor of Great Britain and Ireland; nor, on the other hand, are we insensible of the noble efforts which great and good

men have made during thirty years past, and are still making, for the improvement of the condition of the masses of the United Kingdom. But serf-like poverty is not easily remedied by legislation; and the American, who cannot go abroad and see for himself, may easily read at home enough to convince him of the social misery of "merry England." The English newspapers of the past summer tell us that peers of the realm have expressed grave apprehensions that a population armed against France may easily become an intestine danger to Great Britain herself, and that Mr. Bright has avowed his conviction that a continuance of oppressive taxation may goad the people into the subversion of a monarchy and an aristocracy which are too expensive to be compatible with the comfortable subsistence of the laboring masses. The holders of such language may be, and probably, nay, almost certainly are, extremists; but still there must be vast social misery, vast personal degradation, *great family resemblance to slavery*, in a *free population* of which such things are said, by men who are not only of sound mind and discretion, but high in public confidence, and elevated by wealth above the platform on which the demagogue stands to prepare the hearts of the people for revolution.

And do we not all remember the Chartists' great and solemn procession, and the Iron Duke's great and wise precautions against riot and insurrection? And what has been done by England, since the days of the monster petition, to enrich her suffering masses, or at least to free them from that oppressive, enslaving poverty which maddens man and debases woman? Go to London. Visit Exeter Hall on the occasion of an annual jubilee for West India emancipation. Listen to British eloquence on the ruthless separation of man and wife under legalized sales of negroes in the Southern States of our confederation. Enquire of the orator why husbands and wives are likewise separated in British work-houses; he will inform you, that it is a *necessary part* of a great system for the public good. Listen to him, whilst he