

# The Orphans' Friend.

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## ELOQUENT EXTRACTS FROM GEN. RANSOM'S SPEECH IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

For nearly three years I have sat silently in this Chamber, with the hope that by pursuing a course, as I thought, of impartial and patriotic duty toward all and every part of the country, I might have some influence in satisfying northern Senators that the South desired peace with the North and a restored and fraternal Union of all the States of the Republic. I came from the true State of North Carolina to the Senate of the United States with a sacred purpose to reconcile differences and disputes, to bury in oblivion every bitter recollection of war, and to convince the people of the North that our people of the South sincerely desired to live with them in concord under the common protection of a constitutional and united Government. Before this greatest and best desire of my life, the desire of having a part in restoring the Union of the States firmly in the hearts of all our people, all other passions sank into insignificance. This was the great object of my political existence. To accomplish it, no sacrifice seemed too dear, except the dishonor of my State and the South. I knew this inestimable blessing to my country could only be consummated by our doing full justice to the North and by the North doing full justice to us, and I had faith that both sections would be equal to that great duty. If this faith was right, I saw for my country the grandest destiny upon earth; if it was false, I beheld in the future nothing but appalling darkness. For, unless this Union is based upon the foundations of justice and the affections of all the people, nothing but force can maintain it; and a Union habitually supported by force ceases to be a free government and becomes a despotism, the stronger and the sterner in proportion to the extent of territory and the magnitude of the interests it dominates. I had, too, and still have, this thought, one that to many of you may appear strange and unnatural, but still sincere and true and ardently cultivated in my bosom, that as I had fought for the South and its cause had failed and the Union had been established, it became me as a true man to render to the Government of my country, now embraced by me, the same devotion—for I could have no greater—that I had exhibited to the South.

With these sentiments, Mr. President, I took the oath of office on the right of the chair which you now occupy. With any others in my breast I never would have taken a seat in this Chamber. I felt the pride of a man when these thoughts stirred within me. I knew that they did not lessen in any sense my duty, my love, my very soul for the people of the South. I felt that these sentiments were compatible with their highest honor, and that in entertaining and acting upon them here, I but represented their own generous and patriotic sensibility. I knew we had passed a dark and stormy night, but I also

knew that political justice was the great element which, like the sun in the morning, would dispel from the hearts of our people every cloud and memory of the tempest.

With these convictions I have thought most anxiously, day and night, upon my duty since the commencement of this debate. It is true I have had no doubt at any time—I could not possibly have a doubt—as to the character of the events that have transpired at New Orleans. Unless the lessons of human history and the principles of free government had been suddenly eclipsed in my judgment, I could have on that subject but one opinion. But my anxiety has been in reference to the right course for me to pursue in meeting the issues that have arisen in this discussion. I have considered that subject with the deepest concern. I have devoted to it the best thought I possess. I have brought to it as pure patriotism as I can feel, and I am profoundly thankful that a paramount regard for the purposes which I have declared to animate me as a Senator imperatively commands me not to depart a hair's breadth from the line of those purposes in consequence of any of the provocations given in this discussion. Acting under this high duty, I feel that I owe it to the noble State that honors me with her confidence, to the people of the South who have my sympathy and affection, and to the country at whose altars I minister, to surrender the natural and just resentments excited by unprovoked assaults of a personal and sectional character, as another offering to the peace of my country, and to speak this day without passion or prejudice for the safety and honor of the nation. Yes, sir, I am thankful, profoundly thankful that my wish for harmony is too deeply cherished, my resolution to reconcile and restore too firmly fixed, to be shaken by unjust utterances here or elsewhere.

I do not intend to irritate or to give offense in what I shall say here. If any person thinks so he mistakes me. I wish to pour oil on these troubled waters. I desire to heal these wounds. I seek to cure this malady. I do not intend to aggravate or continue it. I am speaking to-day with all the solemnity of a man who defends a great people, and if I should utter one word that might retard, or prevent, or in any way hinder a thorough reconciliation between the sections, I should deplore the day that I was born. I ask Senators now to think with me on this question. It has been a custom in this Senate—which is the most deliberate, the most courteous, the most refined, the most exalted legislative body upon the earth, where every propriety of speech, every courtesy of manner, every sentiment of duty is strictly observed, where Senators are tender of the feelings of brother Senators—to speak of the southern people as traitors, as red-handed murderers, as stained with barbarism, as having attempted the darkest and the bloodiest horror in human history. Senators, it is but just to

you for me to say that when you so speak you do not utter your own convictions. You are obliged to say you do not in justice to yourselves. For if you think that the southern people, eight millions of them, the leaders of them, are traitors, murderers, and assassins, how dare you, in the light of your duty to your country, to your families, and to your God, consent to embrace them as countrymen and brothers? You did not believe it; you do not believe it. You know you do not believe it.

Perhaps there is something in the history of this southern people that justifies this frightful suspicion and fills the minds of Senators with alarm and dread. That cannot be. For they are the children of the brave English ancestors who for love of civil and religious liberty left the shores of Europe and settled the New World. They are the immediate descendants of the bold and wise men who helped to establish American independence and to frame this grand and magnificent Government. Their illustrious fathers have certainly handed down to them the passion for liberty and the principle of constitutional freedom. We have inherited it for eight hundred years from our ancestors; but those ancestors have not transmitted any taint of or example for secret treasons. In the English heart the spirit of conspiracy never found a congenial home. It is the growth of other soils. But have not recent events, you will say, furnished reasonable grounds for these apprehensions of a secret colossal organization hostile to the Government? Has not the South just emerged from a gigantic war which menaced the very existence of the Union? That is very true; but remember that it was open, bold, defiant war—threatened for years, proclaimed here, published to the world; declared by the press, from the pulpit, and the hustings; the opinion of mankind and the blessings of Heaven invoked in its behalf, and the lives of a people offered to vindicate its justice. It was no concealed, hidden, mysterious, masked conspiracy. Had it been, never, never could it have enlisted the devoted hearts of the noble people who sacrificed everything but honor around its shrine. Its purposes were spoken here; they were never concealed or denied. Its councils were in the light of heaven. Its lines of battle stretched across the continent. Brave hearts in broad day were its defenses, and around it clustered the hopes and pride of a pure and patriotic people. Are courage, truth, honor, constancy, fortitude, and unswerving virtue evidences that the people who possess them will descend from that high estate, and, forgetful of all duty, resort to the lowest practices of cowardice and crime? If this be true, human character is indeed worthless, national honor a mockery and an imposture.

Mr. President, is this hostility between the sections never to cease? Is the temple of Janus never to be closed? Will not a war which cost so much precious blood, so much dear-bought treas-

ure, suffice for this insatiate passion? Have we not had suffering enough? What other sacrifice is necessary to appease this mad demon, this gory Moloch of hate? Are more priceless offerings yet to be burned on his altars before peace will come? Will nothing appease this destructive god of discord but the ruin, the overthrow of free government, and the perpetual misery and strife of this great people? Is this war, this feud, to last between the sections forever? Is there nothing that will stop its fury, nothing that will quell its flames, nothing that will allay the wild winds that fan its fires? It has not been quenched in blood, it has not been exhausted in desolation; the distress, agony, and sorrow of eight millions of people have not softened its angry spirit; ten years of bitter anguish have but exasperated its malignant heat. It is here to-day in unabated fierceness, spreading dismay and baleful shadows over all the land. Is there no exorcism for this hateful fiend of dissension? No calm, quiet spirit to walk on the bitter waters of sectional strife and bid them be still?

Senators, the highest and holiest motives that ever inspired the breasts of mortals should impel us here on this floor to compose this question forever and give peace and repose to the entire country. The South demands it to secure and restore her wasted fortunes, and to educate her people, and to give them comfort and material life. The North requires it that she may have a market for her products and a great support in all times of distress from whatever cause or quarter it may come. Both need it for their mutual safety, happiness, honor, and existence. It is our duty to settle this disturbing and harassing difference. We cannot escape it; we cannot leave it to time; we cannot trifle and palter with it. It involves the life of the nation, the happiness of millions, the fate of free government on the earth. If we are not equal to the great event, if we have not the ability and patriotism to discharge it, if we are not able to accomplish this the first object of our office, let us at least have the manly courage to acknowledge our weakness and bravely surrender our places to those who are superior to our infirmities, and who can and will march up to the line of this high duty and wisely and nobly perform it. We can at least do that; and if we can render no other or better service to our country, we ought certainly to be men and give way to those who can.

The great father of our country, in his farewell address, the last words he spoke to the nation, warned us against these sectional lines and divisions. We did not heed that paternal warning. Disobedience to it brought us innumerable woes, and there is but one road back to a condition of peace, prosperity, and liberty. That road was marked out by the founders of the Republic, and unless it be faithfully followed, we will wander off into a wild career of uncertainty and tumult, ending finally, where all the other free governments have ended, in despot-

ism. Remember the civil wars of the Grecian republics were soon followed by the Roman, along the same road, from freedom. The wars between Athens and Sparta, between Sparta and Bœotia, between first two and finally all the free states of Attica, left Greece an easy victim for Philip. Their dissensions, their wars, their factions broke down the Spirit of liberty, and the Greeks who, when united, made Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea immortal, succumbed, when divided, to Macedonia, almost without a struggle, forever obliterated their greatness and their liberties. Heaven forbid that we should repeat their melancholy examples.

Mr. President, are we to revive here the strifes of the unhappy years that preceded the war? Are these noble Halls, dedicated to human liberty, to become arenas for the exhibition of mad passions? Is the genius, the courage, the resistless energy of this wonderful people to be perverted and wasted here in angry controversy, mutual crimination and re-crimination, in wicked, blind efforts to pull down and destroy the great sections of the Union? Are all the powers of our minds and the forces of our hearts to be forever enlisted in the execrable attempt to destroy and degrade the character of sister States? Is discord to reign here forever? Senators, the terrible calamities of such a course cannot be doubted. I will not even dare to foresee or predict them. I will simply say how much nobler, grander, wiser would we be if we would unite all our faculties; our hopes, our purposes, our aims, our efforts in the works of pacifying all our conflicts, reforming our errors, improving our institutions, and giving stability, beauty, and beneficence to our Government.

Then, Senators, in the name of our great forefathers who for civil and religious liberty braved the ocean, the tempest, the forest, and the savages to rescue freedom from its fate in Europe and plant it in this new world; by the memory of those patriots who one hundred years ago gave their blood and treasure like water to establish our independence; by the names of those who have fallen on every field from Lexington to Appomattox, let us be friends, countrymen, brothers. I invoke the senator of Massachusetts by the memory of North Carolina's successor in her darkest hour: I invoke the Senators from New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware by the memories of their united struggles with Virginia, Carolinas, and Georgia; I invoke the Senators from every State—from the great daughters of Virginia and North Carolina, from those mighty Commonwealths that sprang from the Louisiana purchase by Jefferson and were saved by the valor and patriotism of southern men under Jackson—I invoke all this day and this hour to gather around the family altars and end forever and forever this fratricidal strife. And we shall rear upon the ruins of our errors and follies, over the prejudices, passions, and hates of the past a grander and nobler temple of wis-

(Continued on fourth page.)