

each other. Such accidents are worse than accidents for persons should never trifle so with fire-arms. Sometimes sad and sometimes funny incidents occur in our streets as on all other streets, to wit: coming home late this evening, I was attracted by the sound of a voice at a certain corner. There were two persons. One was a little duck-legged liquor-seller—the other a long-legged liquor drinker. The one spoke words of enmity, the other words of lamentation. The little fellow's whisky had become so strong that he could not get up—his legs were so heavy. The long fellow was up and feeling his groggy arms about his comrade, tried very hard to raise him up to go. But the little fellow was too small. Poor little fellow! He really seemed to be sorry for the drunken man. I really believe the little fellow has some little slight, shadowy sort of kindness left if he does sell whisky to soldiers. Another scene? A cold day—rainy day—a damp night—the railroad shed—soldiers' wives—infants in their arms—children around their knees—all of them shivering—mother and children preparing to suffer or perhaps to die. Why is this? It is because they love their husbands and their husbands love them. But in this case neither one loved wisely. So much traveling by such persons leads to inconvenience, suffering, disease, shocking prostitution—A few truthful chapters about some of these travelling women would surprise their home friends and break their husbands' hearts. Let them stay at home. It is far better. But my letter is long enough.

ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR VANCE, ON THE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY. DELIVERED AT WILKESBORO, N. C., FEBRUARY 22d, 1864.

[A SHORT-HAND REPORT, BY G. CLIFTON STEDMAN.]

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

I do not know how it is possible for me to make myself heard by this large audience, unless I adopt the plan of the one-armed soldier who could not hug his sweetheart all the way around, and so was forced to chalk the distance he could reach on one side, and then turn and hug as far as the other. (Laughter.) It is scarcely possible for me to tell you, fellow-citizens, what my feelings are on once more visiting the people of Wilkes county. I well remember, and perhaps some of you do likewise the first time I ever made my appearance before you. In the summer of '58, a stranger, a boy in years and experience came among you seeking one of the highest offices within your gift; having nothing in the world to recommend him—you having never even heard of his name before. Yet I was so fortunate in making a favorable impression upon you, that you took me up, and from that day to this have never failed to heap honors upon my head. I would be worse than ungrateful, especially when I have this assembly to-day a witness to the fact that I am still remembered by the people of Wilkes county, if I were not devoted to your interest—say, if I were not willing to lay down my life for you. May God bless you, fellow-citizens, for your kindness to me. It affords me great pleasure indeed to meet so large an assembly from this and adjoining counties. I rejoice to know that even in the midst of a great and desolating war, the people in such large number, can yet leave their homes and business to listen to one speak upon the condition of their public affairs, aside from the gratification of the personal compliment you pay me, as expressed by the large audience that honors me with its presence and attention. I shall endeavor to justify both the public interest you display and the compliment you bestow, by to-day doing something which is very rare in a politician—by telling the truth.

Why have you fellow-citizens, invited me to speak to you on this natal day of the great Washington? What is it you want? Of course you desire to hear about the condition of the country. Of course you want the plain, unadorned, undigested facts; not that which would be most pleasing to you, but that which is true. Most likely you would be unable to find a demagogue who could comply with this requirement, because with him the habit of telling the people that which flatters their vanity, and carefully avoiding any painful truth which might shock their tender sensibilities, has grown into a second nature from which we may anticipate no substantial food for the body politic, such as these trying times imperatively demand. In an hour like this, and on such an occasion as the present, especially is it of the most profound importance that no considerations should influence, save those affecting your deepest and most lasting interests. I am not so hypocritical as to boast that in all my past career I have never once talked "in soft nonsense" to the "dear people." On the contrary, I am free to confess that otherwise I would not have been such a successful suitor for political favors. (Laughter.) But I flatter myself I have preserved enough honor and candor to prevent me, when so urgent a necessity requires it, from telling that which is most true in preference to what is most pleasing, and from trifling with the destinies of my country. I esteem myself very fortunate in having saved so much as this from the breakers whereon so many crafts go to pieces in the yeasty waves of political life. Indeed I may say I am as lucky as Paddy Maguire, an old acquaintance of my friend, Judge H—, who, in reply to the friendly inquiry of the latter, how he got on exclaimed, "Well may I place my honor, I've been upon yer, State docket, an' bin drank, an' got a floggin' at the whippin' post since ye was here; but thanks be to the Virgin, amid all me wickedness and rascality I've

preserved me religin' intire." (Laughter.)—And to avoid all my political shortcomings I have preserved honesty enough, I hope, to tell you what I conceive to be true about the condition of the country, the aspect of its civil and military affairs, the prospects of the future, and the duties that devolve upon us and demand our energy and endurance to the successful accomplishment of the work before us.

A people who have been afflicted as you have been afflicted; a people who suffer as you suffer; a people whose gallant boys have been slaughtered as your sons have fallen on the battle field; whose daughters now languish in Northern prisons; wives, whose husbands are waiting in fitful camps the weary weeks of listless inactivity, while the weeds choke the scanty harvest, and the children pine for the presence and support of their natural protectors; old men, who, in feverish anxiety await intelligence which each succeeding mail may bring of the slaughter of their pride and support of their declining years—all are liable to much out, with the spirit of a drowning man, to grasp any passing straw, which for the moment, may keep their heads above the roaring flood, losing sight meanwhile of the firm, perhaps the distant shore, which with calm, determined and persistent effort they will assuredly enable them to attain.

In consequence of this continued suffering which experience had not prepared the people to endure with the fortitude possessed by some nations who have been unwarred to the shock of arms, a certain discontent has pervaded and a funeral gloom hangs over the community, engendering, if we credit a wide rumor throughout the State, a notion that we must have a Convention—that we must secede from the Southern Confederacy; that we must repudiate the whole thing, and go back and do our first work over again.

Now, permit me to ask you what it was that got you into this scrape? Why, you all know it was the fact of your secession in the first instance.

Suppose you were sick of typhoid fever and had had been close to death's door; and becoming convalescent, the physician should gravely inform you that the only plan to effect your entire recovery would be to take another spell of the infernal fever! Would you not think he was a fool? (Laughter.) Or suppose a surgeon should say to a soldier with a ball in his leg: "My dear fellow, I don't see how it is possible for you to obtain relief, unless I call for a musket and put another one in the other leg."—That would be curious surgery, would it not? Would a system based on the same principle be less absurd, when applied to the healing of the body politic?

Secession was tried after it had been considered for a period of forty years, and the whole country understood it as completely as an abstraction could be understood. We were promised it should be peaceable. What is the result? Why, it has been everything else. It has involved us in a war that has no parallel upon the pages of history. Do you expect to find a remedy by a repetition of the dose that brought you to bed? You will pardon me for a funny illustration of so serious a subject, but I am somewhat like the old lady, who, in company with her "old man" used to visit a country store kept by one Major Smith (as there are no Majors and no Smiths in this section, there is no danger of identifying him). The Major kept some fine samples of wet goods in the cellar, to which he treated his customers before displaying his dry goods up stairs; for he knew, as you do, that a man in a certain state of exhalation imagines he can buy two or three counties, to say nothing of goods and groceries. (Laughter.) And the afore-said old couple were about the best customers he had. On one occasion, after repeatedly going back and forth to the cellar, they got to such a good humor, that when they started home the Major could barely fit them in the saddle—the old lady behind in the good old-fashioned style. She was in ecstasies with the Major. He was "the finest work-keeper she ever see in all her born days. Bless that Major, what nice samples he does put up to be sure, and how he sweetens!" Grappling the old man with one hand and jestulating with the other, she proceeded to expatiate on the Major's charming qualities, until they came to a branch, up the opposite bank of which the old man managed to ride, while the old lady unconsciously slipped off quietly into the stream. The old fellow rode some distance before he discovered he had lost something, and rode back to the stream when he ascertained what it was. There she lay in the branch, flat on her back, and had jammed up the water until it had just begun to run into the corners of her mouth. She imagined she was in the cellar, talking to the Major, and "sampling," rolling her eyes, purring up her mouth, she would say every now and then, "not any more I thank you Major," "not another drop Major, unless it is sweetened." (Continued laughter.)—Just so with your number of votes in regard to secession.—Not another drop, Major, if you please, sweetened or not sweetened. (Laughter and applause.)

Our destinies, my fellow-citizens, have now been joined to another government; and although, as you all know, I regretted to go out of the former government, and was one of the last to lay it down, with the same momentary feelings with which I followed my dear father to the grave, I never expected, and do not now expect to see it resurrected again.

Our Convention, composed of delegates from the people, by the most solemn ties that can bind an honorable people to a cause, have pledged their aid to its support. May God aid us in the fulfillment of this obligation in the future as in the past to the letter. The act was a deliberate expression of public sentiment, though it may have been wrong. The government we selected is ours, as much so as our children. The spirit of patriotism is akin to the love of our offspring which God has implanted in us to the highest, holiest sentiment of humanity. A man should love his home if for nothing else but because it shelters him; he should love his wife if for no other reason than because she is his wife; he should love his State because it is his, a part as it were, of his being; he should love his country, right or

wrong, when in the midst of clashing events, he cannot take time to examine all aspects of the question, because in its destiny are involved the welfare of State, community, home, wife, children, self. But if you have no other reason to give for defending it, say you do so because it is your country.

Now, gentlemen, I desire to present you all the various aspects of this question. You have placed me in a position which enables me to gather from sources of information beyond the reach of the public generally, facts which are necessary for a solution of the difficulties and problems which agitate your mind, and if you will only have charity enough to believe that I am honest in what I say, possibly you may, on retiring, be able to quote the passage of scripture: "It was good for me to be here."

Now what is it you desire above all other present earthly good?—Peace?—Peace?—Peace?—We all want peace. I know you do. Every body wants peace. Peace, blessed peace! Why, the man who does not desire peace is unworthy of existence. Peace. It is one of the highest and holiest attributes of Deity, so much so that our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, was called the Prince of Peace. The great Apostle Paul said of the highest character of peace, the peace of God, that "it passeth all understanding." Now if you really want peace, this great blessing to repose upon our bleeding country, your sons to return from the battle field and take their positions again in the family circle, commerce and agriculture to resume their beneficent ways, the sword to be thrust into the plowshare and industry to instruct her magic wand over the war beaten fields till they bloom as a garden, I suppose, as reasonable men, you are willing to take the best plan to insure this consummation so devoutly wished. Which is the best plan?

A Convention is proposed by some. I have no objection to make of those who are moving this question. They are as sound men, no doubt, as I am, as you are, as anybody; they are my friends, but I think it is wrong. Suppose you call a Convention, without any design it shall put the State out of the Confederacy. You merely call it with the hope that it may be able to make some proposition for peace, or accomplish some result in the direction of peace, that the Legislature or the Executive are unable to bring about. Suppose you call a Convention for this purpose. You elect your delegates, and the first thing they do on taking their seats is to swear, on the Holy Evangelists, to support the Constitution of the Confederacy. Now, having done that, we take it for granted that they, as honorable men, will keep that oath. What does that Constitution say? Why, in article 1, sec. 2, it reads as follows: "No State shall enter into any treaty, alliance or confederation." And in article 2, section 11 it says: "The President shall have power by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senate concur." Now you see that the Constitution your delegates have sworn to support, expressly provides that the power to declare war and to make peace shall be vested in the President and Senate of the Confederacy; and the moment one of your delegates make a proposition or offers a treaty of any kind to the enemies of his country, he is a traitor by the law and his own sworn oath. (Applause.)—That is so, not because I say it, but because it is written in the Constitution we have all agreed to support. If you do not intend to instruct your delegates to take your State out of the Confederacy, you see, from this aspect of the question, your Convention assembled can do nothing more towards realizing the end in view than your Legislature or your Governor can accomplish. It can't turn a wheel.

Well, suppose you go a little further and say you will instruct your delegates to take the State out of the Confederacy, because when it is out it is relieved from the obligations of the Constitution and upon a separate and independent basis. Supposing also, that it is not your design to join the United States government again, but only to go out as an independent sovereignty, for the purpose of securing peace to yourself, and possibly effecting the same desirable end for all parties. Well, you pass an ordinance of secession—take another oath of this political bareheadedness—and making I know of a more bitter unless it is a honest deception. (Laughter.)—and set up for yourselves. Is that going to give you peace? Will that restore your sons and fathers to their homes? Will that hush the cry of the orphan and dry the widow's tears? Will that fill your land with plenty and prosperity? So far from it, I can assure you, my fellow-citizens, it will involve you in a new war, a bloodier conflict than that you now deplore. "But," you may say, "Mr. Davis and his government will not dare to make war on a seceding State, because the right of secession is recognized in the Constitution of the Confederacy. So it is, my friend; but you see, by that time you have thrown off that Constitution, you have gotten from under its obligations and what you would have nothing to do with it. Do you expect the Confederacy to be bound by a document you refuse to recognize as affecting yourselves? So soon as you announce to the world you are a sovereign and independent nation, as a matter of course the Confederacy has the right of declaring war against you, for sufficient cause, equally with the right she holds of declaring war against England, France or Holland. This right is inherent in all sovereignties.

But what would Uncle Abraham say to it—that old gentleman whose personal pulchritude has been the subject of so much remark? (Laughter.) and who, they say, can tell more bad jokes than I can. (Laughter.) How would he receive the intelligence that North Carolina had seceded from the Confederacy and set up for herself. He would put his thumb up to his nose and make certain gyrations and evolutions with his finger, and say: "Wah ole North Carolina! I'm tarnation glad ter see yer come outter Jeff Davis' little corner. I s'pose, but yer don't mean to go for to say yer ain't in the Union agin, and under the protection of the best government the world ever saw? Bin s'pin' yer too long to let yer sneak out that way." (Continued laughter and applause.)

Why of course if such a proceeding on the part of North Carolina would secure her independence, it would only be necessary for the State to secede at a time yet herself unprepared, and after all was over, turn round and form such a Confederacy as best pleased them. Old Abraham is fighting as not because we are a part of the Southern Confederacy, but because we are in rebellion to the Old Union; and so long as we refused obedience to the Union he would continue to fight us. The idea that Lincoln would recognize us or shake his claim to allegiance and obedience is preposterous. Well, would the Southern Confederacy recognize your independence and make a treaty of peace with you? This is entirely owing to contingencies. If you went out of the Confederacy and declared yourself independent, you would have to sustain and enforce your position of neutrality with reference to the other belligerents, or they would be at war with you. How could you possibly sustain neutrality when arms are announced? The only real communication between the armies of Gen. Lee and Gen. Johnston, between Virginia and the remainder of the Confederacy, is through North Carolina. You don't suppose we could, as a neutral State, permit the Government at Richmond to communicate across our territory with its Northwestern armies? Gen. Lee and some of his veterans draw their wages from the railroads—the very arteries of the Confederacy—and if any body who interferes with him—and so you have two wars on foot of one! There is another consideration involved in a great portion of the propositions that Gen. Lee's army are engaged in North Carolina. As a neutral State could not sell them, and he would be forced to have them, it is not difficult to foresee how speedily North Carolina would become the seat of war. Moreover, his troops would say: these fellows have barely abandoned us, left us in our fire, and don't deserve our mercy. Old Abe would send his troops here also, because we would no longer be neutral, and so, if you will pardon the expression, we would catch the devil on all sides.

Suppose your State should secede from the Confederacy, what would become of your soldiers in the army? Some would ramble and come home, no doubt; but the mass of them who have followed that old battle flag through smoke and fire, into the presence of death and viewed its bloody folds upon the heights of all hundred fields of triumph, and the cheer of victory that thrill an applauding world—do you suppose that they would trample it under foot and crawl upon their bellies and get dirt in that sort of style? Great applause. Who then would you have in defense of North Carolina? A few old men and rambling officers.

Suppose, as the last alternative for obtaining peace, your Convention should take the State out of the Confederacy and put into the arms of Lincoln. Just so soon as you entered into the old Union and swore to support that government, just so soon would you have imposed on you your share of the debt, taxes, burdens of the united States. Instead of the Confederate tax collector coming around to gather up Confederate currency, of which a must be confessed there is no great lack in the land the Federal agent comes among you demanding "green backs" and gold to assist in carrying on the war. Instead of getting your sons back to the plow and fire-side, they would be drafted and sent into the service of Uncle Sam, to fight alongside of his negro troops in exterminating the white men, women and children of the South. Is there anything very desirable about such a peace as that? Extend your suppositions into the domain of absurdity, and conceive of the North Carolina soldiers basely deserting their comrades in arms, in obedience to the proclamation of your Governor. Why gentlemen, they would not come home in peace to you. They would have to fight with their new friends, and would just cross from the Southern to the Northern side of the Rappahannock, and their rifles would be pointed at the bosoms of the brave men who have fought by their sides through the fierce fire of a three years war. Would that give you peace?

I think of three glorious North Carolina Regiments—you have seen them in the first flush of martial enthusiasm—you know them now unflinching, though sustained but by honor and duty; many of them filled with pure Southern Regiments that have followed the Northern Cross over so many fields already made classic by their prowess, and who have made and made the indelible impression upon admiration of their heroic achievements—should they be asked to fraternize with the miserable scoundrels who have slaughtered our people, devastated our homes, and even inflicted the crowning outrage which dishonors hell pale at our mothers and sisters; shall they be asked to join these wretches in despoiling the homes of the very men by whose sides they have so long fought and suffered? I know you would not think of the proposition. I think I can assure you to-day, with all candor and all honesty—as a dying man to dying men—in the presence of God—that any step of this kind you take will only involve you in a deeper and bloodier war. The calamities of war affect our people to a terrible degree, streams of tears are running down the cheeks of many a poor woman; eyes for bread come from many a suffering child. But let us trust that the God of battles who gave to our ancestors through seven long years, a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, will yet lead us into the land where grows the fragrance of liberty, richer than the spices of Eden, and through which flow the milk and honey of independence and nationality. (Applause.)

I have not, fellow-citizens, enumerated all the consequences which would follow immediate action on your part. What would become of the currency should you abandon the cause of the Southern Confederacy. It is bad enough already, but every bank in the State is filled with it, and would be broken and worthless to-morrow, in such an event. Widows, soldiers' families and orphan children have no other kind. Commercial and financial ruin, compared to which the present suffering on ac-

count of the depreciation of the currency, would be insignificant, would never harm you. It has already become the gallant soldiers who have been maimed and mutilated in the service—soldiers long-legged and maimed legs, maimed arms for labor. Having once submitted ourselves to the enemy, you might see one of these come up, his cheeks wan with suffering, his eyes staring in the breeze, his wasted form supported by crutches, and ask the government for support. The reply would be: "You soldiers' wives, have you the impudence to ask support from a government you have abandoned?"—and so it would go.

Let us not come to remember, that I will be concerned with the Old Union. We will be well as determined. We estimated such a peace as a peace inevitable, and we must all stand up to it—every man, woman and child; and through the length and breadth of the Southern Confederacy we must forget, if possible for awhile, the causes that led originally to this rebellion, and each man take upon himself the full measure of burden and responsibility, regardless of consequences. (Applause.)

But suppose, fellow-citizens, we could forget all these considerations of honor, glory, duty, and realize that we would see what terms we could get from the United States. What does the enemy offer you? You are well as a whole, but when a man will not make a bargain he makes everything just as sharing as he possibly can; he presents his goods in the best possible light, and says the most flattering things to induce you to accept his offer. Well, the same policy prevails in diplomacy. When an ambassador or diplomatist is trying to get another to accept a treaty or an alliance, or to make a proposition in the most plausible language he can, and presents the most advantageous terms he can possibly offer to induce negotiations. Possibly some of you know men who would do better for a friend than they promised to do, but I do not think the majority of you ever heard of them. Can any of you put your finger on a man who has done more for you than he bargained for? It is so hard to find men as the circle of your acquaintance, who in the name of Heaven, you will me of a Yankee who ever gave you more than he agreed to? (Applause.) The difficulty is to make him stand up to his bargain. (Applause.)

Now what does Mr. Lincoln propose the State of North Carolina? In what language does he clothe his gracious terms of pardon and amnesty? He says, if the result of the people of any State will take an oath to support—what? The Constitution? Nay, take an oath to support the proclamation abolishing slavery, his great mission during the slaves of your State to join your home and murder you and your families? If you agree to support this proclamation, you would prepare yourself, for it is an direct violation of that constitution, to you would know. Old Abe has prepared himself, and he wishes to put you in the same category of slavery. Not only must you swear to endorse his infamous document—a proposition by the entire of world—but you are also taken as such to support all the acts of Congress which have been passed, abolishing slavery, confiscating your property, placing you in subjection to one-fourth of the community and all policies existing your government, and every other from a Colonel up to Gen. Lee.

When the United States Congress last met, Lincoln was called upon, by the presence of public sentiment, to propose some terms of peace to the "rebels" of the South—to advance the greatest inducements that could be possibly proffered to secure their return to the Union; and after long consideration, and in the presence of the people of the North, in and out of Congress, the best proposition that could be offered, was to support one-tenth of the Southern community who would swear to assist in the confiscation of the property of the remaining nine-tenths, and five their lives, and hang every man who heavy hand elevated but above a certain rank, every man who was above any to place in civil office. What? Deliver up to the malignity of an unrestrained law at whose deeds, not in the face of our humane aims, and they, of by fear of retaliation, humanity is first with horror, the—a one billion whom our sons have followed through so many trying scenes, and who have made for us a power of glory, and independent as history's sample page "men with spots of time" has ever shuddered? (Prolonged Applause.)

Let me now say this is a fiery sketch. Do not say old Abe is doing that; that he will certainly do better than that. I pledge you my existence he would not do half so well. Do you not see how awful he is even, while offering us to fight. He wants to breed this very civil war which I am here to-day to warn you against. He wants to set up a government within the government of North Carolina, composed of one-tenth of her population. Our voting population is about one hundred thousand. They want to set up a government of ten thousand perjured scoundrels who are worthy to lick the dust of the feet of the poorest soldier in our army; and to support it with the bayonet, and to set the people to slaughtering each other. You are not fool enough to fall into that trap. You do not need my warning upon that subject, although I have given it.

What is to become of your negroes? There were four millions of them in the Southern Confederacy at the commencement of the war. They are all to be turned loose upon us if we consent to the only terms Mr. Lincoln offers. They cannot go to the North. I would almost be willing to send them to Massachusetts. (Laughter.) I think they would elevate the tone of an society very much. (Laughter.) Indeed I think every dollar sent from this country for nothing but negroes and straggling boys would be a missionary to that depraved and god-forsaken country. (Continued laughter.) But they would not receive them, for they are so determined on showing out any thing which might improve their moral condition and there-