

NEW SERIES

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SPEECH OF Hon. William A. Graham

On being called on to preside over the Conventual Convention of North Carolina, Feb. 6th, 1868.

Mr. Graham thanked the convention for the honor conferred in choosing him to preside over its proceedings.

No ordinary occasion, nothing but a firm conviction that the vital principles of free government, and the well being of our country, are in danger, has led me to consent to preside over this assembly...

There was no want of food for bitter animosities and unseemly feelings in the scene through which England had just passed...

has won, and are ready to point out whole legions for sacrifice, provided they themselves escape the doom of conscious guilt. It is, I think, not difficult to demonstrate, as I shall endeavor to do presently...

Gentlemen, our country has recently passed through a most bloody and desolating civil war. The struggle was one of the most gigantic in human history.

It is my sincere conviction, gentlemen, that the serious, if not fatal, disease with which our country is now afflicted, which says its recovery from the gaping wounds of war...

deed, (and, perhaps, were intended to produce) fresh and real offences, with varying objects and pretenses, were perpetrated, until the national mind became disgusted...

It is my sincere conviction, gentlemen, that the serious, if not fatal, disease with which our country is now afflicted, which says its recovery from the gaping wounds of war, and threatens the utter depletion and destruction of the section in which our lot is cast...

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overlooked. Treason, the greatest of crimes, is in that instrument found in the article establishing the Judicial department, with a definition of the offense and the quantum of evidence necessary for conviction...

There is no authority, but an inhibition in the constitution against it, for placing them under duress, or by the agency of the military, as an alternative to their surrendering their rights as citizens...

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with homicide, was tried before a Military Commission, and after its sentence, was sent to be confined in a State's prison in New York; upon the ground, that, in the year 1861, there was a civil government in South Carolina...

But it is said, that we are without the protection of the Constitution, and the enjoyment of the rights of citizens, because we have been conquered...

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his hours of relaxation and social intercourse, had declared an opinion, that those latter were so confined in the Constitution, a committee of the House of Representatives has been charged to inquire into the facts, and, if verified, to consider the question of its impeachment...

Gentlemen, what was there in the nature of the unfortunate struggle to perpetuate hatreds and animosities between the parties lately at war? It was a fair and manly fight, begun upon an alleged defence of a great interest, a property in slaves worth billions of treasure...

What gentleman, what followed next? The attempt at secession had been put down, and heavy losses to the conquering authority, it is true, but these were nothing in their effects...