THE

# UPRISING OF A GREAT PEOPLE.



## THE UNITED STATES IN 1861.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

## A WORD OF PEACE

ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

COUNT AGÉNOR DE GASPARIN.

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NEW AMERICAN EDITION,

FROM THE AUTHOR'S REVISED EDITION.

NEW YORK:
CHARLES SCRIBNER, 124 GRAND STREET.
1862.

# A GREAT PEOPLE RISING.



## INTRODUCTION.

The title of this work will produce the effect of a paradox. The general opinion is that the United States continued to pursue an upward course until the election of Mr. Lincoln, and that since then they have been declining. It is not difficult, and it is very necessary, to show that this opinion is absolutely false. Before the recent victory of the adversaries of slavery, the American Confederation, in spite of its external progress and its apparent prosperity, was suffering from a fearful malady which had well-nigh proved mortal; now, an operation has taken place, the sufferings have increased, the gravity of the situation is revealed for the first time, perhaps, to inattentive eyes. Does this mean that the situation was not grave when it did not appear so? Does this mean that we must deplore a violent crisis which alone can bring the cure?

I do not deplore it—I admire it. I recognize in this energetic reaction against the disease, the moral vigor of a people habituated to the laborious struggles of liberty. The rising of a people is one of the rarest and most marvellous prodigies presented by the annals of humanity. Ordinarily, nations that begin to decline, decline constantly more and more; a rare power of life is needed to retrieve their position, and stop in its course a decay once begun.

We have a strange way of seconding the generous enterprise into which the United States have entered with so much courage! We prophesy to them nothing but misfortunes; we almost tell them that they have ceased to exist; we give them to understand, that in electing Mr. Lincoln they have renounced their greatness; that they have precipitated themselves head foremost into an abyss; that they have ruined their prosperity, sacrificed their future, rendered henceforth impossible the magnificent character which was reserved to them. Mr. Buchanan, we seem to say, is the last President of the Union.

This, thank God, is the reverse of the truth. But lately, indeed, the United States were advancing to their ruin; but lately there was reason to



mourn in thinking of them; the steps might have been counted which it remained for them to take to complete the union of their destiny with that of an accursed and perishable institution—an institution which corrupts and destroys every thing with which it comes in contact. To-day, new prospects are opening to them; they will have to combat, to labor, to suffer; the crime of a century is not repaired in a day; the right path when long forsaken is not found again without effort; guilty traditions and old complicities are not broken through without sacrifices. It is none the less true, notwithstanding, that the hour of effort and of sacrifice, grievous as it may be, is the very hour of deliverance. The election of Mr. Lincoln will be one of the great dates of American history; it closes the past, but it opens the future. With it is about to commence, if the same spirit be maintained, and if excessive concessions do not succeed in undoing all that has been done, a new era, at once purer and greater than that which has just ended.

Let others accuse me of optimism; I willingly agree to it. I believe that optimism is often right here below. We need hope; we need sometimes to receive good news; we need to see sometimes the bright side of things. The bright side is often

the true side; if Love is blindfolded, I see a triple bandage on the eyes of Hate. Kindliness has its privileges; and I do not think myself in a worse position than another to judge the United States because they inspire me with an earnest sympathy; because, after having mourned their faults and trembled at their perils, I have joyfully saluted the noble and manly policy of which the election of Mr. Lincoln is the symptom. Is it not true, that at the first news we all seemed to breathe a whiff of pure and free air from the other side of the ocean?

It is a pleasure, in times like ours, to feel that certain principles still live; that they will be obeyed, cost what it may; that questions of conscience can yet sometimes weigh down questions of profit. The abolition of slavery will be, I have always thought, the principal conquest of the nineteenth century. This will be its recommendation in the eyes of posterity, and the chief compensation for many of its weaknesses. As for us old soldiers of emancipation, who have not ceased to combat for it for twenty years and more, at the tribunal and elsewhere, we shall be excused without doubt for seeing in the triumph of our American friends something else than a subject of lamentation.

# CHAPTER I.

## AMERICAN SLAVERY.

If they had not triumphed, do you know who would have gained the victory? Slavery is only a word—a vile word, doubtless, but to which we in time become habituated. To what do we not become habituated? We have stores of indulgence and indifference for the social iniquities which have found their way into the current of cotemporary civilization, and which can invoke prescription. So we have come to speak of American slavery with perfect sang froid. We are not, therefore, to stop at the word, but to go straight to the thing; and the thing is this:

Every day, in all the Southern States, families are sold at retail: the father to one, the mother to another, the son to a third, the young daughter to a fourth; and the father, the mother, the children, are scattered to the four winds of heaven; these

hearts are broken, these poor beings are given a prey to infamy and sorrow, these marriages are ruptured, and adulterous unions are formed twenty leagues, a hundred leagues away, in the bosom and with the assent of a Christian community. Every day, too, the domestic slave-trade carries on its work; merchants in human flesh ascend the Mississippi, to seek in the *producing* States wherewith to fill up the vacuum caused unceasingly by slavery in the *consuming* States; their ascent made, they scour the farms of Virginia or of Kentucky, buying here a boy, there a girl; and other hearts are torn, other families are dispersed, other nameless crimes are accomplished coolly, simply, legally: it is the necessary revenue of the one, it is the indispensable supply of the others. Must not the South live, and how dares any one travesty a fact so simple? by what right was penned that eloquent calumny called "Uncle Tom's Cabin"?

A calumny! I ask how any one would set to work to calumniate the customs which I have just described. Say, then, that the laws of the South are a calumny, that the official acts of the South are a calumny; for I affirm that the simple reading of these acts and these laws, a glance at the advertisements of a Southern journal, saddens the heart



more, and wounds the conscience deeper, than the most poignant pages of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. I admit willingly that there are many masters who are very kind and very good. I admit that there are some slaves who are relatively happy. I cast aside unhesitatingly the stories of exceptional cruelty; it is enough for me to see that these *happy* slaves expose themselves to a thousand deaths to escape a situation declared "preferable to that of our workmen." It is enough for me to hear the heart-rending cries of those women and young girls who, adjudged to the highest and last bidder, become, by the law and in a Christian country, the property, yes, the property (excuse the word, it is the true one) of the debauchees, their purchasers. And remark here that the virtues of the master are a weak guarantee: he may die, he may become bankrupt, and nothing then can hinder his slaves from being sold into the hands of the buyer who scours the country and makes his choice.

We should calumniate the South if we amused ourselves by making a collection of atrocious deeds, in the same manner that we should calumniate France by seeking in the *Police Gazette* for the description of her social state. There is, notwithstanding, this difference between the iniquities of

slavery and our own: the first are almost always unpunished, while the second are repressed by the courts. An institution which permits evil, creates it in a great measure: in saying that men are things, it necessarily engenders more crimes, more acts of violence, more cowardly deeds, than the imagination of romancers will ever invent. When a class has neither the right to complain, nor to defend itself, nor to testify in law; when it cannot make its voice heard in any manner, we may be excused for not taking in earnest the idyls chanted on its felicity. We must be ignorant at once of the heart of man and of history to preserve the slightest doubt on this point. I add that those who, like me, have had in their hands the documents of our colonial slavery, have become terribly suspicious, and are likely to look with a skeptical eye on these Arcadian descriptions, the worth of which they can appreciate.

Once more, I do not contest the humanity of many masters, but I remember that there were humane masters too in Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Bourbon; yet this did not prevent the discovery, on a rigid scrutiny, sometimes of excesses, as fearful as inevitable, of the discretionary power; at others, of a systematic depravation, and this to such a



point that in one of our colonies the custom of regular unions had become absolutely unknown to the slaves.

I cannot help believing that man is the same everywhere. Never, in any time or in any latitude, has it been given him to possess his fellow, without fearful misfortunes having resulted to both. Have we not heard celebrated the delightful mildness of Spanish slavery in Cuba? Travellers entertained by the Creoles usually return enchanted with it. Yet, notwithstanding, it is found that on quitting the cities and penetrating into the plantations, the most barbarous system of labor is discovered that exists in the entire world. Cuba devours her black population so rapidly that she is unceasingly obliged to purchase negroes from abroad; and these, being once on the island, have not before them an average life exceeding ten years! In the United States, the planters of the extreme South are also obliged to renew their supply of negroes; but, as they have recourse to the domestic instead of the African trade, and as the domestic trade furnishes slaves at an excessively high price, it follows that motives of interest oppose the adoption of the destructive system of Cuba. Other higher motives also oppose it, I am certain; and I am far from

comparing the system of Louisiana or the Carolinas to that which prevails in the Spanish island. We exaggerate nothing, however; and whatever may be the points of difference, we may hold it as certain that those of resemblance are still more numerous: the tree is the same, it cannot but bear the same fruits.

It must be affirmed, besides, that slavery is peculiarly odious on that soil where the equality of mankind has been inscribed with so much eclat at the head of a celebrated constitution. Liberty imposes obligations; there is at the bottom of the human conscience something which will always cause slavery to be more scandalous at Washington than at Havana. What happens in the United States will be denounced more violently, more loudly, than what happens in Brazil; and this is right.

This said, I pause: I have not the slightest wish to introduce here a perfectly superfluous discussion on the principle and the consequences of slavery. I know all with which Americans reproach us Europeans. It was we, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Spaniards, Hollanders, who imposed on them this institution which we take delight in combating—this inheritance which we anathematize! Before attacking slavery, we would do well to turn our attention to our own crimes—to the oppression of the weak in our manufactories, for instance! But these retaliatory arguments have the fault of proving nothing at all. We will leave them; we have said enough on the nature of American slavery; let us proceed to the special subject of our work.

## CHAPTER II.

### WHERE THE UNITED STATES WERE DRIFTING BEFORE THE ELECTION OF MR. LINCOLN.

I HAVE spoken of the great perils which the United States encountered before the election of Mr. Lincoln. The time has come to enter into some details in justification of this proposition, which must have appeared strange at first sight, but the terms of which I have weighed well: if the slavery party had again achieved a victory, the United States would have gone to ruin. Here are the facts:

Formerly, there was but one opinion among Americans on the subject of slavery. The Southerners may have considered it as a necessary evil; in any case, they considered it as an evil. Carolina herself nobly resisted its introduction upon her soil; other colonies did the same. Washington inscribed the wish in his will that so baleful an insti-



tution might be promptly suppressed. To pen up slavery, to prevent its extension, to reduce it to the *rôle* of a local and temporary fact, which it was determined to restrain still more—such was the sentiment which prevailed in the South, as in the North. And, in fact, slavery was ere long abolished in the majority of the States composing the Union. To-day, slavery has become a beneficent, evangelical institution, the corner-stone of republics, the foundation of all liberties; it has become a source of blessings for the blacks as for the whites. We not only are not to think of reducing the number of slave States, but it becomes important to increase them unceasingly: to interdict to slavery the entrance into a new territory is almost iniquitous. Such are the theories proclaimed by the governors, by the legislators of the cotton States; they propose them openly, without scruple and without circumlocution, under the name of political—what do I say? of moral and Christian axioms. For these theories they take fire, they become excited; they feel that enthusiasm which was inspired in other times by the love of liberty. See entire populations, who, under the eye of God, and invoking his support, devote themselves, body, soul, and goods, to the *holy* cause of slavery, its conquests, its

indefinite extension, its inter-State and African trade.

And the conquests of slavery do not figure only in platforms; they are pursued and accomplished effectively on the soil of America. In the face of the nineteenth century, free Texas has been transformed into a slave State. To create other slave countries is the aim proposed; and slave countries multiply, and the South does not tolerate the slightest obstacle to conquests of this kind, and it goes forward, and nothing stops it—I am wrong, the election of Mr. Lincoln has stopped it, and this is why its fury breaks out to-day.

One would be furious for less cause! Every thing had gone so well till then! The South spoke as a master, and the North humbly bowed its head before its imperious commands. Its exactions increased from day to day, and it was not difficult to see to what abysses it was leading the entire American Union. Shall we give our readers an idea of this crescendo of pretensions?

We will content ourselves with going back to the last Mexican war and to the Wilmot proviso. This was, as is known, a measure, or *proviso*, stipulating that slavery could not be introduced into conquered provinces. Such was the starting point.



It was sought then, in 1847, to prevent the territorial extension of slavery. This seems to me reasonable enough; and I am not astonished that the Lincoln platform tends simply to return to this primitive policy. The measure passes the House of Representatives, but is defeated in the Senate. Notwithstanding, the American people hold firm to the principle that slavery shall henceforth no longer be extended; it elects, in 1848, the upright Administration of Gen. Taylor. The cause of justice seems about to triumph, when the death of the whig President, succeeded by the feeble Mr. Fillmore, comes to restore good fortune to the Southerners, the *proviso* is forgotten, and the nation, weary of resistance, ends by adopting a series of deplorable compromises.

Beginning from this moment, the progress of the evil is rapid. Among the compromises, the oldest and most respected, dating back to 1820, was that which bore the name of the *Missouri Compromise*. On admitting Missouri as a Slave State, it had been stipulated that slavery should be no longer introduced north of the 36th degree of latitude. Of this limit, so long accepted, the South now complains; it is no longer willing that the development of its "peculiar institution" shall be obstructed in any thing.

Other combats, another victory. A bill proposed by Mr. Douglas annuls the Missouri Compromise, and, based on the principle of local sovereignties, withdraws from Congress the right to interfere in the question of slavery.

The Wilmot proviso could not subsist in the presence of these absolute pretensions. The liberty of slavery (pardon me this mournful and involuntary conjunction) finds an application on the spot. At this juncture, Texas, a province detached from Mexico, is admitted in the quality of a slave State.

What happens then? The partisans of slavery, hampered by nothing any longer, either by limits at the North, or limits at the South, or provisos, or compromises, encounter, to their great horror, an obstacle of quite a different nature. The local sovereignty which they have invoked turns against them; in the Territory of Kansas, the majority votes the exclusion of slavery. At once the Southerners change theory; against local sovereignty they invoke the central power; they demand, they exact that the decisions of the majority in Kansas shall be trodden under foot; they put forward the natural right of slavery. Why shall they be prevented from settling in a Territory with the slaves,



their property? When this Territory shall be by and by transformed into a State, there will doubtless be a right to determine the question; but to abolish slavery is quite a different thing from excluding it.

If the South did not win the cause this time, it was not the fault of the government of the United States, but of the inhabitants of Kansas. As for Mr. Buchanan, he showed himself what he has constantly been, the most humble servant of the slavery party. They came together into collision with *squatter sovereignty*: they found for the first time in their path that solid resistance of the West which was manifested in the last election, and which, I firmly hope, is about to save America. But in the mean time, they had taken a new step forward—a formidable step, and one which introduced them into the very bosom of the free States: they had obtained a decision from the Supreme Court—the Dred Scott decree. In the preamble of this too celebrated decision, the highest judicial power of the Confederation did not fear to proclaim two principles: first, that there is no difference between a slave and any other kind of property; secondly, that all American citizens may settle everywhere with their property.

What a menace for the free-soilers! How easy to see to what lengths the South would shortly go! Since slavery constituted property like any other, it was necessary to prohibit the majority from proscribing it in States as well as in Territories. Who knew whether we should not some day see slaves and even slave-markets (the right of property carries with it that of sale) in the streets even of Philadelphia or Boston!

Let no one cry out against this: those who demanded and those who framed the Dred Scott decision knew probably what they wished to do. With the right of property understood in this wise, no State has the power either to vote the real abolition of slavery, or to forbid the introduction of slaves, or to refuse their extradition. And, effectively, horrible laws, ordering fugitive slaves to be given up, were accorded to the violent demands of the South. Liberty by contact with the soil, that great maxim of our Europe, was interdicted America; the very States that most detested slavery were condemned to assist, indignant and shuddering, in the federal invasion of a sheriff entering their homes to lay hands on a poor negro, who had believed in their hospitality, and who was about to be delivered up to the whip of the planter.



It was asking much of the patience of the North; yet, notwithstanding, this patience was not yet at an end. The Administration was given up a prey to the will of the Southerners. On their prohibition, the mails ceased to carry books, journals, letters, which excited their suspicion. They had seized upon the policy of the Union, and they ruled it according to their liking. No one has forgotten those enterprises, favored underhand, then disavowed after failure, those filibustering expeditions in Central America and in the island of Cuba. They were the policy of the South, executed by Mr. Buchanan with his accustomed docility. The point in question was to make conquests, and conquests for slavery. By any means, and at any price, the South was to procure new States. Cuba would furnish some, several would be carved out of Mexico and Central America; for otherwise the slavery majorities would be compromised in Congress, and slavery would be forced to renounce forever the election of the Presidents of free America. To avoid such a misfortune, there is nothing that they would not have been ready to undertake.

Thus, step after step, and exaction after exaction, overthrowing, one after the other, all barriers, the Wilmot proviso, the Missouri Compromise, the right

of majorities in the Territories, the very sovereignty of the States annulled by the Dred Scott decision, the South had succeeded in drawing the United States into those violent and dishonest political practices which filled the administration of Mr. Buchanan. The barriers of public probity, and the right of men, yielded in turn; the administration dared write officially that Cuba was necessary to the United States, and that the affranchisement of slaves in Cuba would be a legitimate cause of war. The United States were yoked to the car of slavery: to make slave States, to conquer Territories for slavery, to prevent the terrible misfortune of an abolition of slavery, such was the programme. In negotiations, in elections, nothing else was perceived than this. If the liberty of the seas and the independence of the flag were proudly claimed, it was by the order of the South, and there resulted thence, whether desired or not, a progressive resurrection of the African slave-trade; if candidates in favor of the maintenance of the Union were recommended, it was to assure the conquests of slavery within and without, the invasion of neighboring countries, the extradition of fugitive slaves, the subjugation of majorities rebellious to the South, the suppression of laws disagreeable to the South, the overthrow of



the last obstacles which fettered the progress of the South.

And it was thus far, to this degree of disorder and abasement, that a noble people had been dragged downwards in the course of years, sinking constantly deeper, abandoning, one by one, its guarantees, losing its titles to the esteem of other nations, approaching the abyss, seeing the hour draw nigh in which to rise would be impossible, bringing down maledictions upon itself, forcing those who love it to reflect on the words of one of its most illustrious leaders: "I tremble for my country, when I remember that God is just!"

All this under the tyrannical and pitiless influence of a minority constantly transformed into a majority! Picture to yourself a man on a vessel standing by the gun-room with a lighted match in his hand; he is alone, but the rest obey him, for at the first disobedience he will blow up himself with all the crew. This is precisely what has been going on in America since she went adrift. The working of the ship was commanded by the man who held the match. "At the first disobedience, we will quit you." Such has always been the language of the Southern States. They were known to be capable of keeping their word; therefore, there

ceased to be but one argument in America: secession. "Revoke the compromise, or else secession; modify the legislation of the free States, or else secession; risk adventures, and undertake conquests with us for slavery, or else secession; lastly and above all, never suffer yourselves to elect a president who is not our candidate, or else secession."

Thus spoke the South, and the North submitted. Let us not be unduly surprised at it, there was patriotism in this weakness; many citizens, inimical to slavery, forbore to combat its progress, in order to avoid what appeared to them a greater evil. Declivities like these are descended quickly, and the deplorable presidency of Mr. Buchanan stands to testify to this. The policy of the United States had become doubtful; their good renown was dwindling away even with their warmest friends; their cause was becoming blended more and more with that of servitude; their liberties were compromised, and the Federal institutions were bending before the "institution" of the South; no more rights of the majority before the "institution;" no more sovereignty of the States before the "institution." The ultra policy of Mr. Buchanan had coveted Cuba, essayed violence in Kansas, given up the government of America in fine to a cabinet of such a stamp, that a majority



was nearly found in it, ready to disavow Major Anderson, and to order the evacuation of forts of the Confederation, menaced by Carolinian forces.

During this time, an incredible fact had come to light. It was one of the glories of America to have abolished the African slave trade before any other nation, and even to have put it on the same footing with the crime of piracy. The South had openly demanded the re-establishment of a commerce which alone could furnish it at some day with the number of negroes proportioned to its vast designs. What had Mr. Buchanan done? He doubtless had not consented officially to an enormity which Congress, on its part, would not have tolerated; but repression had become so lax under his administration, that the number of slave ships fitted out in the ports of the United States had at length become very considerable. The port of New York alone, which participates but too much in the misdeeds and tendencies of the South, fitted out eighty-five slavers between the months of February, 1859, and July, 1860. These slavers proudly bore the United States' flag over the seas, and defied the English cruisers. As for the American cruisers, Mr. Buchanan had taken care to remove them all from Cuba, where every one knows that the living car-

groes are landed. The slave trade is therefore in the height of prosperity, whatever the last presidential message may say of it, and as to the application of the laws concerning piracy, I do not see that they have had many victims.

We can now measure the perils which menaced the United States. It was not such or such a measure in particular, but a collection of measures, all directed towards the same end, and tending mutually to complete each other: conquests, the domestic and the foreign slave trade, the overthrow of the few barriers opposed to the extension of slavery, the debasement of institutions, the definitive enthroning of an adventurous policy, a policy without principles and without scruples; to this the country was advancing with rapid strides. Do they who raise their hands and eyes to heaven, because the election of Mr. Lincoln has caused the breaking forth of an inevitable crisis, fancy then that the crisis would have been less serious if it had broken forth four years later, when the evil would have been without remedy? Already, the five hundred thousand slaves of the last century have given place to four millions; was it advisable to wait until there were twenty millions, and until vast territories, absorbed by American power, had been peopled by blacks torn from



Africa? Was it advisable to await the time when the South should have become decidedly the most important part of the Confederation, and when the North, forced to secede, should have left to others the name, the prestige, the flag of the United States? Do they fancy that, by chance, with the supremacy of the South, with its conquests, with the monstrous development of its slavery, secession would have been avoided? No! it would have appeared some day as a necessary fact; only it would have been accomplished under different auspices and in different conditions. Such a secession would have been death, a shameful death.

And slavery itself, who imagines, then, that it can be immortal? It is in vain to extend it; it will perish amidst its conquests and through its conquests: one can predict this without being a prophet. But, between the suppression of slavery such as we hope will some time take place, and that which we should have been forced to fear, in case the South had carried it still further, is the distance which separates a hard crisis from a terrible catastrophe. The South knows not what nameless misfortunes it has perhaps just escaped. If it had been so unfortunate as to conquer, if it had been so unfortunate as to carry out its plans, to create slave States, to

recruit with negroes from Africa, it would have certainly paved the way, with its own hands, for one of those bloody disasters before which the imagination recoils: it would have shut itself out from all chance of salvation.

It is not possible, in truth, to put an end to certain crimes, and wholly avoid their chastisement; there will always be some suffering in delivering the American Confederation from slavery, and it depends to-day again upon the South to aggravate, in a fearful measure, the pain of the transition. However, what would not have been possible with the election of Mr. Douglas or Mr. Breckenridge, has become possible now with the election of Mr. Lincoln; we are at liberty to hope henceforth for the rising of a great people.

## CHAPTER III.

### WHAT THE ELECTION OF MR. LINCOLN SIGNIFIES.

I THINK that I have justified the fundamental idea of this work, and the title which I have given it. If the slavery policy had achieved a new triumph; if the North had not elected its President, the first that has belonged to it in full since the existence of the Confederation; if supremacy had not ranged itself in fine on the side with force and justice, this unstable balance would have had its hour of downfall: and what a downfall! Of so much true liberty, of so much progress, of so many noble examples, what would have been left standing? The secession of the South is not the secession of the North; affranchisement with four millions of slaves is not affranchisement with twenty millions; the crisis of 1861 is not that of 1865 or of 1869. The United States, I repeat, with a pro-

found and studied conviction,—the United States have just been saved.

There are those who ask gravely whether the electors of Mr. Lincoln have a plan all ready to effect the abolition of slavery. We answer that this is not in question. Among the influential and earnest men of the victorious party, not one could be cited who would think of proposing any plan whatever of emancipation. One thing alone is proposed: to check the conquests of slavery. That it shall not be extended, that it shall be confined within its present limits, is all that is sought to-day. The policy of the founders of the Confederation has become that of their successors in turn; and to this policy, what can be objected? Is not the sovereignty of the States respected? do they not remain free to regulate what concerns them? do they not preserve the right of postponing, so long as they deem proper, the solution of a dreaded problem? could not this solution be thought over and prepared by those who best know its elements?

The matter is, indeed, more complicated and difficult than is generally imagined. Should we be imprudent enough to meddle with it, we might rightfully be blamed. Here, summary proceedings



are evidently not admissible. Time and the spirit of Christianity must do their work by degrees; they will do it, be sure, provided the evil be circumscribed, provided the seat of the conflagration be hemmed in and prevented henceforth from spreading further.

Now, such is the great result acquired by the election of Mr. Lincoln; it is nothing more than this, but it is all this: it is prudence in the present, and it is also the certainty of success in the future. Emancipation is by no means decreed; it will not be for a long time, perhaps: yet the principle of emancipation is established, irrevocably established in the sight of all. Irrevocability has prodigious power over our minds: without being conscious of it, we make way for it; we arrange in view of it our conduct, our plans, and even our doctrines. Once fully convinced that its propagandism is checked, that the future of which it dreamed has no longer any chances of success, the South itself will become accustomed to consider its destiny under a wholly new aspect. The border States, in which emancipation is easy, will range themselves one after another on the side of liberty. Thus the extent of the evil will become reduced of itself, and instead of advancing, as during some years past,

towards a colossal development of servitude, it will proceed in the direction of its gradual attenuation.

I reason on the hypothesis of a final maintenance of the Union, whatever may be the incidents of temporary secession. I am not ignorant that there are other hypotheses, which may possibly be realized, and which I shall examine in the course of this treatise; but whatever may happen, I have a full right to call to mind the true scope of the vote which has just been taken. It does not involve the slightest idea of present emancipation; it contents itself with checking the progress of slavery; and to check its progress is, doubtless, to diminish the perils of its future abolition.

It was important to present this observation, for nothing perverts our judgment of the American crisis more than the inexact definitions which are given of abolitionism. We willingly picture abolitionists to ourselves as madmen, seeking to attain their end on the spot, regardless of all else, through blood and ruin! That there may be such is possible, is even inevitable; but the men who exercise any political influence over the North have not for a moment adopted such theories. This is so true, that the other day, at Boston, the people themselves (the people who nominated Mr. Lincoln) dispersed



a meeting intended to discuss plans of immediate emancipation.

What if abolitionism, moreover, be a party? what if it make use of the means employed by parties? what if it have its journals, its publicists, its orators? what if it seek allies? what if it be based on interests which may be given it by the majority? what if it appeal to the passions of the North, as the slavery party appeals to those of the South? I do not see, in truth, why this should astonish us. I am far from believing that all the acts of abolitionism are worthy of approbation; I say only that it would be puerile to repudiate a great party for the sole reason that it has the bearing of a party. The duty of citizens in a free country is to choose between parties, and to unite with that whose cause is just and holy. Let them protest against wrong measures, let them refuse to participate in them—nothing can be better; but to withdraw into a sort of political Thebais because the noblest parties have stains on their banner, is, in truth, to turn their back on the civil obligations of real life.

The abolition party is a noble one. Several of its champions have given their lives to propagate their faith. But lately, indeed, the Texan journals

took pains to tell us that a number of them had just been hung in that State; and, without even speaking of these noble victims, whose death completes the dishonor of the Southern cause, are there any bolder deeds in the history of mankind than those of the citizens of New England who, to wrest Kansas from slavery, went thither to build their cabins, thus braving a fearful struggle, not only with the slaveholders, but with the President, his illegal measures, and the troops charged with maintaining them?

We must fight to conquer. This seems little understood by those who reproach abolitionism with having been a party militant; to hear them, the true way of bringing about the abolition of slavery was to let it alone: to attack was to exasperate it.

This argument is so unfortunate as to be employed in all bad causes. I remember that when measures were taken against the slave trade, we were told that the sufferings of the slaves would be thus increased, and that the slavers would be *exasperated.* Later, when we held up to the indignation of the whole world the Protestant intolerance of Sweden, we were assured that these public denunciations would put back the question instead



of accelerating it. We persevered, and we did rightly. Sweden is advancing, though at too slow a pace, towards religious liberty. It would be difficult to cite any social iniquities that have reformed of themselves; and, since the existence of the world, the method which consists in attacking evil has been the one sanctioned by success. In America itself, the progress made by the border States does not seem to confirm what is told us of the reaction caused by the aggressions of abolitionism. In Virginia, in Kentucky, in Missouri, in Delaware, etc., the liberty party has been continually gaining ground; and the votes received in the slave States by Mr. Lincoln prove it a very great mistake to suppose letting alone to be the condition of progress. Would to God that slavery had not been let alone when the republic of the United States was founded! Then, abolition was easy, the slaves were few in number, and no really formidable antagonism was in play. Unhappily, false prudence made itself heard: it was resolved to keep silence, and not to deprive the South of the honor of a voluntary emancipation—in fine, to reserve the question for the future. The future has bent under the weight of a task which has continued to increase with years, thanks to letting it alone.

A little more letting alone, and the weight would have crushed America; it was time to act. The Abolition party, or rather the party opposed to the extension of slavery, has acted with a resolution which should excite our sympathies. The future of the United States was at stake; it knew it, and it struggled in consequence. Remember the efforts essayed four years ago for the election of Mr. Fremont, efforts which would have succeeded perhaps, if Mr. Fremont had not been a Catholic. Remember those three months of balloting, by which the North succeeded in carrying the election of speaker of the House of Representatives. Remember the conduct of the North, in the sad affair of John Brown, its refusal to approve an illegal act, its admiration of the heroic farmer who died after having witnessed the death of his sons. On seeing the public mourning of the Free States, on hearing the minute gun discharged in the capital of the State of New York on the day of execution, one might have foreseen the irresistible impulse which has just ended in the triumph of Mr. Lincoln.

The indignation against slavery, the love of country and of its compromised honor, the just susceptibilities of the North, the liberal instincts so



long repressed, the desire of elevating the debased and corrupt institutions of the land, the need of escaping insane projects, the powerful impulse of the Christian faith, all these sentiments contributed, without doubt, to swell the resistance against which the supremacy of the South has just been broken. This, then, is a legal victory, one of the most glorious spectacles that the friends of liberty can contemplate on earth. It was the more glorious, the more efforts and sacrifices it demanded. The Lincoln party had opposed to it, the Puseyistic and financial aristocracy of New York; the manœuvres of President Buchanan were united against it with those of the Southern States. Many of the Northern journals accused it of treading under foot the interests of the seaports, and of compromising the sacred cause of the Union.

To succeed in electing Mr. Lincoln, we must not forget that it was necessary to put the question of principle above the questions of immediate interests, which usually make themselves heard so distinctly. The unity, the greatness of the country, the gigantic future towards which it was advancing, were so many obstacles arising in the way. Then came the reckoning of profits and losses, the inevitable crisis, the Southern orders already with-

drawn, the certain loss of money; it seems to me that men who have braved such chances, have nobly accomplished their duty.

America, it is said, is the country of the dollar; the Americans think only of making money, all other considerations are subordinate to this. If the reproach is sometimes well-founded, we must admit, at least, that it is not always so. Those who wish to persuade us that the Abolitionists in this again have simply sought their own interests, by seeking to break down the competition of servile labor, forget two or three things: first, that the slaves produce tobacco or cotton, while the North produces wheat, so that there is not a race in the world that competes less with it: next, that the cotton of the South is very useful to the North, useful to its manufactures, useful to its trade, both transit and commission. The people of the North are not reputed to lack foresight; they were not ignorant that in electing Mr. Lincoln, they had, for the time at least, every thing to lose and nothing to gain; they were not ignorant that Mr. Lincoln occasioned the immediate threat of secession; that the threat of secession was a commercial crisis, was the political weakening of the country, and the unsettling of many fortunes. But neither were they



ignorant that above the fleeting interests of individuals and of the nation, arose those permanent interests which must rest only on justice; they decided, cost what it might, to wrest themselves from the detestable, and ere long fatal allurements of the slavery policy.

Let us beware how we calumniate, without intending it, the few generous impulses which break out here and there among mankind. I know that there is a would-be prudent skepticism which attacks all moral greatness that it may depreciate it, all enthusiasm that it may translate it into calculation. To admire nothing is most deplorable, and, I hasten to add, most absurd. Without wandering from the subject of slavery, I can cite the great Emancipation Act, wrested from Parliament by Christian public opinion in England. Have not means been found to prove, or at least to insinuate, that this act, the most glorious of our century, was at the bottom nothing but a Machiavellian combination of interests? Doubtless, those who have taken the trouble to look over the debates of the times know what we are to think of this fine explanation; they know what resistance was opposed by *interests* to the emancipation, both in the colonies and in the heart of the metropolis; they know with

how much obstinacy the Tories, representing the traditions of English politics, combated the proposed plans; they know in what terms the certain ruin of the planters, the manufactures, and the seaports, was described; they know by how many petitions the churches, the religious societies, the women, and even the children, succeeded in wresting from Parliament a measure refused by so many statesmen. But the mass of the people do not go back to the beginning; they take for granted the summary judgment that English emancipation was a master-piece of perfidy.

We hear very nearly the same thing said of that glorious movement which has just taken place in America. We would gladly detect all motives in it except one that is generous and Christian. As if a vulgar calculation of interest would not have dictated a contrary course! And it is precisely this that makes the greatness of the resolution adopted by the North. It knew all the consequences; they had been announced by the South, recapitulated by prudent men, stated in detail by the newspapers of great commercial cities; it chose to be just. Despite the inevitable mingling of base and selfish impulses, which always become complicated in such manifestations, the ruling motive in this



was a protest of conscience, and of the spirit of liberty.

The accounts that have come to us from America demonstrate the lofty character of the joy which was manifested after the election. Men shook hands with each other in the streets; they congratulated each other on having at last escaped from the yoke of an ignoble policy; they felt as though relieved from a weight; they breathed more freely; the true, the noble destinies of the United States reappeared on the horizon, they saluted a future that should be better than the present, a future worthy of their sires, those early pilgrims who, carrying nothing with them but their Bibles, had laid the foundation of a free country with poor but valiant hands.

I should like to quote here the sermon in which the Rev. Mr. Beecher poured out his Christian joy at that time. He spoke of the strength of the weak; he showed that principles, however despised they may be, end by revenging themselves on interests; he recalled the fact that the Gospel is a power in America. To rise up, to attack its enemy manfully, to arraign the causes of the national decline, to approach boldly the solution of the most formidable problem which could be propounded here on earth, such is not the act of a nation of calculators. Some-

thing else is implied in it than tactics, something else than combinations of votes or sectional rivalries. To vote as they did, they had to overcome almost as many obstacles in the North as in the South; for, in consequence of the vote, the North had to suffer like the South, and they knew it.

If you wish to be just to the United States, compare them with other countries in which slavery exists. In the United States there is a struggle; the question is a living one; men do not turn aside from it with lax indifference. I love the noise of free nations; I find in the very violence of their debates a proof of the earnestness of convictions. Men must become excited about great social problems; if abuses exist, they must, at least, be pointed out, attacked, and stigmatized; the prescription of silence must never be accorded them; devoted voices must exclaim against them, unceasingly, in the name of justice and of humanity. Such a spectacle does good to the soul; it solaces the sorrows of the present, it carries within itself guarantees for the future.

The sad, profoundly sad, spectacle, is that of nations where crimes make no noise. Look at Brazil. Like the United States, it has slavery, but it is an honorable, discreet slavery, of which nothing is said.



Whatever may happen there, no one inquires about it; there are no discussions, either through the press or in the courts. No party would dare insert such a question into its platform. One thing, very properly, has been found to disturb it, and the public sale of slaves has just been forbidden.

Look, above all, at Spain and its island of Cuba. There, too, is perfect silence. Nothing, in truth, opposes the belief that Cuba is the abode of felicity, and that the atrocities of slavery are the monopoly of the United States. But inquisitive people, who like to search to the bottom of things, discover that if the masters are very gentle at Havana, the overseers are scarcely so on their account on the plantations; I have already given the proof of it. Out of ten slavers that are seized on the high seas, nine are always destined to Cuba. Spain has forbidden the slave trade; she has even been compensated for it by the English; but this does not prevent her from suffering it to be carried on before her eyes with almost absolute impunity. Her high-sounding phrases change nothing; the smallest fact is of more value. At Cuba, the landing of slaves is continual, and the places of disembarkation are known. Now, the American flag protects no one at the time of disembarking. Why is no opposition made to this?

Why has the importation of negroes tripled in Cuba? Why does no slaver, American or any other, steer towards Brazil, since Brazil has *desired* to put an end to the slave trade? The answer to these questions will be given us on the day when Spain shall *desire*, in turn, to suppress it. In the mean time she prefers to keep silence, unless when a word from London strikes out a concert of protestations more patriotic than convincing; save in this case, the government is silent, public opinion is silent, no colonial sheet is found ready to hazard an objection, nor even a metropolitan journal that is willing to disturb so touching an equanimity. The court of Madrid, in which many questions are agitated, prudently stands aloof in the matter of slavery and the slave trade; among the numerous parties disputing for power, not one dares venture on a ground where it would meet nothing but unpopularity. Ah! after this death-like silence, how the soul is refreshed by the fiery contests of the United States, the great word-combats carried on in every village of the Union, the appeals addressed to the conscience, the battle in broad daylight! How refreshing to see by the side of these nations, who sleep so tranquilly, while regarding the inroads of slavery, a people



whom it disquiets, whom it irritates, who refuse to take part in it, and who, rather than conform to the evil, agitate, become divided, and rend themselves perchance with their own hands!

# CHAPTER V.

## THE CHURCHES AND SLAVERY.

This leads me to examine a side of the American question upon which attention is naturally fixed at the present time; how is it that the iniquities of slavery are maintained among this charitable and liberal people? how is it that such iniquities have subsisted under the influence of so powerful a Christian sentiment? Can it be true that Christians have deserted the cause of justice? Has the Gospel had the place which belongs to it, in the great struggle that is going on between the North and the South? yes; or no. This is perhaps the point of all others most important to clear up; first, because it is the one on which the most errors have accumulated; next, because it is the one most closely connected with the final solution; for this solution will not be happy, if the Gospel has no hand in it.

To judge rightly, let us approach and endeavor



to comprehend the true position of those whose conduct we seek to appreciate. See the South, for example, where the almost universal opinion is favorable to slavery, where governors write dithyrambics on its benefits, where many Christians have succeeded in discovering that it is sanctioned by the Gospel, where men of sincerity are now placing their impious crusades in behalf of its extension under the protection of God, where numerous preachers expound in their own way the celebrated text "Cursed be Canaan!" Do not these sentiments of the South, detestable as they are, find, to a certain point, their explanation and excuse in the circumstances in which the South is placed?

The power of surroundings is incalculable. If we ourselves, who condemn slavery, and are right in so doing, had been reared in Charleston; if we had led a planter's life from our earliest infancy; if we had nourished our minds with their ideas; if we considered our monetary interests menaced by Abolitionism; if the image of more fearful perils, of violent destructions and massacres, appeared to haunt our thoughts; if the political antagonism between the North and the South came to add its venom to the passions already excited within us, is it certain that we ourselves should not

be figuring at the present time among the desperadoes who are firing upon the ships of the Union, and attempting the foundation of a Southern Confederacy?

It is well to ask this of ourselves, in order to learn to respect, to love, and consequently to aid those whose conduct we blame the most strongly. For my part, whenever I am tempted to set myself up as a judge or an accuser of the South, I ask myself what I should do if I belonged to the South, and this brings me back to the true position. I remember, too, what I saw, with my own eyes, at the time when the discussion on slavery was carried on in France; the colonial passions, the blindest and most violent of all, broke out in Martinique and the isle of Bourbon, as they had broken out before in Jamaica, where the circulars of Mr. Canning, the proposition, for example, to suppress the flagellation of women, had excited a veritable explosion. There were some very honorable men among those who were indignant at this measure; and, among us, likewise, the planters who determined to combat all modification of the negro system, were good men. Severity is almost always a defect of memory; we blame others without pity, only when we begin by forgetting our own history. We French-



men, who had so much difficulty in emancipating our own slaves, and who would not, perhaps, have succeeded in it, had it not been for the bold decision of M. Schoelcher; we, who have sought to take back, in part, through our colonial regulations, the liberty accorded the blacks; we, who suffered recruitals by purchase to be made on the African coast; who formerly organized the expedition charged with re-establishing slavery and the slave trade at St. Domingo; who suppressed the slave trade at the Congress of Vienna only in stipulating its continuance for some years; who carried into our discussions on the right of search, a very meagre interest for the victims of the slavers; we, whose consciences are burdened with these misdeeds, are bound to use indulgence towards the States of the South.

This remark was necessary: it is from the South that the Biblical theories in favor of slavery proceed; it is on account of the South that these theories have been adopted by certain Christians of the North, desirous, above every thing, of avoiding both the dismemberment of the United States, and that of the churches and religious societies. Take away the South, and no one in America, any more than in Europe, will dream of discovering in the

Gospel the divine approbation of the atrocities of slavery.

I comprehend better than most, the sentiment of indignation that is caused by these deplorable teachings, in which slavery is sometimes excused, sometimes exalted; I comprehend, that, under the impulse of a sentiment so justifiable, one may be led on to anathematize preachers and churches in a mass, that he may even come to the point of representing to himself the Christian faith as the true obstacle to the progress of liberty. This is a great perversion of the truth, but we can easily understand how it has succeeded in gaining the assent of generous and sincere minds. I myself have read a sermon which was listened to with sympathy in a certain Presbyterian church in New York, in which slavery, declares right until the return of Jesus Christ, ceases to be so, I know not why, during the millennium? I know the nature of that theology, too truly styled *cottony*, which is displayed in the clerical columns of the *New York Observer*. Notwithstanding, I hasten to say that these revolting excesses seldom appear except in seaports, and especially in New York. The interests of this great city are bound up to such a degree with those of the cotton States, that, until very lately, New York might



have been considered as a prolongation of the South. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find some congregations there which are ruled by the prejudices of the South. Besides, even in New York, other churches protest with holy zeal, and other journals, among which I will cite the *Independent*, the organ of the Congregationalists, combat slavery unceasingly in the name of the Gospel.

Then people persist in seeing only New York, in taking notice only of what passes in New York; but they forget that New York is ordinarily an exception in the North, as much by its commercial position as by its opinions and votes. Let us go ever so short a distance from the city into the surrounding country, and we will encounter a different spirit—a spirit thoroughly impregnated with Christian faith, and little disposed to covenant with slavery. There we begin to see that race of Puritan farmers, but lately represented by John Brown. Has not the attempt been made to transform him also into a free thinker, a philosophic enemy of the Bible, and, from this very cause, an enemy to slavery? We need nothing more than his last letter to his wife, to show from what source he had drawn that courage, so misdirected but so indomitable, which he displayed at Harper's Ferry; the Christian, the

Biblical and orthodox Christian, comes to explain the liberal and the hero.

That Christians in general condemned the enterprise of John Brown, while sympathizing with him, I hasten to acknowledge; and I am far from blaming them. That many have committed the real wrong of recoiling before the consequences of an open and decided conduct, I am forced to admit. Yes, without even mentioning the South, where, as every one knows, the reign of terror prevails, there are numerous Protestant and Catholic churches in the remainder of the Confederation, which have refused to declare themselves, as they should have done, in opposition to the crime of slavery. Let us not hasten, however, to cry out against falsehood and hypocrisy; most honorable and sincere men have believed that they would do more harm than good by bringing on a rupture with the South. Let us not forget that political rupture is complicated here with religious rupture. Now, all the churches extend over both North and South; all the charitable societies number committees and subscribers in both North and South. The point in question then, (let us weigh the immensity of the sacrifice,) the point in question is to rend in twain all the churches, to break in pieces all the societies, to expose to perilous risks all the great works that do honor to the United States.



Doubtless, to have gone their way, to have done their duty, and not to have troubled themselves about the consequences, was the great rule of action. I grant it; yet, notwithstanding, I refuse to stigmatize, as many have done, those men who have committed the fault of hesitating; I feel that to rank them among the champions of slavery is to pervert facts, and to fall into a blamable exaggeration. Again, to-day, after the election of Mr. Lincoln, cannot citizens be cited in the North who are devoted to the cause of the negroes, but who refuse to participate in abolitionist demonstrations, because they fear (and the sentiments does them honor) to encourage the impending insurrections?

This said, I wish to prove by some too well-known facts, what has been this forbearance, or even this pretended hesitation of orthodox Christianity. On regarding the churches, I see two, and the most considerable, which have openly declared themselves: the Congregationalists and the Methodists. About six months since, the General Conference of Methodists resolutely plunged into the current without suffering itself to be trammelled by the protests which came to it from the South.

I read in a report presented to one of the great divisions of this church: "We believe that to sell or to hold in bondage human beings under the name of chattels, is in contradiction to the divine laws and to humanity; and that it conflicts with the golden rule and with the rule of our discipline." Last year, a numerous assemblage of delegates of the Congregational churches adopted the following resolution: "Slaveholding is immoral, and slaveholders should not be admitted as members of Christian churches. We ought to protest against it without ceasing, in the name of the Gospel, until it shall have entirely disappeared." And this resolution has not remained a dead letter: a Congregational church of Ohio has expelled from its bosom one of its deacons, who had contributed in the capacity of magistrate to the extradition of a fugitive slave.

Other churches, without taking so decided a position, have at least manifested by their internal convulsions the profound interest excited among them by the question of slavery. In this manner a secession has just rent the Presbyterian church in twain, because the declared adversaries of slavery were unwilling to remain responsible for a forbearance which appeared to them criminal. These



things are signs of life, and these signs are beginning to show themselves even in the midst of ecclesiastical bodies which have acted, until now, in the most unchristian manner. A warm discussion has been thus called forth, and this signifies a great deal, among the members of the Episcopal church in New York. The majority stifled the debate; will it be able to do this always?

If from the churches we proceed to the religious societies, we find the same symptoms among them; here, they declare themselves openly against slavery, in spite of the menaces of the South; there, they succeed in staving off the question, yet at the price of excited debates, which continually spring up again, of a great scandal, and of protests which are heard by Christians through the whole world. The course of conduct adopted by the great American Board of Missions is the more significant, inasmuch as its committee is composed of members belonging to various evangelical denominations; it stands, therefore, as their permanent representative, yet this has not prevented its adoption, after long hesitation, of resolutions indicating in what course it will henceforth proceed: it has broken off its relations with the missonaries employed among the Choctaws, for the sole reason that they obstinately

refused openly to attack Indian slavery, and the abominable practices which it engenders. The Society, which long, too long, contented itself with a timid and inconsistent censure, has been obliged, therefore, to resort to more decisive measures.

Another great body, the Tract Society, unfortunately, has not followed this example; the general assemblies held at New York, and ruled by the spirit of that city, have given a majority to the party opposed to the discussion of the subject; but, be it said to the honor of American Christians, the very large minority resisted to the end; the latter was sustained by outside opinion, and many friends of the Gospel joined with it in deploring the pusillanimity which yielded to the menaces of the South. A crisis thence arose, which has not yet reached its height, and the first fruits of which have been the foundation of a rival society in Boston, to which adherents are gathering from all sides.

These are grave events, for they manifest the inmost revolutions of the human soul. Would you know what will take place in political societies? Begin by informing yourself about what is taking place in the consciences of the public. Now it is evident that the public conscience is in motion in the United States. The vast obstacles by which this movement was trammelled have been surmounted on every side. I wish no other proof of this than the deplorable fact of which I have just made mention: the conduct of the Tract Society, the internal crisis which it has experienced, the reprobation which it encounters in Europe as in America. Are not these palpable proofs of the too little known truth that the great moral force which is struggling with American slavery is the Gospel?



And how could it be otherwise? If we had not positive facts before our eyes, if we did not know that one entire sect of Christians, the Quakers, have devoted themselves, body and goods, to the service of poor fugitive slaves, if we did not recognize the deep Puritan imprint in the movement which has colonized Kansas, and in that which has borne Mr. Lincoln to the presidency, should we not be forced to ask ourselves whether it is possible that the Gospel remains a stranger to a struggle undertaken for liberty? There exist, thank God, between liberty and the Gospel, close, eternal, and indestructible relations. I know of one species of freedom which contains the germ of all the rest—freedom of soul; now what was it, if not the Gospel, that introduced this freedom into the world? Remember ancient Paganism: neither liberty of conscience, nor liberty of individuals, nor liberty

of families—such was its definition. The State laid its hand upon all the inmost part of existence, the creeds of the fathers, and the education of the children; moral slavery also existed everywhere, and if slavery, properly called, had been anywhere wanting, it would have given cause for astonishment. The Gospel came, and with it these new phenomena: individual belief, true independence makes its advent here on earth, a liberty worthy of the name appears finally among men. From this time we see men lifting up their heads, despotism finding its limits, the humblest, the weakest opposing to it insurmountable barriers.

They act without reflection, who attempt to place in opposition these two things: the Gospel and liberty. And remark that in the United States, in particular, the Gospel and liberty are accustomed to go together; they first landed together at New Plymouth with the passengers of the Mayflower. Why had these poor pilgrims torn themselves from all the habits of home and country, to seek in the dead of winter an asylum on an unknown soil? Because they loved the Gospel, and because they desired liberty; the chief of liberties —that of the conscience. From the 21st of December, 1620, there existed on the shores of the New World the beginning of a free people—free



through the powerful influence of the Gospel. All who have studied the United States with sincerity, will ratify the opinion of M. de Tocqueville: "America is the place, of all others, where the Christian religion has preserved the most power over souls." This power is such, that we find it at the base of all lasting reforms. In this country, in which the idea of authority has little force, there is one authority, that of the Bible, before which the majority bow, and which is of the more importance inasmuch as it alone commands respect and obedience.

If you doubt the decisive part which the Gospel fills in American debates, look at the pains taken by parties to render public homage to it, the Democrats as the Republicans, Mr Buchanan as Mr. Lincoln. Then look more closely at the Republican party, do you not find in it again the visible traces of Puritanism? It is the ancient States, it is old America, it is also the Young America of the farmers, of the pioneers of the Western solitudes, the America of the clearers of the forests, the America of the Bible and the schools. This America long since abolished slavery, and prevented its introduction into the territories that acknowledged its influence. In the meanest of its cabins, you will find the Scriptures, hymn books, reports of religious so-

cieties; in the majority of its families, domestic worship is celebrated; in its prayer-meetings, it is not rare to see physicians, lawyers, magistrates, marine officers, taking part publicly; its statesmen do not think themselves dishonored by keeping a Sunday-school; the Gospel, in a word, is a power to which no other can compare, and outside of which it would be puerile to expect to succeed in accomplishing any thing of importance.

Here the action of the Gospel can be plainly detected; an important religious event preceded and paved the way for the political event which we have witnessed: before the election of Mr. Lincoln, an awakening took place. The American awakening, which must not be confounded with those *revivals*, the description and sometimes the caricature of which have been transmitted us by travellers, the awakening, which had neither ecstasies nor convulsive sobs, and the distinctive feature of which was a tone of simplicity and conviction, produced one of those profound agitations of the conscience, which give rise to generous resolutions. The financial crisis had just overthrown the fortunes of the people; they turned towards God and began to pray. On a route of three thousand miles, wherever one might stop, he found a meeting, a simple, spontaneous meeting, at which the pastors did not



take the initiative, where they were present instead of presiding. Ere long, public attention became fixed on this movement, the greatness of which could not be contested; the most hostile journals ended by rendering it homage. And it lasted, it still subsists, it has produced something else than meetings and prayers, it has induced extensive moral reforms, it has closed places of debauchery and taverns by hundreds. The military and commercial marine of the United States has been especially subjected to its influence; captains, officers, and sailors in great numbers, have shown by their lives that their habits of piety are more than a vain form; American vessels are perhaps the only ones at the present day in which groups of sailors assemble to converse on the interests of their soul, and to make the praises of God resound over the ocean.

In strengthening the religious element, in exciting the Puritan fibre of America, the awakening certainly contributed a great share to the success of the party opposed to slavery. South Carolina acknowledged this herself lately, when she inserted the following phrase in her declaration of independence: "The public opinion of the North has given to a great political error the sanction of a still more erroneous

religious sentiment." Is this religious sentiment, assailed by the slaveholders, that of free thinkers, or of Christians? The South is not mistaken; it knows that the truly difficult acts of emancipation are accomplished on earth only by the power of the Gospel; it saw the great abolition impulse rise in England, and spread over the United States; journals, committees, correspondence, all indicated that the English had become the American movement, and was continued under the same banner. Under this banner, and this alone, it has conquered. A colossal work in fact is here in question, before which all purely human forces fall to the ground. If such prodigious Christian efforts were needed to give the victory to Wilberforce, what will be required in the heart of a country where slavery is not exiled to distant colonies, and where it has acquired formidable proportions with years. There are easy abolitions, which are wrought in some sort of themselves, and which seem the natural corollary of a political revolution; as, for instance, that which occurred forty years ago in the Spanish republics. Bolivar, Quiroga, and the other leaders, needed the support of all classes of the population in their struggle against Spain; they adopted the expedient of suppressing slavery. In taking this resolution,



they accomplished a most honorable deed, but they made little change in the condition of the country, for large planting was rare, and both the blacks and the whites were few in numbers, less numerous, indeed, than the Indians and the half breeds.

If political reasons then sufficed, it is evident that they are far from sufficing to-day: we must seek elsewhere for the explanation of the movement which, a long time wavering and suppressed, has just manifested its irresistible power in the United States. We have recognized in it the hand of the Gospel; and this is no indifferent matter, for if the Gospel had no part in it, such a movement would end in destruction.

The responsibility of Christians will be great in America; they can do much for the favorable solution of a problem which menaces the future of their country, and overshadows that of humanity. The mode of pacification here is, to declare themselves; the pretensions of the South, its fatal progress, the extreme peril to which but lately it exposed the Confederation, are due much more than is imagined to the deplorable hesitation of the religious societies and the churches. If it had long since been brought face to face with a determined evangelical doctrine, the

South, which knows also, though in a less degree, the influence of the Gospel, would have avoided falling into the excesses to which it is now abandoned. The faults of the past are irreparable, but it is possible to ward off their return. Let all Northern churches, let all societies, let all eminent Christians take henceforth with firmness the position which they ought to have taken from the first; let them present to their Southern brethren a solid rallying point, and the effects of this faithful conduct will not be slow in making themselves felt. There is, in the slave States, especially in those occupying an intermediate position, more disturbance of thought, and more conflicts of feeling, than we generally suppose. Let the banner of the Christian faith be openly displayed, and many good men will rally round it: this is certain.

And let no one put forward the shameful pretext: there are sceptics, rationalists, free thinkers in the ranks of Abolitionism! Why not? Questions of this sort, thanks to the Gospel, have entered in the domain of common morality, shall I desert these questions in order to avoid contact with men who reject the essential doctrines of Christianity? I confess that the orthodoxy which should draw such conclusions would appear suspicious to me.



Voltaire pleading for the Calas will not make me turn my back on religious liberty; Channing writing pages against slavery, revealing a heart more Christian than his doctrine; Parker, blending his noble efforts in favor of the negroes with his assaults against the Bible, will not alienate me from a cause which was mine before it was theirs.

I say, besides, that the objections of these men against Christianity force me to ask whether our conduct as Christians be not one of the principal causes of their scepticism. Is it quite certain that Voltaire himself would have been the adversary that we know him, if he had not seen that thought was stifled, that liberty was crushed, that conscience was violated in the name of the Gospel? Would not this same Gospel have presented itself under a different aspect to Parker, Channing, and the other Unitarians of Boston, if they had seen it at its post, the post of honor, at the head of all generous ideas and true liberties? Yes; there are Abolitionists who reject the Bible because they have heard certain orthodox Christians maintain that the Bible is in favor of slavery. Whoever preaches this, is of a school of impiety.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE GOSPEL AND SLAVERY.

How did they set to work to preach this? I will answer this question by two others: How did Bossuet set to work to write his *Politique tirée de l'Ecriture*, to proclaim in the name of the Bible obligatory monarchy, divine right, the absolute authority of kings, the duty of destroying false religion by force, the duty of officially sustaining the truth, the duty of having a budget of modes of worship, the duty of uniting Church and State, without speaking of his Biblical apology for war, for the use of Louis XIV.? How did certain doctors among the Roundheads, in their turn, set to work to proclaim the divine right of republics, and to ordain the massacre of the new Amalekites? The method is very simple: it consists only in confounding the law with the Gospel. This confusion once wrought, the political and civil institutions of the Old Testament



lose their temporary and local character, and we go to the New Testament in search of what is not there: namely, political and civil institutions.

Though the Gospel is not the law, it is a truth which has been making its way since the seventeenth century, and which seems to be no longer contested to-day, except in the camp of the champions of slavery. The Gospel, which addresses itself to all nations and all ages, does not pretend to force them into the strait vestments of the ancient Jewish nation; no more does it pretend to "sew a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new cloth taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse." I speak here with a view to those who, in the law as in the Gospel, in the New Testament as in the Old, venerate the infallible word of God. A revelation, to be divine, does not cease to be progressive, and nothing exacts that all truths should be promulgated in a single day. If God deemed proper to give to his people, so long as they needed it, a legislation adapted to their social condition, this legislation, divinely given at that time, may be also divinely abrogated afterward. And this is what has taken place. Those who quote to us texts from the Old Testament concerning slavery, appear to have forgotten the saying of Jesus Christ in refer-

ence to another institution, divorce: "It was on account of the hardness of your hearts." Yes, on account of the hardness of their hearts, God established among the Israelites, incapable, at that time, of rising higher, provisory regulations,* perfect as regards his condescension, but most imperfect, as he declares himself, as regards the absolute truth. He who makes no account of this great fact will find in the books of Moses, and in the Prophets, pretexts either for practising to-day what was tolerated only for a time, or for attacking the Scriptures, indignant at what they contain.

It was Jesus Christ himself, therefore, who drew the line of demarcation between the law and the Gospel—who announced the end of local and temporary institutions. Has he revealed other institutions, this time definitive? To form such an idea of the Gospel, we must never have opened it. The Gospel is not a Koran. In the Koran, we doubtless find both civil and criminal laws, and the principles of government; the Apostles did not once tread on this ground. Fancy what their work would have been, had they substituted a social for a spiritual revolution—had they touched, above all, the question of slavery, which formed part of the fundamental law of the ancient world. And here I wish my thought to be clearly comprehended: I do not pretend that the Apostles were conscious of the unlawfulness of slavery, and that they avoided pointing it out through policy, for fear of compromising their work. No, indeed, this happened unconsciously. According to all appearances, they held the opinions of their times, and God revealed nothing to them on the subject, wishing that the abolition of slavery, like all the social results of the Gospel, should be produced by moral agency, which works from within outward, which changes the heart before changing the actions.

* These provisory and imperfect regulations appear none the less admirable when compared, not only with the systems of legislation of other nations of antiquity, but with those which prevail to-day even in the Southern States. According to the law of Moses, the Jewish slave always becomes free in seven years; the foreign slave also becomes free when his master wounds him in chastising him; he has the right to testify in law; he has the right to acquire and to possess.



At the time of the Apostles, there were many other abuses than slavery; they never wrote a word in their condemnation. They make allusions to war, yet say nothing of the nameless horrors which then attended it; they speak of the sword placed in the king's hands to punish crime, yet say nothing of those atrocious tortures, in the first rank of which must be cited crucifixion; they make use of figures borrowed from the public games, yet say

nothing either of the combats of the gladiators, or of the abominations which sullied other spectacles; they unceasingly call to mind the reciprocal relations of husbands and wives, of parents and children, yet say nothing of the despotic authority which the Roman law conferred upon the father, or of the debasement to which it condemned the wife. The evangelical method is this: it has not occupied itself with communities, yet has wrought the profoundest of the social revolutions; it has not demanded any reform, yet has accomplished all of them; the atrocities of war and of torture, the gladiatorial combats and immodest spectacles, the despotism of fathers and the debasement of women, all have disappeared before a profound, internal action, which attacks the very roots of the evil.

Not only does the Gospel forbear to touch on social and religious problems, but, even on questions of morals, it refuses to furnish detailed solutions. Its system of morality is very short; and in this lies its greatness, through this it becomes morality instead of casuistry. Cases of conscience, special directions, a moral code, promulgated article by article—you will find in it nothing of this sort. What you will find there, and there alone, is a growing morality, which passes my expression. Two or three sayings were written eighteen centuries ago, and these sayings contain in the germ a series of commandments, of transformation, of progression, which we have not nearly exhausted. I spoke a moment since of the progress of revelations; I must speak now of the progress which is being wrought in virtue of a revelation constantly the same, but constantly becoming better understood, which multiplies our duties in proportion as it enlightens our conscience. With the one saying: "What ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them," the Gospel has opened before us infinite vistas of moral development.



Before this one saying, the cruelties and infamous customs of ancient society, not mentioned by the Apostles, have successively succumbed; before this one saying, the modern family has been formed; before this one saying, American slavery will disappear as European slavery has disappeared already. With this saying, we are all advancing, we are learning, and we shall continue to learn. Yes, the time will come, I am convinced, when we shall see new duties rise up before us, when we cannot with a clear conscience maintain customs, what, I know not, which we maintain conscientiously to-day.

This carries us somewhat further, it must be granted, than a list of fixed duties *ne varietur;* it

opposes slavery in a different manner than a sentence pronounced once for all. The Gospel took the surest means of overthrowing it when, letting alone the reform of institutions, it contented itself with pursuing that of sentiments; when it thus prepared the time when the slaveholder himself would be forced to ask what is contained in the inexhaustible saying: "What ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." Even in the heart of the Southern States, despite the triple covering of habits, prejudices, and interests, this saying is making its way, and is disturbing the consciences of the people much more than is generally believed. And the work that it has begun it will finish; it will force the planters to *translate* the word SLAVERY, to consider one by one the abominable practices which constitute it. Is it to do to others as we would that they should do to us, to sell a family at retail? To maintain laws which give over every slave, whether wife or maiden, to her owner, whatever he may be, and which take away from this maiden, from this wife, the *right* of remembering her modesty and her duties—what do Christians call this? To produce marketable negroes, to dissolve marriages, to ordain adulteries, to inflict ignoble punishment, to interdict instruc-



tion—is this doing to others what we would that they should do to us?

The Christian sense of right is relentless, thank God; it does not suffer itself to be deceived by appearances; where we dispute about words, it forces us to go to facts. Now, look at the facts which are really in question in America, when the great subject of slavery is discussed there theoretically. Against the great evangelical system of morality, the Judaical interpretations of such or such a text have little chance. The epistle of Paul, sending back to Philemon his fugitive slave Onesimus, is quoted to us. Assuredly, the Apostle pronounces in it no anathema against slavery, nor does he exact enfranchisement; these ideas were unknown to him; but he says: "I beseech thee for my son whom I have begotten in my bonds, whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is my own bowels. Without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved. Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do also more than I say."

Does any one fancy Philemon treating Onesi-

mus, after this epistle, as fugitive slaves are treated in America, putting up his wife and children directly after for sale, or delivering him over to the first slave merchant that was willihg to take charge of him, and carry him a hundred leagues away? It is so certain that Philemon did more than had been told him, that the Epistle to the Colossians shows us the "faithful and well-beloved brother Onesimus" honorably mentioned among those concerned about the spiritual interests of the church.

Do what one will, there is an implied abolition of slavery (implied but positive) at the bottom of that close fraternity created by the faith in the Saviour. Between *brethren*, the relation of master and slave, of merchant and merchandise, cannot long subsist. To sell on an auction-block or deliver over to a slave-driver an immortal soul, for which Christ has died, is an enormity before which the Christian sense of right will always recoil in the end. "In this," it is written, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, nor circumcision nor uncircumcision, nor barbarian nor Scythian, nor bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." Let slaveholders put to themselves the question what they would say to-day if the epistle to Philemon were addressed to them; and it is addressed to them; the Onesimuses of the South—and such there are—are



thus thrown upon the conscience of their masters, their brothers.

I have said enough on the subject to dispense with examining very numerous passages in which slavery is *supposed* by the writers of the New Testament. The duties of masters and of slaves are laid down by them without doubt, and the existence of the institution is not contested for a moment; only, it is brought face to face with that which will slay it: the doctrine of salvation through Christ, of pardon, of humility, of love, is, in itself, and without the necessity of expressing it, the absolute negation of slavery.

It has fully proved so, and the early ages of Christianity leave no doubt as to the interpretation given by Christians to the teachings of the Apostles. Despite the rapid corruptions introduced into the churches, we see one brilliant fact shining forth in them: emancipations becoming more frequent, slaves, as well as free men, succeeding to ecclesiastical offices, spiritual equality producing the fruit which it cannot help producing, namely, legal equality. Observe, too, how the edicts of the emperors multiplied as soon as the influence of Christianity was exerted in the Roman world. And all these edicts had but one aim: to sweeten servitude, to in-

crease affranchisement by law, to facilitate voluntary emancipation.

What the Gospel did then against European slavery, it is doing now against American slavery. Its end is the same; its weapons are the same; they have not rusted during eighteen centuries. Those planters of the English islands were not mistaken, who, instinctively divining where lay their great enemy, had recourse to every measure to expel missionaries from among them. Neither were those Texan executioners mistaken, who lately put to death the missionary Bewley, a touching martyr to the cause of the slaves. I ask, in the face of the gallows of Bewley, what we are to think of that prodigious paradox according to which the Gospel is the patron of slavery. To those who mistake its meaning on this point, the Gospel replies by its acts; it replies also by the unanimous testimony of its servants. What is more striking, in fact, than to see that, apart from the country in which the action of interests and habits disturbs the judgment of Christians, there is but one way of comprehending and interpreting the Scripture on this point? Consult England, France, Germany; Christians everywhere will tell you that the Gospel abolished slavery, although it does not say a single word which would proclaim this abolition. Why, if the



doubt were possible, would not diversity of opinions be also possible among disinterested judges? To speak only of France, see the synods of our free churches, which continually stigmatize both Swedish intolerance and American slavery; see an address signed three years ago by the pastors and the elders of five hundred and seventy-one French churches, which has gone to carry to the United States the undoubted testimony of a conviction which in truth is that of all.

It seems to me that our demonstration is complete. What would it be if I should add that American slavery, which its friends so strangely claim to place under the protection of the Apostles, has nothing in common with that of which the Apostles had cognizance. The thing, however, is certain. Slavery, in the United States, is founded on color, it is *negro* slavery. Now, this is a fact wholly new in the history of mankind, a monstrous fact, which profoundly modifies the nature of slavery. Before Las Casas, that virtuous creator of the slave trade, the name of which comprises to him alone a whole commentary on the maxim "Do evil that good may come," before Las Casas, no one had thought of connecting slavery with race. Now, the slavery connected with race is that of all others most difficult to uproot, for it bears an indelible

sign of inequality, a sign which the law did not create, and which it cannot destroy.

Such was not the slavery that offered itself to the eyes of the Prophets and Apostles; a normal servitude, of right, based upon a native and indestructible inferiority was not then in question, but an accidental servitude among equals, to which the chances of war had given birth, and which emancipation suppressed entire. Quite different is the slavery which depends on race, and which, it may be said, supposes a malediction; do what one will, this latter will subsist, it will, in a manner, survive itself; it will find, besides, in the idea of a providential dispensation, the natural excuse for its excesses. This slavery the Bible condemns in the most explicit manner. If its champions dare suppose two species, the book of Genesis shows them all mankind springing from one man, and the Gospel recounts to them the redemption wrought in behalf of all the descendants of Adam; if they argue from the curse pronounced against Canaan, the Old Testament presents to them the detailed enumeration of the Canaanites, a vast family, in which the whites figure as well as the blacks.

In short, there is a deadly struggle between the Gospel and slavery under all its forms, and particularly under the odious form which the African slave trade has given it in modern times. The Gospel has been, is, and will be, at the head of every earnest movement directed against slavery. It is important that it should be so; it is the only means of avoiding the acts of violence, the revolts, the extreme calamities from which the whites and the blacks would equally suffer. The Gospel is admirable, inasmuch as by the side of the duties of masters, it proclaims those of slaves; as in the time of the Apostles, it does not hesitate to recommend to them gentleness, submission, scrupulous fidelity, love for those who maltreat them, the practice of difficult virtues; it makes them free within, in order to render them capable of becoming free without.



To judge of this method, we have only to compare the miserable population of St. Domingo with the beautiful free villages which cover the English islands. How true the saying: "The wrath of man never accomplishes the justice of God." Wherever the wrath of man has had full sway, even to chastise abominable abuses, it has remained a curse. I tremble when I think of the revolts which may break out at any moment in the Southern States. Bloodshed, let us not forget, would sully our ban-

ner; to the right of the slaves, such a crisis would be forever opposed, and who knows whether a terrible return might not burst upon them?

The mind becomes troubled at the mere image of the horrors that would ensue from civil war. May the Christians of America comprehend, at length, in a more perfect manner, the greatness of the part that God reserves for them, and the extent of the responsibilities that are weighing upon them. To take a stand frankly against slavery; to remove their last pretexts from sincere men who seek to reconcile it with the Gospel; to organize in the North the action of a vast moral power; to address to the South words breathing forth truth and charity; to appeal without wearying to the hearts of masters and slaves; to prepare for trying moments that guarantee which nothing can replace, the common faith of the blacks and the whites; to keep courage even when all seems lost; to practise the Christian vocation, which consists in pursuing and realizing the impossible; to show once more to the world the power that resides in justice—this is to accomplish a noble task.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PRESENT CRISIS.

We now possess the principal elements of our solution; we can approach the problem just propounded by the present crisis, and, confining ourselves no longer to the appreciation of the past, can glance at the future. Not, indeed, that I make any pretensions to prophecy; political predictions, suspected with reason in all times, should be still more so at our epoch, which is that of the unforeseen. But I have a right to prove that the work which is being pursued in America is, as I have affirmed, a work of elevation, not of destruction. The dangers which the nation is advancing to meet are nothing, compared with those towards which it was lately progressing; the election of Mr. Lincoln, and the secession of the cotton States have introduced a new position which at last affords a glimpse of real chances of salvation.

I have named secession: what are we to think of the principle on which it rests? For this question another may be substituted: what is a Confederation? If we reduce it, which is inadmissible, to a simple league of States, it still remains none the less binding on each of them, so long as the end of the league remains intact. Never yet existed on earth, a federal compact conceived in this wise: "The States which form a part of this league will remain in it only till it pleases them to leave it." Such, notwithstanding, is the formula on which the Southern theorists make a stand. Among the anarchical doctrines that our age has seen hatched, (and they are numerous,) this seems to me worthy of occupying the place of honor. This right of separation is simply the *liberum veto* resuscitated for the benefit of federal institutions. As in the horseback diets of Poland, a single opposing vote could put a stop to every thing, so that it only remained to vote by sabre-strokes, so Confederations, recognizing the right of separation, would have no other resort than brute force, for no great nation can allow itself to be killed without defending itself.

Picture to yourselves, I intreat you, the progress that political demoralization would make under such a system. As there is never a law or a measure



that is not displeasing to some one, it would be necessary to live in the presence of the continually repeated threat: "If the law passes, if the measure is adopted, if the election takes place, if you do not do all I want, if you do not yield to all my caprices, I leave you, I constitute myself an independent State, I provoke the formation of a rival Confederacy." The worst causes are the readiest to threaten in this style; having nothing reasonable to say in their own favor, they willingly proceed to violence, and the saying of Themistocles would find here a legitimate application: "You are angry, therefore, you are wrong."

What the result of this would be, we can imagine. No question would be longer judged by its own merits; the despotism of bad men would be established; expedients would take the place of principles; fear would put justice to flight; national resolutions would be nothing more than compromises and bargains. This, we must admit, is something like what has been passing in the United States since the South proclaimed its ultra policy, and placed its pretensions under the protection of its threats. If they had once more bowed the head, all would have been lost; the dignity, the mental liberty of America, would have suffered complete

shipwreck; of all this noble system of government, there would have remained standing but a single maxim: Accord always and everywhere whatever is necessary to prevent the separation of the South. Unconstitutional in all places, the theory of separation is doubly so in the United States, where the federal system is more concentrated than elsewhere. It is without doubt a federal system; the separate States preserve the right in it of regulating their special legislation, of governing themselves as they choose, and even of holding and practising principles which are profoundly repugnant to other parts of the Confederation; the central power is, however, endowed with an extended sphere.

It has its taxes, its officers, its army, its courts; it possesses in the Territory of the different States federal property depending upon it alone; in fine, its general government and general legislation apply to the effective handling of all the essential interests of the nation. I am not surprised that the American Confederation is so strongly cemented together, excluding the pretended right of separation better than any other; the States that united towards the close of the last century were already in the habit of acting in concert; they were of the same blood, and had lived under the same rule;



their history, their interests, their customs, their tongue, their religion, all contributed to bind them closely to each other.

Besides, the question is unanimously resolved in the United States. Apart from the *fire-eaters*, not a person is found who has the slightest doubt as to the impossibility of modifying, by the violent decision of a few, the common Constitution which contains the enumeration of the States, and which can only be amended by a solemn act, voted in the special form prescribed by the compact. Mr. Lincoln merely expressed the general opinion when he said the other day: "The Union is a regular marriage, not a sort of free relation which can be maintained only by passion." *Secession is Revolution* is a political axiom which has been current at all times in the United States. It is because they are something else than a juxtaposition of States, that they comprise, by the side of a Senate in which all the States are equal, a House of Representatives, in which the number of deputies is in proportion to the population. "Our Constitution," wrote Madison, "is neither a centralized State nor a Federal Government, but a blending of the two." The experience which they had had from 1776 to 1789 had taught the different States the necessity of giving a

more concentrated character to their federation. Let us not forget that they are bound by oath to remain faithful to *perpetual union*, and that there is not a federal officer in America who has not sworn to maintain this Union.

I shall not dwell on the fact that the Confederation purchased with its money two of the States that now pretend to secede from it; that it gave seventy-five millions to France for Louisiana, and twenty-five millions to Spain for Florida; no, I choose to appeal from this to precedents, the authority of which is not contested, and which form, in some sort, the interpreting commentary of the Constitution. In the last century, the State of New York, on giving in its adhesion to the Constitution, desired to reserve to itself this same power of seceding some day if it pleased; but such a reservation was rejected. At the epoch of the war of 1812 and the embargo laws, a convention of the New England States assembled at Hartford, and talked of eventual separation, whereupon the Southern party likened all separation without consent to treason, and this doctrine was sustained by the *Richmond Inquirer*, the organ of Jefferson. When, afterwards, South Carolina, accustomed to the fact, dared proclaim that act of nullification which was



the prelude to a complete renunciation of federal obligations, it was plainly signified to her that a revolt would be suppressed by force of arms, and she yielded on the spot. When, the other day, this same South Carolina lowered the colors of the United States, and unfurled the Palmetto flag, Mr. Buchanan himself proclaimed (how could he do otherwise?) the flagrant illegality of such an act; it is true, that, after having declared it illegal, he took care to disavow all intention of putting the law in force.

And this same conduct of Mr. Buchanan is the precise explanation of the prodigious haste which the South Carolinians have used in their proceedings. They knew that the President in power could not, if he would, act with vigor against his own party. His inaction was assured; there were two months of interregnum, of which it was important to make the most; so that Mr. Lincoln, on coming into office, might find himself checked, or at least harassed, by the power of a deed accomplished.

It seems as though Mr. Buchanan was anxious himself to give the signal of revolt. The message that was issued by him, after the election of Mr. Lincoln, is really the most extraordinary document ever

of Nebraska to prohibit slavery in its Territory; a Government falling apart by piecemeal, for fear of compromising itself by resisting some part of the South: do you know of any thing so shameful? Mr. Buchanan will end as he began: for four years, he has been struggling to obtain an extension of slavery; for a month, he has been favoring the plans of separation, by opposing his force of inertia to the growing indignation of the North.

Being unable to prevent every thing, he does at least what he can: forced to send some reinforcements, he speedily withdraws them in a manner seemingly designed to render easy the attack on Fort Sumter and to discourage Major Anderson. In the hands of a President who understood his duties, things would have gone on very differently. In the first place, the South would have known on what to rely, and would have been reminded of the message of General Jackson in 1833, exacting the *immediate* disbanding of its troops; next, preliminary measures of precaution would not have been systematically neglected; lastly, at the first symptom of revolt, a sufficient number of ships of war would have been sent to Charleston to insure the regular collection of taxes and respect for the Federal property. Nothing is so pacific as resolution:



face to face with a strong Government, we look twice before launching into adventures; but, with Mr. Buchanan, it was almost impossible for the cotton States to refrain from precipitating themselves headlong into them. The repression that will come by and by will not repair the evil that has been done. Explanations will also follow too late; it was for the President to reply on the spot, and categorically, to the manifestos issued by the South. To let the violent States know that their unconstitutional plans would meet a prompt chastisement; to let the neighboring States know that their sovereignty was by no means menaced, and that they would continue to regulate their internal institutions as they pleased; to say to all that the discussion of plans of abolition was not in question; to say too to all that the majorities of free-soilers would be protected in the Territories, and that the conquests of slavery were ended: what language would have been better fitted than this to isolate the Gulf States—perhaps to check them?

I say *perhaps*, because I know that passions had reached such a pitch of exasperation that a rupture seemed inevitable. In South Carolina, for example, the Governor had recommended both Houses in advance to take measures for seceding if

Mr. Lincoln should be elected; a special commission was nominated, and held permanent session. In Texas, Senator Wigfall did not fear to say, in supporting Mr. Breckenridge: "If any other candidate is elected, look for stormy weather. There may be a Confederation, indeed, but it will not number more than thirty-three States." Mr. Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, and Mr. Benjamin, of Louisiana, held no less explicit language, announcing that at the first electoral defeat of the South, it would set about forming a separate Confederation, long since demanded by its true interests.

What the South called its "interests," what it ended by adopting as a political platform, outside of which there was no safety, was, as we have seen, the subjugation of majorities in the Territories, the restriction of sovereignty in the Northern States, the reform of the liberty bills, which refused the prisons of these States and the co-operation of their officers, to the Federal agents charged with arresting fugitive slaves, the power of transporting slavery over the whole Confederation, the duty of extending indefinitely the domain of slavery. Who paid Walker? Who continually recruited bands of adventurers to launch on Cuba or Central America? Who prepared the well-known lists of slave



States with which the South counted on enriching itself: four States some day to be carved out of Texas, (the South had caused this to be authorized in advance,) three States to be created in the Island of Cuba, an indefinite number of States to be detached one after another from Central America and Mexico? Who clamorously demanded the reëstablishment of the African slave trade, alone capable of peopling this vast extent, and of lowering the excessive price of the negroes supplied by the producing States? The extreme South, which alone was concerned in this, saw gigantic vistas opening before it on which it fastened with ecstasy. Now, already, in spite of the more or less avowed support of Mr. Buchanan, its success was already checked, it felt itself provoked and thwarted. Henceforth, all its hopes were concentrated on the election of 1860: we may judge, therefore, of its disappointment, and of the furious ardor with which it must have seized upon its last resource, namely, secession, which might prove in its hands either a means of terrifying the North, and of bringing it again under the yoke, or of entering alone into a new destiny, of having elbow-room, and of devoting itself entirely to the propagation of slavery!

The facts are known; I do not think of recount-

ing them. I content myself with remarking the enthusiasm which prevails in the majority of the cotton States. One could not commit suicide with a better grace. It is easy to recognize a country hermetically sealed to contradiction, which is enchanted with itself, and which ends by accomplishing the most horrible deeds with a sort of conscientious rejoicing. The enthusiasm which is displayed in proclaiming secession, or in firing on the American flag, is displayed in freeing the captain of a slaver, a noble martyr to the popular cause. There is something terrifying in the enthusiasm of evil passions. When I consider the folly of the South, which so heedlessly touches the match to the first cannon pointed against its confederates; when I see it without hesitation give the signal for a war in which it runs the risk of perishing; when I read its laws, decreeing the penalty of death against any one who shall attack the Palmetto State, and its dispatches, in which the removal of Major Anderson is exacted, in the tone which a master employs toward a disobedient servant, I ask myself whether the present crisis could really have been evaded, and whether any thing less than a rude lesson could have opened eyes so obstinately closed to the light.

People have taken in earnest the plans of the



Southern Confederacy. Nothing could be more imposing, in fact, if they had the least chance of success. The fifteen Southern States, already immense, joined to Mexico, Cuba, and Central America—what a power this would be! And, doubtless, this power would not stop at the Isthmus of Panama: it would be no more difficult to reëstablish slavery in Bolivia, on the Equator, and in Peru, than in Mexico. Thus the "patriarchal institution" would advance to rejoin Brazil, and the dismayed eye would not find a single free spot upon which to rest between Delaware Bay and the banks of the Uruguay. Furthermore, this colossal negro jail would be stocked by a no less colossal slave trade: barracoons would be refilled in Africa, slave expeditions would be organized on a scale hitherto unknown, and whole squadrons of slave ships (those "floating hells") would transport their cargoes under the Southern colors, proudly unfurled; patriotic indignation would be aroused at the mere name of the right of search, and the whole world would be challenged to defend the liberty of the seas.

Such is the project in its majestic unity. Such is the glorious ideal which the extreme South hoped to attain by its union with the North, and which it

now seeks to attain by its separation. The hearts of men beat high at the thought, and many are ready to give their lives heroically in order to secure its realization. Alas! we are thus made; passion excuses every thing, transfigures every thing.

Each one feels instinctively, moreover, that no part of the plan can be separated from the whole; that it must be great to be respected; that to people this vast extent with slaves, the African slave trade is indispensable; of course, they took care not to avow all this at the first moment; it was necessary, in the beginning, to delude others, and perhaps themselves; it was necessary to obtain recognition. On this account, the prudent politicians who have just drawn up the programme of the South, have been careful to record in it the prohibition of the African slave trade, and the disavowal of plans of conquest. But this does not prevent the necessities of the position from becoming known by and by. True programmes, adapted to the position of affairs, are not changed from day to day. I defy the slave States, provided their Confederation succeeds in existing, to do otherwise than seek to extend towards the South; hemmed in on all sides by liberty, incessantly provoked by the impossibility of preventing the flight of their negroes, they will



fall on those of their neighbors who are the least capable of resistance, and whose territory is most to their convenience. This fact is obvious, as it is also obvious that they will have recourse to the African slave trade to people these new possessions. It is in vain to deny it, on account of Europe, or of the border States; the necessities will subsist, and, sooner or later, they will be obeyed. If the border States persist in deluding themselves on this point, and fancy that they will always keep the monopoly of this infamous supply of negroes sold at enormous prices, this concerns them. In any case, the illusion will finally become dispelled. It is not in the nomination of Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederate States, that we are to look for the final repudiation of those projects of which this politic man is in some sort the living representative.

And when they are renewed, we shall see an invincible obstacle rise up in the way of the realization of a plan so monstrous. As soon as the African slave trade is established, the domestic slave trade will cease, the revenues of the producing States will be suppressed, the price of negroes will fall everywhere, and the fortunes of all the planters will fall in like proportion. Can it be possible that they will accept the chances of civil war, of insurrections,

and of massacres, in order to ensure to themselves the risk of ruin in case of success? Can it be possible, above all, that Europe will lend a hand, as we seem to imagine, to the most audacious attack ever directed against Christian civilization?

I know that we must always make allowance for probable perfidy, and I am far from dreaming, as times go, that chivalric Europe will refuse to serve her own interests because these interests would cost her principles something. No, indeed, I imagine nothing of the sort; yet I think that I should wrong the nineteenth century if I supposed it capable of certain things. There are sentiments which cannot be provoked beyond measure with impunity.

Remember the shudder that ran through the world when Texas, a free country, was transformed into slave territory as the result of the victory of the United States; multiply the crime of Texas by ten, by twenty, and you will have a faint image of the impression of disgust that the Southern republic is about to call forth among us.

It is important that they should know this in advance at Charleston, and not delude themselves as to the kind of welcome for which the Palmetto State and its accomplices have to hope. Not only will no one recognize their pretended independence at



this time, for to recognize it would be to tread under foot the evident rights of the United States, but they will excite one of those moral repulsions which the least scrupulous policy is forced to take into account. It is one thing to hold slaves; it is another to be founded expressly to serve the cause of slavery on earth; this is a new fact in the history of mankind. If a Southern Confederacy should ever take rank among nations, it will represent slavery, and nothing else. I am wrong; it will also represent the African slave trade, and the fillibustering system. In any case, the Southern Confederacy will be so far identified with slavery, with its progress, with the measures designed to propagate and perpetuate it here below, that a chain and whip seem the only devices to be embroidered on its flag.

Will this flag cover the human merchandise which it is designed to protect against the interference of cruisers? Will there be a country, will there be a heart, forgetful enough of its dignity to tolerate this insolent challenge flung at our best sympathies? I doubt it, and I counsel the Carolinians to doubt it also. The representative of England at Washington is said to have already declared that in presence of the slave trade thus practised, his government will not hesitate to pursue slavers into the very ports of

the South. France will hold no less firm a tone; whatever may be the dissent as to the right of search, the *right of slave ships*, be sure, will be admitted by none; a sea-police will soon be found to put an end to them; if need be, the punishment will be inflicted on their crews that is in store for a much less crime, that of piracy; these wretches will be hung with short shrift at the yard-arm, without form or figure of law.

The Carolinians deceive themselves strangely. They fancy that they will be treated with consideration, that they will even be protected, because they maintain the principle of free trade, and because they hold the great cotton market. Free trade, cotton, these are the two recommendations upon which they count to gain a welcome in Europe. Let us see what we are to think of this.

I shall not be suspected in what I am about to say of free trade—I, who have always been its declared partisan; I, who sustained it twenty years ago as candidate in the bosom of one of the electoral colleges of Paris, and who applauded unreservedly our recent commercial treaty with England; but man does not live by bread alone, and if ever a school of commercial liberty should anywhere be found that should carry the adoration of its principle so far as to sacrifice to it other and nobler liberties, a school disposed to set the question of cheapness above that of justice, and to extend a hand to whoever should offer it a channel of exportation, maledictions enough would not be found for it. Let England take care; those who have no love for her, take delight in foretelling that her sympathies will be weighed in the balance with her interests, and that the protection of the North risks offending her much more than the slavery of the South. I am convinced that it will amount to nothing, and that we shall once more see how great is the influence of Christian sentiment among Englishmen. Should the reverse be true, we must veil our faces, and give over this vile bargaining, adorned with the name of free trade, to the full severity of public opinion.



I repeat that it will amount to nothing. Moreover, do not let us exaggerate either the protective instincts of the North or the free trade of the South. The new tariff just adopted at Washington (a grave error, assuredly, which I do not seek to palliate) may be amended in such a manner as to lose the character of prohibition with which certain States have sought to invest it. Let us not forget, that by the side of Pennsylvania, which urges the excessive

increase of taxes, the North counts a considerable number of agricultural States, the interests of which are very different. Now, these are the States which elected Mr. Lincoln, and which will henceforth have the most decisive weight on the destinies of the Union. We may be tranquil, the protective reaction which has just triumphed in part will not long be victorious. All liberties cling together: the liberty of commerce will have its day in the United States.

But if all liberties cling together, all slaveries cling together also, and cannot be liberal at will, even in commercial matters. The Southern States plume themselves on being thus liberal, and it is sought to give them this reputation. However, the facts are little in harmony with their brilliant programme. Far from proclaiming free trade, the "Confederate" States, by a formal act adopted on the 18th of February, have maintained the tariff of 1857. They have gone further: their Congress has just established a new and relatively heavy tax, which must burden the exportation of cotton. This is not commercial liberty as I understand it.

Notwithstanding, the watchword has been given, the champions of slavery have skilfully organized their system of manœuvre in Europe, and it is de-



veloping according to their wishes. To be indignant at the new tariff, to speak only of the new tariff, to create by means of the new tariff a sort of popularity for the Southern republic—such is the end which they sought to attain. I doubt whether they have fully obtained it, although the South, I say it to our shame, has already succeeded in procuring friends and praisers among us. The factitious indignation will fall without doubt; but cotton remains: at the bottom, the South counts much more upon cotton than free trade to bring the Old World into her interests. On rushing into a mad enterprise, all the perils of which, enraged as it was, it could not disguise, it said to itself that its cotton would protect it. Is it not the principal and almost the only producer of a raw material, without which the manufactures of the whole world would stand still? Are there not millions of workmen in England (one-sixth of the whole population!) who live by the manufacture of cotton? Is not the wealth of Great Britain founded on cotton, which alone furnishes four-fifths of its exported manufactures? All this is true, and they are not ignorant of it at Manchester. Notwithstanding, what happened there the other day? An immense meeting was convoked for the purpose of carefully

examining the great cotton business, and the perils created by the present crisis. I do not know that among these manufacturers, knowing that their interests were menaced, that among these workmen, knowing that their means of livelihood were at stake, that from the heart of this country, knowing that want, famine, and insurrections might come to her door, there arose a voice, a single one, to address a word of sympathy to the Southern States, and to promise them the slightest support. It was because there was something transcending manufacturing supplies, and even the bread of families: the need, I am glad to state, of protesting against certain crimes. Instead of extending a hand to the secessionists of Charleston, the English manufacturers resolutely laid the foundation of a vast society, destined to develop on the spot the production of cotton by free labor in India, the Antilles, and Africa. Such was their answer; and if you knew their most secret thoughts, you would have no difficulty in discovering that the ambition of the South, its turbulent policy, and its aggressions without pretext, are far from exciting the gratitude of English commerce, or of inspiring its confidence.

Every one in England comprehends that, from the standpoint of interest, the separation of the



South is a mortal blow dealt to the cotton production, which will henceforth have the aid neither of credit nor entrepôts, and which is advancing towards catastrophes which may involve a conflict of arms. From another and higher standpoint, the public opinion of England has not made us wait for its verdict: already its abolition societies have regained life and begun their movements; already, under the pressure of the universal feeling, the Court of Queen's Bench has revised the affair of the negro Anderson, to deliver into the strong hands of the metropolis a question before which the judicial authority of Canada hesitated, and to pronounce at length a verdict of acquittal.

The South has taken account in its calculations neither of man nor God. God especially seems to have been forgotten, though it placed itself formally under his protection. Who does not shudder at the enunciation of these unheard-of plans: we will do this, then we will do that; we will hold England through cotton, we will entice France through influence—we will have many negroes, much produce, and much money! And what will God think of it? Everywhere else but in South Carolina, this question would appear formidable beyond expression.

If the South has taken its wishes for realities in Europe, it has committed the same error in America. Its secession has some chance (and what a chance!) only on condition of drawing in all the slave States without exception; now it seems by no means probable that such a unanimity, supposing it to be gained by surprise, could ever be maintained successfully. The negro-raising States could not possibly regard the future in the same light as the consuming States. Their revenues are based on the value of the domestic slave trade, which bears no resemblance to that of the African slave trade. Ask Virginia or Maryland long to sustain a policy, the result of which would be to lower the price of her slaves in one day from a thousand dollars to two cents! This is so clearly felt in the extreme South, that the provisional constitution, adopted at Montgomery, is drawn up with an express view to reassuring the producing States on this point. They are afraid of the African slave trade! It shall not be reopened. They are anxious to sell their negroes! They shall be bought only of those States forming part of the Southern Confederacy. It belongs to them to ask now whether this Montgomery constitution, adopted for a year, really guarantees any thing to them, and whether



it is possible that an attempt will not be made to revive the African slave trade, provided the Southern Confederacy succeeds in enduring. However this may be, they are held apart by so many causes, that they would only unite to-day to separate to-morrow. I know well that the passions of slavery rule in many of the border States, especially in Virginia, as violently as in the extreme South. I do not disguise from myself that the habit of sustaining a deplorable cause in common has created between the border and the cotton States a bond of long standing and difficult to break. But I say this: the impulses of the first hour will have their morrow; when the frontier States witness the commencement of those territorial invasions which must necessarily bring the African slave trade in their train; when they know what reliance to place on the fine promises made to-day to attract them; when they perceive that in separating from the North, they themselves have removed the sole obstacle in the way of the flight of all their slaves; when, in fine, they feel weighing upon them, and them first, the perils of an armed struggle and a negro insurrection, they will listen perhaps to those of their citizens who, even now, are urging them to turn to the side of justice—of justice and of safety.

By the fewness of their slaves, by the nature of their climate, which resembles that of Marseilles and Montpellier, by the kind of cultivation to which their country is adapted, by the number of manufactures which are beginning to be established among them, it seems as if they must be led, or, at least, some day led back, to the policy of union. This is no discovery: the *seceded States* know it already; they form a separate band. America has not forgotten the retreat of the seven, which, a few months ago, dismembered the Democratic Convention assembled at Charleston. These seven were South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana; in other words, all those States which were the first to vote for secession. The same list, with the addition of Georgia and North Carolina, appeared again on the day of the Presidential election: these nine States alone adopted Mr. Breckenridge as their candidate.

Here, then, is a profound distinction, which attaches to interests and tendencies, which has manifested itself already, which will manifest itself more and more, and which will work, sooner or later, the salvation of the United States. The border States cannot unite with the cotton States definitively. They gave proofs of this in the last election. Five



among them, Tennessee, Kentucky, Delaware, Virginia, and Maryland, at that time took an intermediate position by making an intermediate choice: Mr. Bell. Without going so far, Missouri protested at least against the nomination of Mr. Breckenridge by casting its vote for Mr. Douglas. Better than this, a declared adversary of slavery, Mr. Blair, was elected representative by this same slave State, Missouri, on the day before the balloting for the presidency; and on the next day his friends voted openly for Mr. Lincoln, while no one dared annul their votes, as had been done four years before. Mr. Lincoln thus obtained fifteen thousand votes in Missouri, four thousand in Delaware, fifteen hundred in Maryland, a thousand in Kentucky, and as many in Virginia. The figures are nothing; the symptom is significant. The slave States of this intermediate region contain in their bosom, therefore, men who do not fear to attack the "patriarchal institution." Have we not just seen a Republican committee acting at Baltimore, in the midst of Maryland? Has not this same Maryland just rejected, by the popular vote, the infamous law which its legislature had adopted, and by virtue of which free negroes who should not quit the State would be reduced by right to slavery? When I remember

these facts, so important and so recent, I comprehend how it is that a Kentuckian holds the South at bay behind the menaced walls of Fort Sumter, and how the cabinet of Mr. Lincoln has ministers in its midst, who belong to the border States.

People take the peculiar situation of the border States too little into account in looking into the future which is preparing for America. They persist in presenting to us two great confederacies, and, in some sort, two United States, called to divide the continent. If any thing like this could occur, it could not endure. Doubtless, there are hours of vertigo from which we may look for every thing, even the impossible; and, who knows? perhaps the impossible most of all; nevertheless, the border States cannot attach themselves forever to a cause which is not their own. By the side of the manifestations which have taken place in Virginia and South Carolina, we have already a right to cite demonstrations of a different kind. Has not Missouri just decided prudently, that, in the matter of separation, the decisions of her legislature shall not be valid until ratified by the whole people? This little resembles the eagerness with which States elsewhere rush into secession. It is therefore probable that the United States will keep or soon bring back



into their bosom a considerable number of the border States. By their side, the gulf States will attempt to form a rival nation, aspiring to grow towards the South. Such is the true extent of the separation that is preparing.

Suppose these projects to become, some day, realities, we may ask whether a real weakening of the United States would be the result. Suppose even that another secession, based on different motives, which nothing foretells at present, should take place beyond the Rocky Mountains; suppose that a Pacific republic should some day be founded, would the American Confederation have reason to be greatly troubled at witnessing the formation on her sides of the association of the gulf States, California, and Oregon? Look at a map, and you will see that the valley of the Mississippi, and of the lakes, and the shores of the Atlantic, are not necessarily connected either with the Gulf of Mexico, (save the indispensable outlet at New Orleans,) or the regions beyond the great desert and the Rocky Mountains, the land of the Mormons and the gold-diggers. Unity is not always the absolute good, and it may be that progress must come through disruption. Who knows whether instantaneous secession would not perform the mission of resolving

certain problems otherwise insoluble? Who knows whether slavery must not disappear in this wise in the very effort that it makes to strengthen itself through isolation? Who knows whether it is not important to the prosperity and real power of the United States to escape from theories of territorial monopoly, those evil counsellors but too much heeded? Who knows, in fine, whether the day will not come, when, the questions of slavery once settled, new federal ties will again bind to the centre the parts that stray from it to-day?

I put these questions; I make no pretensions to resolve them. In any case, the imagination has had full scope for some time past. People have not been satisfied with the Southern Confederacy; have they not invented both the pretended Pacific Confederacy which I have just mentioned, and the central Confederacy, in which the border States will take shelter in common with two or three free States, as Pennsylvania and Indiana? Have they not supposed, in the bargain, (for they seem to find it necessary to discover the dissolution of the Union everywhere at all costs,) that the agricultural population of the West, discontented with the tariff recently adopted, and putting in practice the new maxim, according to which they are to have re-



course to separation, instead of pursuing reforms, will seek an asylum in Canada? I need not discuss such fables. I am convinced, for my part, that the principle of American unity is much more solid than people affirm; I see in the United States a single race, and almost a single family: they may divide, they will not cease to be related. The relationship will take back its rights. For the time, however, secession seems to have a providential part to enact. It facilitates, in certain respects, the first steps of Mr. Lincoln; thanks to it, the hostile majority in the Senate is blotted out, the uncertainty of the House of Representatives is decided, the Government becomes possible. In the face of the senators and representatives of the gulf States, I do not see how Mr. Lincoln could have succeeded in acting. Did not the Senate, last year, adopt the proposition of Mr. Jefferson Davis in opposition to the liberty of the Territories? Congress would have trammelled, one after another, all the measures of the new administration. Now, on the contrary, the rôle of the victorious party will be easy; its preponderance is assured in both Houses; the Supreme Court will cease, ere long, to represent the doctrines of the extreme South, and to issue Dred Scott decrees. This is a vast change. General Cass, in

truth, comprehended the interests of slavery better than Mr. Buchanan, when he demanded that the Government should arrest with vigor from the beginning the faintest wish of separation.