

were more sensitive to the rights of Slavery than was Slavery itself. The moral emasculation of the North was more piteous to behold than the servile life of the plantation. Young men were taught cowardice as a virtue. Literature was obliged to submit to the *Index Expurgatorius* of Commerce. School-books and histories were purged of all sentiments of freedom. Religious publishing houses deflowered the Gospel, emasculated religious books, and secretaries, changed to ferrets, chased liberty through every crack and cranny, as if it were vermin! Never before in the world was weakness so strong, oppression so secure, and liberty so utterly trodden under foot. The crack of a slave-driver's whip in Alabama was heard in New York and echoed along every street. Philadelphia, New York, Boston, like puppets in a show, danced, tumbled or lay flat, at a sign from the South, each beggarly city deathly afraid that the other would surpass it in subservience to the Slave interest.

New theories of society began to appear. Slavery, no longer apologetic, began to deride Liberty. At first obscurely, but soon with effrontery, Southern statesmen whose wisdom had passed to a proverb, began to plan and announce the subjection of the whole continent to Slavery. A new creed came up. Capital was to own labor. Despotism was the proper foundation on which to build republican governments. Free society was the curse of virtue and the source of all political vices.

Looking back upon that period, it is difficult yet to see why, with ordinary prudence, Slavery might not have maintained itself, and perpetuated its political influence for centuries. But it is God's everlasting decree that wickedness shall not be prudent. Despotism corrupts its own chiefs as much as it oppresses its dependents. Slavery breeds lawless men. Arrogance and presumption ruined Slavery.

From this culminating point of history, the Southern statesmen have presented a series of blunders that have no parallel in history, and which clearly show how impossible it is for supreme wrong to be sagacious or wise.

It was the true policy of Southern men, having all real power in their hands, to have maintained good nature when a few Northern malcontents cried out against them. Instead of good natured patience, they flamed into vindictive anger at free speech and free printing. They expelled from them, either by rope or other modes of exile, all who dared to speak; they rifled the mails, they stormed at the National Capital. It was all a blunder!

The North, quite subservient, should have been flattered and kept in profitable content. The Fugitive Slave Law was flung in its face! No one supposed this infamous law was designed to meet any real necessity. It was an insult to the despised moral sense of the North. It weakened the friends of the South and strengthened their enemies. It was a blunder!

As if Slavery was not likely to have enough conflicts, Southern statesmanship, stone-blind, determined to unloose old ones, and like untying the mythical bag of the winds, it brought upon itself a rage of tempests by abolishing the Missouri Compromise. The patient North was shocked and convulsed. A wise statesmanship would at least have waited, and sought to convince the North that it was not hurt, or in danger of harm. Slavery can never be wise. The shameful treatment of Kansas, the gigantic frauds, the bloodshed, the utter contempt for right or law, thoroughly aroused the North, and organized the Fremont campaign of 1856, which was the precursor of 1860, and a victorious Freedom.

The statesmen of Slavery were cunning disturbers, but they had no arts of peace. They had injected poison into the veins of a prosperous country, but they had no antidote. With an infatuation that will remain to the end of time as a monument of the folly and imbecility of Slavery, they determined to force the Slave-law upon the nation by the election of 1860, or to divide the country.

The election went against them. By conciliation, by temporizing, by any of the commonest arts of political management, during all the winter of 1860, and the spring of 1861, Southern leaders might have compromised, and by compromise, have regained their ascendancy. From the Northern point of view, the country was never in so much danger as during the winter preceding Mr. LINCOLN'S inauguration. The state of the public mind was such, and the fear of war was to timid men so appalling that with a grain of concession, and with a mere show of temperateness, the South might have changed the course of things. It was not to be!

The war, opened by the South, was the climacteric blunder. As a stroke of policy there inhered in it the capital vices which had marked the whole career of Southern statesmen, an arrogant overestimate of Southern superiority, and an arrogant contempt for Northern courage and for the Northern conscience.

The evolution of the war as a military history may be left to military critics, but, as a political history it is a congeries of blunders. At many points in the war, it was possible for the South, not only to bring hostilities to an end, but Southern statesmen might, by a rebound of gladness and generosity of the North at the ending of a cruel war, have obtained terms of settlement which would have given to slavery a new lease of life, and -new guarantees

against interference. Providence ordained that Conceit should prevail against Wisdom! Even down to the autumn of 1864, it was in the power of Southern statesmen to have closed the war on terms most favorable to themselves.

There can scarcely be a doubt that, with a little wisdom, during the depressing days preceding SHERMAN'S great campaign, the South might have secured a peace which would, in spite of the Proclamation of Emancipation have rescued slavery, secured the payment of the vast war debt, and ere long have brought back their statesmen into a position of influence quite as great as they had ever had. It was thought by them to be wiser to hold out—to utterly exhaust the wealth of the South, to bring her to bankruptcy and beggary before leading her captive to defeat.

So uniformly and consistently did Southern statesmen err in judgment from 1850 to 1860, that one who believes in a Divine Providence in human affairs, cannot but believe that they were given over to blindness, as much as ever was PHARAOH, and for the same reason, that God might before all the earth bring slavery into judgment!

The weakness, and utter exhaustion of the South, has made it impossible for her, or for her old allies, to influence the settlement of her affairs. That Constitution which her spirit had suborned to Slavery has been purged. Upon the spots where Slavery had entrenched itself, have arisen towers and citadels of Liberty. The industry of the South has been revolutionized. A new spirit has arisen. Industry is now mightier than class. Slaves are citizens. The hands that formerly carried the whip are now held out in solicitation for votes. In 1860 there was not a white man in all the South so low that he could not trample upon four million lower than he. In 1870 there is not, in all the same territory, a white man so high that he is not obliged to ask these downtrodden slaves leave to go to legislatures, or to sit in courts. The spirit of 1860 was, that every black man on the continent should be a slave. The decree of 1870 is that every black man shall be a citizen, and that every citizen shall have the right to vote!

This extraordinary history is not without its lesson to all who hereafter shall strive against overweening power for the establishment of justice and truth. It is but another and sublime instance of the Apostle's words: "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, * * * to bring to nought the things that are."

Those who remember what anti-slavery men were in 1850, and what they are in 1870, will need no commentary on that text.

Other gigantic wars there have been, other social revolutions, and other emancipations; but there is no other parallel to the emergence so suddenly of more than four million creatures from a position so low that the law refused to call them men, to the position of men, freemen, citizens clothed with the full power of suffrage. Nor is there another instance of a slave race, so suddenly elevated, whose docility, kindness, and industry so well merit freedom. They have been thrown up like a volcanic island out of the sea, but, unlike such sudden upheavals, they are not barren, but emerge from the troubled waters already clothed with vegetation and full of promise for the future.

We are yet too near to our own great epoch to judge it correctly. A longer focal distance must be attained before we can judge accurately of its proportions, its wide relations, and of its importance. The Fifteenth Amendment was undoubtedly incorporated into the Constitution with primary reference to our Anglo-African population. But it does not stop with them. It covers the races which are swarming to this continent from every region. This is a polyglot nation of common people, gathered from every race under the heavens. The Fifteenth Amendment is the boldest avowal ever made of our faith in the safety of self-government. Give men a chance, educate the manly side of character, leave them free and they will frame better laws, and better policies than can be made for them by thinkers, philosophers, or the wisest statesmen, acting as a governing class. Upon one side of the continent are pouring Asiatic emigrants, on the other, European, while already, the African largely possesses the land. We have thrown our laws, our government, our policy, our wealth and our civilization under the power of their miscellaneous vote. It is a sublime declaration that republicanism is not a sectarian government, but is the one rightful universal government! No government in this world is safe. But self-government is the safest. Human nature is not wholly trustworthy, but it is far safer when trusted than when doubted. Human nature is after all the one thing we have to build on. Like a field, it may raise weeds or it may produce wheat, according to the cultivation given. The American doctrine is "*Trust Human Nature and then see that it is kept worthy of trust!*"

For ourselves, we look forward to the Future with confidence. Universal Suffrage is logically consistent with our organic truths, congenial to human nature in political association, and, as we firmly believe, safe, and fruitful in good.

THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT.

The Emancipation of American Slaves is an illustrious instance of the final power of moral influences which in their advent seemed weak and contemptible. There can never be real historical parallels. But there cannot be even a superficial and apparent one to this, the Great Event of the nineteenth century.

Slavery stood at its sublime elevation about the year 1850. At that time it had firmly established itself as the great industrial system of the South, and it was turning its eyes to the South-west.

It over-ran Mexico and Central America, and to establish in all tropical America a republican empire based upon Slavery was not the dream but the avowed purpose of the leading spirits of the South. Nor was it at that time easy to see why the brilliant iniquity would not be crowned with success. What had Slavery ever undertaken without succeeding? Its own history justified such expectations.

Early Colonial Slavery was a foreign inoculation. It was more like a wart than a cancer, and like such excrescences on boys' hands, might be expected to drop off as vitality gave strength to the system.

Upon its early weakness came the awakened sensibilities of the Colonies for the great principles of Human Rights, and when the hot breath of the old Revolutionary war was blown into its face, it seemed to shrivel, and men counted it as a thing already perishing and to perish.

Yet, even then, it had the cunning of the serpent and seduced our political forefathers. It turned the edge of moral principle, and converted the Constitution into a shield. That which was ordained to be its death was in the end a minister of life to it. It secured the Capital of the Nation to slave soil, and soon began to be felt in political measures.

Liberty is centrifugal. It tends to individualization. The free North tended to diversity, in industry, in philosophy, and in religion.

The South was consolidated. Despotism is centripetal. A political society made up of Slavery at the bottom, and a brilliant, aristocratic barbarism at the top, will have all the force which comes from organized selfishness. This unity of the South was continually played off against the divisions of the North, and the political power of the nation passed into the hands of Southern statesmen.

In 1850 Slavery had become despotic over the continent. No measure could be carried without its consent. No man could hope for political preferment who resisted its authority. All parties succumbed to its dictation. It had first intimidated and then perverted the Courts of Justice, perverted the public sentiment of the nation, and suborned or silenced political economists. The great cities of the North, under a perpetual bribe of self-interest,