

Christian benevolence, animated by an unselfish love of country and of their fellow men, meeting by the consent and encouragement of their respective authorities, could, and in my solemn and deliberate judgment would, in ninety days agree upon terms which would be acceptable to a large majority of the American people, and by which the Union of these States would be more firmly established than ever before — the lives of millions spared, the hard earnings of the laborer left for him to enjoy, peace and domestic tranquillity restored. I would improve the armistice which winter declares to achieve many bloodless and permanent victories in favor of the Union and the constitution. I would not stop there. I would extend the armistice as long as there was hope of inducing the return of a single State. But suppose negotiation should fail. Then, indeed, would this administration be armed with an argument in favor of war which it has never yet possessed. This fact is well understood by the Executive and his advisers, but they refuse to negotiate because they have reason to believe that the Union would thus be restored and the war ended. But slavery would not thereby be abolished, and the scheme of building up a despotic, centralized federal government would be defeated. The war, therefore, goes on; the young men of the nation are swept into their graves upon the plain of battle, and the old men become slaves to the tax gatherer, not to restore the Union, but to give a worthless liberty to the black man, and to strike down the legal rights and privileges of the white man.

Sir, upon this question of negotiation, concession, compromise and union, I appeal for approval to my own conscience. It sustains me with all the force of a burning conviction of duty. By it I am lifted beyond the reach of

partisan malice. I appeal to the people! The voice and humane instincts of honest nature will plead my cause in their hearts. At their hands I fear no evil for the country. They are just and will appreciate a plain and inherent element of right. I appeal to future years. When candor, reason and Christianity sit in judgment on this struggle, every line which records the history of war or peace in all former ages, tells me that their verdict will be in favor of the principles which I advocate. I seize this hour of future triumph by anticipation. That it will come I entertain no more doubt than I do that I breathe the air of life this moment. I appeal, finally, to God before whom I stand, and into whose presence we all hasten to answer for our conduct and our motives. In that awful hour I humbly trust and believe that my feeble efforts to turn aside the devouring edge of the sword; to stay the hand of the great reaper, death; to pause in the horrid work of sending souls to their eternal account without repentance or pardon; to stop bereavement, woe, and tears around every fireside; to brighten the mournful face of the land with the radiance of peace; to reconstruct and restore a fraternal and harmonious Union will meet with the approval of the Father and go far toward relieving the newly liberated and trembling spirit of the terrors which surround it.

But, Mr. Chairman, what other declared purposes of the constitution for the accomplishment of which this government was established have been carried out by the policy and administration of the party now in power? Do they "promote the general welfare?" With the principles of justice everywhere suppressed, the blessing of liberty annihilated throughout all our borders, and the domestic tranquillity utterly destroyed, it is almost needless to inquire what is left

to constitute the general welfare. But it is my painful duty on this occasion not only to show that the principles of free government are dying, rapidly dying before our faces, but that the material prosperity, the absolute physical resources of the country are perishing also. The welfare, the strength, and glory of a nation are dependent in a vast measure upon the extent of its population and the amount of its wealth. Next to the virtue and intelligence of the people their numbers constitute the power and dignity of a State. The ancient commandment and the blessing delivered to the original founders of the human race was to be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth. And one of the richest promises to the Patriarchs of old was that their tribes and their descendants should increase until they became as the leaves of the forest and the sands of the seashore. Every public ruler who by wise political and social economy has rapidly swelled the population of his country, holds a place in history as a benefactor of his kind. Every human being is a machine of labor. Each head and each hand is a producer. The busy brain and the active muscle are perpetually adding to the storehouses, the granaries, and the merchant-ships of the world. It was a blessing and not a curse; it was in mercy and not in wrath that man was commanded to eat his bread in the sweat of his face. By obedience to this command the glory of civilization adorns the earth, and commerce penetrates the most distant seas. The fulfilment of this decree redeems the savage face of nature, builds up the great marts of trade, patronizes sciences and letters, erects temples to art and progress, and is a forerunner of the Christian faith. Labor is the fountain of all wealth, and of all happiness. Nations and individuals are alike utterly and entirely dependent upon it for their prosperity. And national pros-

perity is simply the result of individual labor. The humble and obscure toil of the honest ploughman, who,

"Homeward plods his weary way"

at nightfall, is the source of all the nation's greatness, the foundation of all its vast enterprises, the support of all its boasted revenues; it is the small spring breaking into a rivulet from the hill side, which flowing on and mingling with the other waters of its kindred at last swells into an ocean on whose bosom the destinies of the world are determined. . . .

Sir, I take leave of the question of the "general welfare." The bitter hour of a people's bloody sweat and agonizing tears will soon be here. The mournful shadows of its funeral pall are already penetrating the once bright and abundant homes of virtuous labor. The spirit of oppression is omnipresent in the land, and, like death and famine, none will escape the pangs which it inflicts. Let each eye which now beholds the sun take its last look at scenes of plenty and prosperity. Our fall from bounding wealth and unlimited resources to pinched and shrunken poverty and cowering bankruptcy, is as certain and as fatal under our present policy as the fall of Lucifer, the morning star, from heaven. And the exclamation of the laborer as he toils in a hopeless bondage to the public debt may well be as despairing as the anguish of the lost angel:

"Farewell happy fields,—
Where joy forever dwells. Hail horrors, hail
Infernal world, and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor."

And, now, Mr. Chairman, what else remains? What portion of the constitution can yet be found alive? What principle has been spared, preserved, or protected by the

destroyers who rule the nation? Have they provided for the common defence against foreign powers? The Emperor of France tramples the Monroe doctrine disdainfully under his feet. He overthrows the Republic of Mexico, and on its ruins erects an imperial despotism in immediate contact with our borders. A prince of the house of Hapsburg, trained in the courts of Austrian oppression, becomes our closest neighbor. Perhaps it is needless to complain of this near example of one-man power — this European head wearing a crown on North American soil. It will not be long if our present career is unchecked until the terms dictator, king and emperor will be as familiar in Washington as in the palace of St. Cloud.

But, sir, the saddest question embraced within the scope of my remarks, remains to be answered as I draw them to a close. Has the policy pursued for the last three years resulted in the formation of "a more perfect Union?"

No language that the tongue of man can utter would form so expressive an answer to such a question as a silent survey of the dreadful scene which lies before us. A gulf of blood and tears and all of human agony which the afflicted race of man can know this side of the dread abodes of the damned, divides the suffering and miserable sections of a once fraternal and contented people. Statesmen of Christian faith, imbued with the lofty spirit of him who gave his blessing to the merciful, could again span this horrid chasm and bind together the torn and bleeding ligaments of the Union. But an evil star is raging in our sky, and under its malign power the legislation of the land appears as the frenzied, murderous, disjointed dreams of a madman in his cell. Such a penal code as now stands in the way of the return of the men, women and children of the South to their allegiance, has no

parallel in the annals of the human race. A thousand miles of gibbets with the dangling halter and the ready executioner; universal confiscation of property to the remotest period of an innocent posterity; the absolute extermination of a whole people and the appropriation of the depopulated country to the unsparing demands of a more than Norman conquest; the utter extinction of every vestige of our present form of government by States, all this and infinitely more is contained in the enactments which already stain the records of American legislation. But why need I dwell upon these evidences of disunion? The great leader of the administration on this floor, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Stevens] has deliberately here announced after all our sacrifices, sorrows, and loss, that the Union of our fathers is dead, and that he who attempts its resurrection is a criminal instead of a patriot. He goes further and admits all the seceded States have ever claimed — their nationality. They have sought in vain in all the four quarters of the earth for recognition. They find it at last at the hands of those who speak for the administration on this floor.

Sir, I deny this doctrine. I plant myself on the constitution which recognizes an unbroken Union. I shall stand there in every vicissitude of fortune, and if I fall it will be when the people themselves abandon their own constitution. By the principles of this mighty instrument I expect finally a restoration of the Union of the States. Every hour which the party of power prolongs its control of affairs, postpones the auspicious day, but as I behold the future, it will assuredly come. Material and indestructible interests unite every section, except that which prospers on fanaticism. And I here to-day, in the spirit of one who expects and desires his posterity and theirs to live together in the ancient

and honorable friendship of their fathers, warn the Southern people not to look forward to separation and independence, but to embrace every opportunity for co-operation with the conservative men of the North, who will aid with their lives, if need be, to secure them all their rights and institutions as free and equal citizens of the United States. If this be done, the approaching presidential election will bring peace, union and liberty. But if the peaceful popular revolution of the ballot-box fails to produce these results, then darkness will settle upon the face of the deep, and the free institutions of America will exist only on the page of the future historian. Four years more of our present policy will leave the Republic an unshapen mass of ruins — a wreck more melancholy and hopeless than any that strew the pathway of ages. And here, in this fair young western world, as in all former times, a despotism will arise from the shattered fragments of self-government, to which each succeeding generation shall pay the extorted tribute of its blood and toil.

SIR WM. V. HARCOURT



THE RIGHT HON. SIR WILLIAM VERNON HARCOURT, P. C., M. P., a distinguished English Liberal statesman, the grandson of a former archbishop of York, was born Oct. 14, 1827, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he had a brilliant career. Called to the Bar of the Inner Temple, London, in 1854, he became Queen's Counsel in 1866, professor of international law at Cambridge University in 1869, and solicitor-general, 1873-74. He entered Parliament as Liberal member for Oxford in 1868, and was Secretary of State for the home department in 1880. On the fall of the Liberal party, in 1885, he went out of office, but on its return to power in January, 1886, he was made chancellor of the exchequer, to which post he was again appointed in 1892. From 1880 to 1895 he represented Derby in the House of Commons, but has since sat for West Monmouthshire. In Parliament, he has long been ranked among the ablest speakers and vigorous debaters, as well as an impressive orator, his oration upon Gladstone before the Commons being especially memorable. His budget of 1894, which created a great sensation on its appearance, is usually accounted his greatest achievement. In 1899, he retired from the Liberal leadership and now sits in the House as a private member. He was one of the original contributors to the "Saturday Review," and his "Historicus" letters on international law to the "Review," and the "Times" were collected in a volume in 1883. Sir William has been conspicuous in the Commons for his defence of Irish Home Rule.

OUR NATIONAL POSITION

SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON AUGUST 1, 1900, ON
THE SECOND READING OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL WAR LOAN BILL

WE HAVE now come to the last supplementary estimate of this Session, although anybody would be extremely rash to say that we have come to the last supplementary estimate of the present financial year. But, as this Session will be recorded as one of the most memorable financial chapters in the history of the Parliament, I think that this is the proper opportunity for taking