

You in New York must follow the government as expressed by the will of the majority of your State until you can revolutionize that government and change it; and those loyal at the South must, until this contest comes into process of settlement, also follow the action of the organized majorities in which their lot has been cast, and no man, no set of men, can see the possible solution of this or any other governmental problem as affecting States, except upon this basis.

Now, then, to pass from the particular to the general, to leave the detail in Louisiana, of which I have run down the account, rather as illustrating my meaning than otherwise, I come back to the question: What is now the nature of the contest with all the States that are banded together in the so-called Confederate States? Into what form has it come? It started in insurrection: it grew up a rebellion; it has become a revolution, and carries with it all the rights and incidents of a revolution.

Our government has dealt with it upon that ground. When the government blockaded Southern ports they dealt with it as a revolution; when they sent out cartels of exchange of prisoners they dealt with these people no longer as simple insurrectionists and traitors, but as organized revolutionists who had set up a government for themselves upon the territory of the United States.

Sir, let no man say to me, "Why then you acknowledge the right of revolution in these men!" I beg your pardon, sir; I only acknowledge the fact of revolution—that which has actually happened. I look these things in the face and I do not dodge them because they are unpleasant; I find this a revolution and these men are no longer, I repeat, our erring brethren, but they are our alien enemies, foreigners carrying on war against us, attempting to make alliances against us,

attempting surreptitiously to get into the family of nations. I agree that it is not a successful revolution and a revolution never to be successful,—pardon me, I was speaking theoretically, as a matter of law,—never to be successful until acknowledged by the parent State. Now, then, I am willing to unite with you in your cheers when you say a revolution, the rightfulness or success of which we, the parent State, never will acknowledge.

Why, sir, have I been so careful in bringing down with great particularity these distinctions? Because in my judgment there are certain logical consequences following from them as necessarily as various corollaries from a problem in Euclid. If we are at war, as I think, with a foreign country, to all intents and purposes, how can a man here stand up and say that he is on the side of that foreign country and not be an enemy to his country?

A man must be either for his country or against his country. He cannot, upon this theory, be throwing impediments all the time in the way of the progress of his government, under pretence that he is helping some other portion of his country. If any local man thinks that he must do something to bring back his erring brethren (if he likes that form of phrase) at the South, let him take his musket and go down and try it in that way. If he is still of a different opinion and thinks that is not the best way to bring them back, but he can do it by persuasion and talk, let him go down with me to Louisiana and I will set him over to Mississippi and if the rebels do not feel for his heart-strings, but not in love, I will bring him back. Let us say to him: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. If the Lord thy God be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve ye him. But no man can serve two masters, God and Mammon."

Again, there are other logical consequences to flow from the view which I have ventured to take of this subject, and one is as regards to our relations from past political action. If they are now alien enemies I am bound to them by no ties of party fealty or political affinity. They have passed out of that, and I think we ought to go back only to examine and see if all ties of party allegiance and party fealty as regards them are not broken, and satisfy ourselves that it is your duty and mine to look simply to our country and to its service, and leave them to look to the country they are attempting to erect, and to its service; and then let us try the conclusion with them, as we are doing by arms and the stern arbitrament of war.

Mark, by this I give up no territory of the United States. Every foot that was ever circumscribed on the map by the lines around the United States belongs to us. None the less because bad men have attempted to organize worse government upon various portions of it. It is to be drawn in under our laws and our government as soon as the power of the United States can be exerted for that purpose, and therefore, my friends, you see that next one of the logical consequences that proceed from our theory: that we have no occasion to carry on the fight for the constitution as it is.

Who is interfering with the constitution as it is? Who makes any attacks upon the constitution? We are fighting with those who have gone out and repudiated the constitution, and made another constitution for themselves. And now, my friends, I do not know but I shall speak some heresy, but as a Democrat, and as an Andrew Jackson Democrat, I am not for the Union as it was. I say, as a Democrat, as an Andrew Jackson Democrat, I am not for the Union to be again as it was. Understand me, I was for

the Union because I saw or thought I saw the troubles in the future which have burst upon us, but having undergone those troubles, having spent all this blood and this treasure I do not mean to go back again and be cheek by jowl with South Carolina as I was before, if I can help it.

Mark me, let no man misunderstand me, and I repeat, lest I may be misunderstood—there are none so slow to understand as those who do not want to—mark me, I say I do not mean to give up a single inch of the soil of South Carolina. If I had been in public life at that time and had had the position, the will, and the ability, I would have dealt with South Carolina as Jackson did and kept her in the Union at all hazards, but now she has gone out, and I will take care that when she comes in again she comes in better behaved, that she shall no longer be the firebrand of the Union—aye, and that she shall enjoy what her people never yet have enjoyed—the blessings of a republican form of government.

Therefore in that view I am not for the reconstruction of the Union as it was. I have spent treasure and blood enough upon it, in conjunction with my fellow citizens, to make it a little better. I think we can have a better Union the next time. It was good enough if it had been let alone. The old house was good enough for me, but as they have pulled down all the L-part, I propose, when we build it up, to build it up with all the modern improvements.

Another of the logical sequences, it seems to me, that follow in inexorable and not-to-be-shunned sequence upon this proposition, that we are dealing with alien enemies, is with regard to our duties as to the confiscation of rebel property, and that question would seem to me to be easy of settlement under the constitution and without any discussion, if my first proposition is right. Has it not been held

from the beginning of the world down to this day, from the time the Israelites took possession of the land of Canaan, which they got from alien enemies—and is it not the well-settled law of war to-day, that the whole property of alien enemies belonged to the conqueror, and that it is at his mercy and his clemency what should be done with it?

For one I would take it and give the loyal man who was loyal in his heart, at the South, enough to make him as well as he was before, and I would take the balance of it and distribute it among the volunteer soldiers who have gone—[The remainder of the sentence was drowned in a tremendous burst of applause]. And so far as I know them, if we should settle South Carolina with them, in the course of a few years I would be quite willing to receive her back into the Union.

This theory shows us how to deal with another proposition: What shall be done with the slaves? Here again the laws of war have long settled, with clearness and exactness, that it is for the conqueror, for the government which has maintained or extended its jurisdiction over conquered territory, to deal with slaves as it pleases, to free them or not as it chooses. It is not for the conquered to make terms, or to send their friends into the conquering country to make terms for them. Another corollary follows from the proposition that we are fighting with alien enemies, which relieves us from a difficulty which seems to trouble some of my old Democratic friends, and that is in relation to the question of arming the negro slaves.

If the seceded States are alien enemies, is there any objection that you know of, and if so, state it, to our arming one portion of the foreign country against the other while they are fighting us? Suppose that we were at war with England.

Who would get up here in New York and say that we must not arm the Irish, lest they should hurt some of the English? And yet at one time, not very far gone, all those Englishmen were our grandfathers' brothers. Either they or we erred, but we are now separate nations. There can be no objection, for another reason, because there is no law of war or of nations,—no rule of governmental action that I know of, which prevents a country from arming any portion of its citizens; and if the slaves do not take part in the rebellion, they become simply our citizens residing in our territory which is at present usurped by our enemies to be used in its defence as other citizens are. At this waning hour I do not propose to discuss but merely a hint at these various subjects.

There is one question I am frequently asked, and most frequently by my old Democratic friends: "General Butler, what is your experience? Will the negroes fight?"

To that I answer, I have no personal experience, because I left the Department of the Gulf before they were fairly brought into action. But they did fight under Jackson at Chalmette. More than that; let Napoleon III answer, who has hired them to do what the veterans of the Crimea cannot do—to whip the Mexicans. Let the veterans of Napoleon I, under Le Clerc, who were whipped by them out of San Domingo, say whether they will fight or not.

What has been the demoralizing effect upon them as a race by their contact with white men I know not, but I cannot forget that their fathers would not have been slaves, but that they were captives of war in their own country in hand-to-hand fights among the several chiefs. They would fight at some time, and if you want to know any more than that I can only advise you to try them.

Passing to another logical deduction from the principle that we are carrying on war against alien enemies (for I pray you to remember that I am only carrying out the same idea upon which the government acted when it instituted the blockade), I meet the question whether we thereby give foreign nations any greater rights than if we considered them as a rebellious portion of our country. We have heretofore seemed to consider that if we acknowledged that this was a revolution, and the rebels were alien enemies in this fight, that therefore we should give to foreign nations greater apparent right to interfere in our affairs than they would have if the insurgents were considered and held by us as rebels only, in a rebellious part of our own country.

The first answer to that is this: that so far as the rebels are concerned, they are estopped to deny that they are exactly what they claim themselves to be, alien enemies; and so far as foreign nations are concerned, while the rebels are alien to us yet they are upon our territory, and until we acknowledge them there is no better settled rule of the law of nations than that the recognition of them as an independent nation is an act of war. They have no right to recognize them, because we say to them, "We will deal with you as belligerent alien enemies," than they would have to treat with them if we hold them simply as rebels; and no country is more sternly and strongly bound by that view than is England, because she claimed the recognition by France of our independence to be an act of war and declared war accordingly.

Therefore I do not see why we lose any rights. We do not admit that this is a rightful rebellion—we do not recognize it as such—we do not act toward it except in the best way we can to put it down and to re-revolutionize the country.

What is the duty then of neutrals if these are alien enemies? We thus find them a people with whom no neutral nation has any treaty of amity or alliance: they are strangers to every neutral nation. For example let us take the English. The English nation have no treaty with the rebels—have no relations with the rebels—open relations I mean, none that are recognized by the laws of nations. They have a treaty of amity, friendship, and commerce with us, and now what is their duty in the contest between us and our enemies to whom they are strangers? They claim it to be neutrality, only such neutrality as they should maintain between two friendly nations with each of whom they have treaties of amity. Let me illustrate: I have two friends that have got into a quarrel—into a fight if you please; I am on equally good terms with both and I do not choose to take a part with either. I treat them as belligerents and hold myself neutral. That is the position of a nation where two equally friendly nations are fighting.

But again I have a friend who is fighting with a stranger, with whom I have nothing to do, of whom I know nothing that is good, of whom I have seen nothing except that he would fight—what is my duty to my friend in that case? To stand perfectly neutral? It is not the part of a friend so to do between men and it is not the part of a friendly nation as between nations. And yet from some strange misconception our English friends profess to do no more than to stand perfectly neutral while they have treaties of amity and commerce with us and no treaty which they acknowledge with the South.

And therefore I say there is a much higher duty on the part of foreign nations toward us when we are in contest with a people with which they have no treaty of amity than there