

no sweetness in revenge which can justify a continuance of such a condition of things.

The conservative masses of the country, sooner or later, will protest against it. The dominant party cannot expect to deal with whole communities as with individuals. They cannot coerce a whole people into relations of amity and friendship. They may make them friends by kindness and fair dealing, but not by injustice and oppression. They may annihilate them by their power; but humanity would hardly uphold any party in a return to the barbaric ages, in a policy of extermination.

President Johnson has brought this work of reconstruction to the last point of consummation. Step by step he has steadily persevered in his plan of peace and reconstruction, with no single violation of the Constitution, so far as I am capable of forming an opinion. In the act of completing his great work—of riveting the last link in the circle—he is met by the conflicting and indefinite plans of Congress.

I do not propose to pursue this argument. The responsibility is now with Congress, who may at any time adjust the relations between the States, and bring harmony to the country by the admission of loyal Representatives. The power is with her, and I trust she may not forget the momentous consequences involved in her action.

Congress is the recognized arbiter of the qualifications of its own members. If the apprehension of renewed disloyalty is still expected to re-animate the prostrate people of the South, why may she not say to the Southern States whose Representatives are without the requisite qualifications upon her standard, send us loyal men and we will admit them. This would settle the question at once; the power is in her own hands, and so has resided from the origin of this controversy. The South can really give no substantial guarantees that she has not already given. We asked for the abolishment of slavery—she conceded it. We asked for a repudiation of the debt contracted during the rebellion—this she conceded also. Now we are told that further guarantees are to be secured, while she is weak and powerless and at our mercy.

But where is this contest to end and what are the people to gain by it?

We have just terminated one of the most stupendous conflicts that has ever marked the progress of a people, either in ancient or modern times. This nation wants repose, and still more does she want the co-operation of her whole people, in her return to the arts of peace. The Southern States—so important in the geographical position which they occupy, and their productive power and resources, are now awaiting the action of Congress. Their great staples in times past, have