

late, that every vestige of power has been wrested from them, and has passed beyond recall from the hands of the many to the few.

The developments which have already taken place are not without their significance. The monarchies of the Old World have uniformly fraternized with the people of the South. They are awaiting with hope and anxiety the disintegration and ruin of our National system, that intervention may find its excuse, and that with the sympathy and co-operation of the Southern oligarchy, they may arrest the spread of free principles by imposing the same form of government upon the South which they have already established upon the soil of a sister republic.

The present Federal Executive came into office, as we all know, in accordance with the prescribed forms of the Constitution. He was duly elected by the people. He had claimed no interference or encroachment upon the rights of any of the States. He had made no war upon the institution of slavery. He came into power with the honest and avowed purpose to uphold the Constitution and faithfully execute the laws. During the early stages of his administration—before the rebellion assumed the proportions which it has since reached—he would have sealed a treaty with the Southern States to protect slavery if confined within the limits of the States were it then existed. But this did not satisfy the South. They desired to extend it beyond these limits; they claimed to enlarge the circle of its power; and upon this point, the President entertained views identical with those of Henry Clay, who declared that no earthly consideration would induce him to propagate slavery into any State or Territory where it had not already been recognized by law. As the rebellion progressed—involving so much of irritation and embittered feeling—slavery became every day more and more odious. The issue soon passed from the control of the President into the hands of the people. The blood of our gallant soldiers, falling by thousands and tens of thousands in this unnatural strife, appealed to the sympathies of loyal men throughout the land. The Fugitive Slave Law became a dead letter upon the statute book. Attempts were made to execute it, but signally failed. The President no longer able to resist the current of popular indignation, threw himself upon its surging billows to control it as best he might. In dealing with so grave and delicate a subject his action was marked by cautious and matured deliberation. Failing to execute the Fugitive Slave Law, he made an appeal to Congress in the interest of gradual emancipation with compensation by the Government. That proposition was not received with favor by the representatives of the Border Slaveholding States, in whose behalf it was especially conceived; and he was again left powerless in the midst of