

successor, you have assigned the duty of digesting and preparing the work which is to engage your attention in this new field of labor; and upon you will devolve the not less responsible duty of co-operation in its practical development and prompt and vigorous execution.

The time for embittered party feeling has gone by. In resuming relations with those of our fellow-citizens known to be loyal, who, viewing from their own stand point our national as well as State complications, have honestly differed in opinion, we should promptly lay aside the animosities of the past. The flag which floats to-day over this venerable State-House is the only recognized test of honorable brotherhood among those who cherish this noble inheritance of free government. From its enemies alone, we withhold the hand of fellowship. The domestic issues which have divided us have been settled by the authoritative voice of the people. Can we not, then, forget the dissensions and heartburnings of the past, and come together once more, in a spirit of conciliation and harmony, to give our best energies, as one party, to the work of reconstruction and reorganization upon which we are entering with such prospects of admitted and assured success?

The trials through which this country has struggled during the four years which have just elapsed, admonish us that our only safe dependence in the future, as it has proved throughout the changes of this eventful war, is in the steady maintenance of the Union of these States. A nation, nearly equal in extent of territory to the sixty Empires, States and Republics of the Old World—with diverse interests and prejudices, inviting to conflict and jealousy, and fruitful of so many incentives to social and political irritation—can only be held in equilibrium by the fearless exercise of the powers delegated by the people themselves, for the maintenance of the national life. The theory of a Government formed of a combination of States or communities claiming to be alike independent of each other and of the delegated central power—sovereign in their claims of allegiance—and competent of their own motion, to nullify the executive, legislative and judicial functions, upon which it rests, in the plan of its formation, is sufficiently illustrated by the teachings of our past history and the adoption of our present Federal Constitution. In 1784, Richard Henry Lee, then President of Congress, remarked in a letter to Mr. Madison: "It is by many here suggested, as a very necessary step for Congress to take, the calling on the States to form a Convention for the sole purpose of revising the Confederation, so far as to enable Congress to execute with more energy, effect and vigor the powers assigned to it, than it appears by experience they can do under the present state of things." To which Mr. Madison replied: "I should hold it for a maxim, that the Union of these States is essential to