

money—to regulate commerce with foreign nations to declare war—to raise and support armies—to provide and maintain a navy—to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions, together with the other delegated powers enumerated in the Constitution. The disorganizing doctrine of State Rights, claimed by the disciples of the Southern school, become a mere abstraction, unsupported by any color of authority from the Federal compact. There could be no recognized right on the part of any State or combination of States to dissolve a Union thus formed, unless in the mode prescribed by the Constitution itself. The people, and not the States, had made it; and the people alone could decree its dissolution. The Virginia resolutions of 1798, from which the whole theory of State power and State resistance took its growth, had gone no further than to assert a principle common to all civil government, that “in case of the dangerous exercise of powers not granted by the General Government, the States may interfere to prevent the progress of the evil.” The right of peaceful remonstrance within the Constitution could not admit of doubt, and such was the interpretation of the doctrine as understood by Mr. Madison, the reputed author of the resolutions.

With this theory of our Government well understood, the Southern States—without just cause—without provocation—without even the pretext of encroachment upon their reserved rights—commenced the desolating war in which we are now engaged. South Carolina—wary of Republican government, and demoralized by the ruin brought upon her by the withering effects of slavery, which she was not too blind to see, was fast falling into decay under the pressure of an enlightened public opinion and the frowns of the civilized world—was thrust forward to give embodiment to a heresy which had been announced upon the floor of the Senate, by her accredited leader in 1830. The glory of applying the match to the first gun fired upon Sumpter was generously accorded to an aged citizen of a sister State, who, forgetting her own Revolutionary history, and the patriotic admonitions of her great progenitor, stood ready to accept the doubtful compliment. That hoary-headed old man—just ready to step into eternity, lifting the flaming torch in the face of God himself—performed the office of love, and awaited with composure the effect of the reverberation which his own madness—stimulated by reckless and designing demagogues—had wickedly precipitated. It was the first act in the drama of this bloody war. It was the uplifted arm of unprovoked rebellion against the best and freest government on earth. When we look upon the field of carnage and desolation which it has since caused; when we contemplate the untold num-