

to the Federal Union, we have at least the present example of an imbecile and crumbling Confederacy rapidly hastening to its final dissolution.

This day, we believe, inaugural ceremonies are being performed within the walls of the rebel Congress, at Richmond. Jefferson Davis, and his compeers, hold a carnival of high treason, but it is like the feast of Belshazzar—drunk and eaten in silence—while the mysterious hand of a righteous Providence traces their doom upon the wall, and Darius the Median thunders at the outer gates. Down traitors with the golden cups stolen from the temple, close to your dens, for if the Euphrates has not been turned from its channel, Fort Donelson has been taken, and the Mississippi will be forced! Does it require a prophet to interpret the “*mene, mene,*” of thy fate? Ask the hero of Western Virginia, the architect of the stupendous scheme which is just unfolding—and yet to be the hero of the Potomac. Ask him. He will read the riddle with his sword. In the twinkling of an eye, by the mere rubbing of a rusty old lamp with its wick burned out, or the agitation of a threadbare question, what a gorgeous palace invested with all the trappings of oriental imagery, resplendent with jewels and soft with the mild effulgence of pearly rays, rose “like an exhalation” in the South. But, like Aladdin, the high priest of the temple, will wake up some morning, and find his palatial dream entirely vanished. It will disappear as suddenly as it came.

High grounds for exultation have we on this 22d of February, 1862. Look back a year. But five or six States had then seceded. Not a gun as yet had been levelled at Fort Sumter. The Nation bewildered or paralyzed by the vacillation of its Executive, half imbecile and half treasonable, knew not whither to turn. The correspondent of the “London Times” wrote home, that New York was anxious only to sip its fine wine, or smoke its highly-flavored Havannas. What cared Broadway for Secession? They, who knew the American people better, had commenced to doubt their capacity for self-government, or whether their attachment to it was strong enough to carry them into a war for its defence. Republican institutions abroad were pronounced a failure. They were not regarded as altogether sound at home. Opinion was unfixed, nothing seemed stable—the very foundations of society were breaking up. The old Administration was ousted. Abraham Lincoln took possession of the White House—a man cursed by his enemies, and by no means liked or trusted by the friends of his cause. Then appeared his Inaugural—what did it mean?—Peace or War? Then there was another period of uncertainty and agitation. When would the question be settled? The first cannon that boomed over Charleston Harbor settled it, and settled it forever. The Inaugural meant