

SOLDIERS OF OUR ARMY:

Prompted by intense anxiety in the success of our cause, I wish to address you. In the infancy of our existence, as a Southern Confederacy, we have accomplished much; but much still remains to be accomplished. Driven, by necessity, amidst compromises, concessions and expostulations, the South, to avert entire destruction, was forced to arms in her own defence against the inroads of power arrogated by the North, and accumulated and accumulating apprehensions, which threatened inevitably our existence, our liberty, and all the dearest rights of a free people. Long, long did the South submit to the gigantic strides of cruel power, which was boastfully and defiantly aimed at her vitals! Far, far less, the cause that led to our struggle in '76; and far less, the cause that led to the Revolution in the time of Charles I. of England, or of Louis XVI. of France, than the crisis which rouses us!

It is not against the *principles* of the old Constitution we fight, but against its *abuses* and the inroads of *usurpation*; derived *not* from the Constitution, but alone from arbitrary power. No, it is for those sacred principles of *equality* and *justice*, embodied in that Constitution, that we now contend against that power, which, by our endurance, rather than resistance, we of the South have strengthened,—ay, have strengthened by our means and blood!

What toils have we not encountered—what sacrifices have we not made in behalf of liberty, and what we had vainly supposed an equality of the States? Our contributions to the coffers of the late Union, forced by unjust taxation, have been immense, compared with those of the North; and the blood of our South-

ern heroes has been mingled with the dust, almost over the entire area of North America! The names of Marion, of Moultrie, of Washington, and other illustrious worthies of the South, are inscribed on the loftiest columns of Immortality!

The means thus contributed by the South, have been, by unjust legislation, profusely lavished for the prosperity of the North, and the construction of a navy now used by that very power, to subjugate, if possible, the very section to which the North is indebted for its ill-gained prowess, and which it now frankly acknowledges, *cannot exist without us*. In the use of our own treasures, the unscrupulous North is now endeavoring, by a process of insolent inquisition and arrogant assumption, to force us into base submission!!

Think you, for a moment, what would be our condition, were the North possibly to succeed? Can tortured imagination paint in faintest colors the then condition of the South? Can you imagine the inflated despotism of a heartless and cruel power, guided only by brutal rapacity, and disregarding all moral and constitutional restraints? Imagine further, if you please, the subjugation of the Southern States, and their organization into territorial governments,—with a population disarmed; civil and religious liberty crushed, and a sentinel at each man's door, to suppress even the freedom of speech! Can you imagine the *reality* of our condition of thus being made “hewers of wood and drawers of water”? This would be our foe's idea of liberty and safety to the Union!!!

Oh, Liberty! what crimes would not then “be committed in thy name”!! Can you further, then, imagine the insults of the brutal soldier under the pay of a government extracting from the fragments of our substance the cruel expenses of the past war, (which, it would be alledged, *we* caused!)—the support of that government, and the maintenance of its increased and standing army, and a navy, whose use would be, to fasten more securely our chains of bondage?

But, further, can you imagine the condition of a crushed people, then denied the right of expatriation—a right which, if allowed at all, would be to those only, whose wretched destitution would preclude the hope of escape from such misery? In vain might we pant for even the condition, infinitely preferable, of down-trodden and parcelled out Poland!

Already in that now desecrated Congress, where once were heard the monitions of our sages, striving in vain to avert the then pending storm, that now has burst in fury, are to be found base myriamdoms of *would be* despotic power, muttering forth their fiendish plans to crush and curse our gallant South,—a South, whose cause *should be their own!!* While humanity shudders at their nefarious schemes, the descendants of Huguenots, and of Cavaliers, and every freeman, will leap to the conflict,—whose watch-word will be—“*Give us liberty, or give us death!*”

A faint idea of the tyrannous intentions of the Northern Government is presented in its desired substitution, as its emblem, of the Boa Constrictor for the Eagle!! Its desire is, to crush us in its folds, and gloat over the spoils!! Neither suffer yourselves to be betrayed by a kiss; trust not to the Syren Song attributed to its leading General,—that “this is but a war to restore the Union to what it was at the commencement.” This *cannot be*; and it is doing the Northern leader injustice, to ascribe to him a remark so utterly absurd. Besides, is there a true Southern heart that would consent to such a “Union”? Or, could it be a Union? What! Restore us to a condition that at once deprives us of all justice—which ignores all right, and excludes forever all resistance to wrong, while it effectually and finally suppresses all hope of an equality of States, and of a Republic! False and vain, such declaration,—if ever such was made or entertained by man!!

That is not the object of our foes; their object is *subjugation*—*subjugation*; it is that, and nothing less.

But, can force construct or re-construct a Union? Preposterous thought!

Can force gain Union? "Impudence of hope,
As well mere man an angel might beget!"
Go first, and reconstruct the human heart,
Endow'd with passions by th' Almighty wrought.

Soldiers of the camp, and citizens all: to you I would appeal. Our cause is just, and onward, because it is just. The cause of Subjugation or Liberty is before you. Choose you, this day, which you will prefer. If Subjugation—say so, and no more; but, if Liberty—then cluster around our standard; and let each man be a host, and every hillock a defence. Let us

"Strike,—till the last arm'd foe expires,
Strike—for our altars and our fires;
Strike—for the green graves of our sires;
God—and our native land!"

There is a duty in this glorious struggle, for all—*for all*; and, where duty points, let all obey. What, though a hostile fleet crowd and cloud around our coast, and thousands of men, and millions of money, be voted for our subjugation. "The battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift," "but to the active, the vigilant, the brave!" There is a just God, who presides over the destinies of nations! Let us all discharge our duties to ourselves—our country, and our God; and the event will not be doubtful. The tree of Liberty, congenial to our soil, will rear aloft its towering branches, even amidst the tempests of war; and, though it may be seen to bend, as the lofty cedar, on some towering eminence, it will, by its elastic strength, soon be seen erect in all its beautiful proportions, unscathed by the storms of the past. The Beacon of Liberty, which we now erect, will cast forth its effulgent rays, rejoicing our hearts; and to which even our foes, with envious emotions, will point; while it will shed light and lustre to the nations of the earth!

While the superstitious heathens, through untold privations, crowd in humble prostration around their idol-shrine; while the infatuated Mussulman, through perils and sacrifices indescribably great, pays his homage at the tomb of his "prophet;" and, while the pilgrims of the past brooked every danger with delight, in forcing onward their perilous journey to the land of Syria; let us emulate their examples, and rally around our glorious cause, spurning, with ineffable contempt, the invaders of our soil; and with heroic firmness rush to the conflict, resolved to conquer or die!

Soldiers! to you, again, I would appeal. Your toils and your hardships have been great, but your patience and patriotic endurance have been superior to them all; and, while your comrades and your country have sympathized with you in your privations, your country is proud of her sons. The foe is yet on our soil; and hardships and conflicts we have yet to encounter and overcome; but your valor is equal to the task. "We have other forced marches to make; other enemies to subdue; more laurels to acquire!" In the hasty organization for our campaign, doubtless, many unworthy have crept into posts of honor and trust; but, it is hoped that correctives will soon be applied; and yourselves, in the selection of most of your leaders, in the future, will be better informed, and then know in whom to confide. Select those, only, whose patriotism and valor shall be adequate to the occasion. Defective as has been our organization, and unequal the conflict, we have done much. The enemy has been checked; and there are Bethel, Manassas, Leesburg, Belmont, Springfield, and other glorious victories—of which our country is proud, and which will live in glowing brilliancy on the pages of history, and be chanted in songs of triumph by millions yet unborn!

The boasted "*programme*" of our invaders has been foiled; and, since our flag was first raised, many of our sister States have flocked to our standard. Their policy is again changed to

an invasion of our unprotected coasts, because of our supposed inadequate defences—inadequate in part, because of their extent; and they there approach with a formidable armada, and land, and call such, “victories”—conquests!! But, where is their near approach to danger, where our brave hearts have met to defend? Indeed, their timidity is acknowledged in their destruction of the channels leading to our ports! Certain it is, they are careful not to venture beyond the protection of their navy guns!!

Distracted in their councils, and crushed by a debt they can never discharge, their last expiring hope is—disaffection among some of our people, and reluctance, on the part of our soldiers, to re-enlist. But, in this, their disappointment will be great. What say you, fellow-soldiers? What say you? Though all will speak, but one voice will be heard—“*We will—we will*”—will be the reply. Re-enlist, then, early, remembering in your elections to choose those only, in whom you would confide in camp and on the battle-field; and all will be well.

Let not our flag trail in the dust; but, let us at once be prepared, and leap to the fight, and be, as the Scottish clan, ready—*ay, ready!* So, when the conflict shall have passed, and the glorious tidings of Liberty and Peace shall have been proclaimed, your kindred and your country will rejoice in your valor, and your fellow-citizens, as you pass, pointing out each, will say—“There goes one, who belonged to the army of the South!”

But ere that period, should many or all of us fall, we *will fall as martyrs*; and each, like a gallant Burrows, who, while smiling in the arms of death on the field, exclaimed, “Thank God, though I die, it is in the best of causes!” Or, like the common sailor, who, snatching from the surgeon his amputated leg, and throwing it aside, exclaimed—“Let me go, doctor—*let me go!* I know that I am dying—that I may give one more huzza for my country before I die!”

Citizens all—to you, also, I appeal. What say you? To

those who have not yet shared the toils of our camp, and whose strength and health will permit—without regard to age—our country calls! Her hallowed cause demands your aid. For-sake your fire-sides, your homes, your sordid pelf, and *come to the rescue, and perform your part!*

To our appointing powers I would say: No longer reward the able-bodied and slothful, who decline to enlist, by rewards of office, where ease and money can more easily be obtained. Many, whose patriotism none can suspect, but whose strength is inadequate to more active service, would there be glad to serve their country.

To mothers I would also appeal. Have you a son? Is he in our army? Why not? You control his lofty impulses at the fire-side,—*send him forth!* Disown him, if he disobey. *Send him forth,* and that in the spirit of a Spartan mother, who, on the eve of battle, presenting her son with a shield, said to him: “Go, and return *with* it, or return *upon* it!” Let none be idle, but every one perform his part, and with prayerful hearts, united in our cause, and trusting in the God of battles, we will achieve a glorious result! Ay, we *will* and *must triumph over our foes!*

RO. H. ARMISTEAD. •