

1863

## The First Duty of the Citizen; The Grandeur of the Struggle and Its Responsibilities; Southern Principles

Unknown authors

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/pamphlet\\_collection](https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/pamphlet_collection)

### Recommended Citation

authors, Unknown, "The First Duty of the Citizen; The Grandeur of the Struggle and Its Responsibilities; Southern Principles" (1863). *Pamphlet Collection*. 75.

[https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/pamphlet\\_collection/75](https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/pamphlet_collection/75)

This Pamphlet is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pamphlet Collection by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@cedarville.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@cedarville.edu).

THE  
FIRST DUTY OF THE CITIZEN.

---

THE GRANDEUR OF THE STRUGGLE

AND ITS

RESPONSIBILITIES.

---

SOUTHERN PRINCIPLES.

PHILADELPHIA :

PRINTED FOR GRATUITOUS DISTRIBUTION.

1863.

A

973,708

F527

76-70293

## THE FIRST DUTY OF THE CITIZEN.

---

IF free institutions confer advantages, they also entail responsibilities. The bourgeois of Paris can devote himself exclusively to his private business or pleasure, for all his interests are under the control of a strongly centralized government, to which he looks for the regulation of the minutest concerns of his political existence; and he knows that a change in the administration of public affairs is only to be accomplished by barricades and bayonets. The Austrian subject, under the paternal despotism of the Hapsburgs, pays his taxes, performs his allotted term of military duty, and then can give his undivided energies to securing the bodily or mental necessities of existence. We, who boast that our mission is to demonstrate the capacity of man for self-government, have a larger and a nobler sphere of action. Have we fully understood the nature of the task which we have undertaken, and are we properly discharging the duties connected with it?

“The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” The saying has become so trite as to have lost its significance to the ear, yet it is none the less a truth of the deepest import. In a republic, no man, however engrossing may be his business, and however ardent his pursuit of gain or pleasure, can afford to neglect the duty of active participation in public affairs. We have proved ourselves recreant to the trusts confided to us, and the result is to be seen around us. For years the intelligent, the educated, the disinterested portion of the community has been withdrawing itself more and more completely from the details and management of politics. Most men have felt a qualified interest in elections, have voted with one party or the other,

have felt grieved when bad men succeeded in obtaining office, but have shrunk from the exertion requisite to make their honest convictions felt in the management of public affairs. The needy and the desperate, the unprincipled adventurers who abound in all large and prosperous nations, have not been slow to avail themselves of the opportunities thus offered, and to thrust themselves forward to occupy the place thus abandoned by the honest and capable. Causes such as there react upon each other with constantly increasing intensity, until at length we, who regard ourselves as essentially a practical people, present to the world the anomalous absurdity of a country where we pretend to govern ourselves, and yet where the business of government is regarded as degrading those who are engaged in it.

This last assertion may perhaps provoke dissent, yet a moment's reflection will confirm its truth to every man. What merchant proposing to engage a clerk would not hesitate if he learned that the applicant was a "politician?" Visions of corner groggeries, of contaminating associations, of debased morality would naturally suggest themselves, and would probably result in the choice of some safer assistant. What merchant would not run some risk of impairing his credit if it were known that he participated actively in the political movements of his district? Who would care to give an important contract to a man who was known to be largely engaged in work for the city or state? The first impression would be that he had either gained employment by dishonest practices or had speedily become familiarized with them, for every one takes for granted that corruption exists in all public business. Do we not express surprise when an independent and cultivated man accepts position in our municipal councils or in our state legislature? Have we not reached the point where every one is suspected of private motives in offering his name as a candidate before the people? What wonder then that the men best fitted by education and position to aid in controlling public affairs shrink in disgust from the means necessary to secure success, and from the associations connected with office? Surely

when such are the prevailing sentiments, we may safely assert that the influences of the business of government are degrading to those who participate in it.

The perpetuity of complex free institutions such as ours can only be secured by a virtuous and intelligent public spirit, and is utterly incompatible with existing conditions. Corruption in municipal affairs, corruption at Harrisburg, corruption at Washington, if not notorious, is at all events so firmly believed in as to work all the reflex evil that its existence could occasion. The life of the state consists in its legislative and executive functions, and where these are vitiated at the source, there can be but little hope for the body politic. Such is our present condition—our institutions shaken to the very foundation, and every man looking anxiously to the future, asking how we may best escape the punishment which is at last meting out to us the fit return for our sin's of omission and commission.

Great is the vitality of political organizations based on the immutable principles of right and justice. Ours has been sorely tried by our own remissness, yet is it not past remedy, and that remedy is so simple and so easy of application, that our disgrace is the more poignant that it has not long since been attempted. If a comparatively small portion of the independent public would devote to this subject a few hours in the course of the year, they could take the management of politics, municipal, state and national, out of the hands of those who make it the basest of trades, and who only hold it on sufferance. It is simply our supineness that can enable them to inflict on us the grievous wrong of a venal legislature or a corrupt municipal administration. Let us shake off that supineness, and we shall be surprised to find how fragile are the bonds that have tied the nation down, while adventurers of every party have been disputing over its spoils as their birth-right.

The foundation of our political edifice is to be found in the local sub-divisions of election districts. It is by manipulating these minute fractions of the community, that the professional politicians perfect their schemes and gain their ends. The



practical working of the elective franchise has rendered necessary a system of strictly party elections and conventions, unknown to the law or the constitution, which in effect regulates all political action. It is in vain that on the day of a general election the honest citizen, anxious to cast his ballot conscientiously, scans critically the various tickets laid before him in the desperate hope of making up one for himself composed of pure and capable men, when he has slothfully allowed the machinery of nominations to be controlled unopposed by those who may have found their interest in selecting candidates unworthy of respect or confidence. The trader in politics has not thus been idle. He has attended the ward meetings and has seen that judges and inspectors of election favorable to his views have been appointed; he has nominated as delegates to conventions men who sympathize and work with him; he has seen that at the delegate election in his precinct the ten or a dozen votes were cast, necessary to secure the return of his delegate; and when the nominating convention meets, he feels safe that the candidates which it will present for popular suffrage will be men who will reward him richly at the public expense, for the trifling exertions which he has made in their behalf—men, it may be, who will gain, in a short tenure of office, the wages to support them through years of this idle work. The honest citizen, who fondly fancies himself a free and independent voter, is in reality the slave of these men, who count him as part of the assets of their political capital. They go over the assessors' lists and distribute the voters according to their political proclivities, and those who are assigned to the democracy, or to republicanism are regarded as the personal property of the respective candidates, as thoroughly as the horse that propels a cider mill—indispensable to his owner as a motive power, but utterly unconscious of the direction or purposes of his labors.

Reform must begin at the beginning. Since these preliminary movements control all subsequent action, it is these preliminary movements that must be themselves controlled, and few understand how easily this would be accomplished by in-

telligent concerted action. Men who have never attended a ward meeting or a primary election, have vague ideas concerning the mysteries of subterranean political manœuvres, which they fancy cannot be comprehended or combated. This is an error arising from pure ignorance. The precinct is the political unit, and by controlling the precincts the sum total of politics may be controlled. Now, in the city of Philadelphia there are two hundred and thirteen precincts or election districts, and it is perfectly safe to say that four or five reputable, disinterested citizens in each precinct could control, for all purposes of good, the movements of their party therein. When the ward meeting of their party is called, let them attend it. Known to have no personal objects in view, their mere presence would have a most beneficial influence over the trading political hucksters who are accustomed to manage these assemblages; but they need not stop here. Each precinct nominates its own election officers and delegates, and this a few honest men will find themselves perfectly able to do. Let them then use their influence to see that their neighbors attend the delegate elections, where usually from five to twenty votes only are polled, and they can with the utmost ease secure the formation of nominating conventions composed of men who are not aspirants for political preferment, and who will conscientiously endeavor to place before the people a ticket which no honest man need blush to vote for. All this is but the work of three or four hours, and by concerted action of this kind, a few hundred substantial men could change the whole political aspect of the city. After the nominations are made, the regular party machinery will be necessary to bring out a full party vote, and those who begin to feel an interest in the success of their efforts, can see that that machinery is properly worked.

It will scarcely be denied that politics have at length reached a point where they must be rescued from the defilement of mercenary and unscrupulous hands, or the nation must perish. Each citizen must now be willing to admit his own dereliction of duty in the past, and to quiet his conscience by promises of amendment in the future. I have pointed out the mode in



which those promises can fructify into performance. To men whose daily dealings count by thousands, and whose minds are intent upon the mighty issues whereon hang the destinies of a continent, it may seem a paltry and unworthy matter to devote attention to the trivial intrigues of a petty precinct, yet they may be assured that in this way alone can their business interests be protected, and the national life preserved. If, after the sore experience of the last few years; if, after writhing under the calamities resultant from abandoning politics to the management of venal and unprincipled men, there is not left in the community sufficient public spirit to demand from the honest masses the controlling influence to which they are entitled; if the trifling sacrifices of time and attention requisite to this are not willingly rendered hereafter, then, indeed, are we degenerate from our fathers, and the verdict of history upon our suicide as a free and self-governing people will not be long deferred or doubtfully phrased.

---

### EMANCIPATION A FINALITY.

Postmaster General Blair, in a recent speech at Cleveland, Ohio, thus spoke of the President's emancipation proclamation and its fruits:

“That measure which as Commander-in-Chief the President rightfully adopted under the Constitution and in accordance with national law, to obtain the co-operation of the whole race of people, and which involves both life and freedom in its results when proclaimed, was beyond revocation by either the civil or military authority of the nation. *The people once slaves in the rebel States can never again be recognized as such by the United States.* No judicial decision, no legislative action, State or national, can be admitted to re-enslave a people who are associated with our own destinies in this war of defense to save the Government, and whose manumission was deemed essential to the restoration and preservation of the Union and to its permanent peace.

## The Grandeur of the Struggle and its Responsibilities.

Generations, like individuals, are born to different lots. Some to ease, others to hardship; some to security, others to peril; some to small duties, others to responsibilities well-nigh super-human. In reclaiming this world, God means that all shall do a part, generations as well as individuals; but this part is not equal. It varies as He, in his wisdom and love, chooses to have it vary. It is not for man to question His ways. We must recognize His dealing, accept it, and conform to it.

This third American generation has a peculiar lot. By an ordering of Providence which it did not at all foresee, it finds itself face to face with responsibilities such as have never before been known on this continent, nor indeed in modern civilization. It is the pilot, in the engulfing storm, of the most precious argosy that ever floated—the warrior in the deadly breach of the great siege of the ages. If it falter, all is lost.

The magnitude of our trust is beyond our power of conception even in its grosser and lower aspects. The body of our people estimate it chiefly by what is called the necessity of preserving the national limits. It is the Republic as stretching from Lakes to Gulf and from ocean to ocean, that especially stirs their blood. Their hearts throb at the thought that this most magnificent heritage, this continental arena for the development of national activity and power, is in danger. But how small and inadequate are the common notions of even these material interests! In fact, no man has an understanding broad enough, or an imagination strong enough, to take in any but the boldest outlines of what will be the development of our Republic in population, in wealth, and in physical power, if its present theater of action is retained to it. We may cipher out progressive ratios, and soon read startling figures; but mere numerals can give, at best, but a very meager idea of what will

be the living, breathing, working reality. It so far transcends anything found in history, that comparisons give no aid. The more we strive to body forth the potential aggrandizement of the Republic on its present domain, the more completely do our powers sink exhausted and baffled, and we can at last only say that as its great authors failed in their wildest dreams adequately to imagine its strength, even as beheld by us of the third generation, we far less can prefigure the reality that shall be developed in the indefinite series of future generations.

So much for the merely material interests involved. They are of immeasurable value. Yet they are but the very lowest element at stake. They relate to the nation's adjuncts; not to its essential life. The issue is not simply whether this Republic is to exist on a larger or smaller scale, but whether it is to exist at all. The *vital force* itself is in peril. This rebellion strikes at just authority; and without authority government is but an intermittent revolution, and the so-called nation but an organized mob. To give way to the present secession movement is to loosen every national ligament, and to put our body politic throughout henceforth at the mercy of every wild passion, of every sordid calculation. We are literally battling for the nation's life. It is a sort of war that hardly occurs once in a thousand years. Wars generally are maintained to vindicate national rights abroad, or to overthrow or reform national rule at home. Whether they do or do not succeed, the nation still lives. They are sometimes waged, as by our revolutionary forefathers, and by the Italian patriots of the present day, for independence, and an opportunity to originate a new nationality. But in our case it is to save a nationality already existent and strong. With the comparatively small exception of Poland, there has not been a case like it in modern times. And who can calculate a nation's value? The creation of one is the grandest and most difficult of all human achievements. There is not one, even the poorest, that has not cost unmeasured blood and toil—hardly one worthy of the name that has not required generations and centuries for even an imperfect development. A well-knit national organization, with all its

vital powers in full health and force, is infinitely the most precious of all earthly possessions. Its preservation is the most sacred trust that one generation can possibly devolve on another. The generation which betrays that trust, either by positive act or by default, commits an inexpiable wrong both against its ancestry and its posterity.

But even this does not measure the responsibility of the crisis. Not only the physical unity of the Republic is at stake, and its very life, but what is of immensely greater consequence yet—the salvation of Human Rights. We are fighting not simply an American war, but a war for the race. It has been recognized, the world over, that our institutions are the supreme test whether self-government is practicable or not. If our Republic perishes in the very morning of its existence—if, with all the immense advantages in its power, it but adds another to the long list of democratic governments which have gone down in blood—the proof will be considered complete, that human freedom, as understood hitherto, is but a delusion. Power and privilege will make good their old claims over the masses, and will take out a new and indefinite lease. On the other hand, if the Republic overmasters this most gigantic rebellion of history, it will have demonstrated the matchless power of free government most irresistibly. It will give all prescription and oppression their finishing stroke. It will smite away from the champions of prerogative their last and strongest argument—that free governments, however suited to calm times, had no strength to outride a storm. We shall have practically proved a free government, the strongest and safest government that can exist, by its triumphantly weathering a tempest that would have inevitably shipwrecked any other. Our example, during its period of seventy years, has had a mighty influence through the civilized world. It has produced *forty* civil revolutions. It has banished kings, extinguished dynasties, pushed empires a thousand years old to the verge of destruction, put the Supreme Pontiff to flight, planted popular banners upon every palace on the continent this side of Russia, trumpeted through Europe ideas such as before were barely lisped there above a whisper,



evoked new races into life, summoned constituent assemblies, framed constitutions, convoked parliaments, commanded armies. Under it, all the old helpers of oppression have been dying—feudalism, the divine right of kings, patrician prestige, papal infallibility, tradition, superstition, military conquest, foreign intervention, the balance of power, diplomatic craft. All this, too, in spite of the terrible anomaly, the shameful stigma, of our maintaining African slavery. Cleared of this accursed reproach, and accredited by the demonstration that a free government is not only the happiest but the strongest and most secure of all governments, we shall exercise an influence, after winning this contest, vastly beyond anything ever before realized. It will literally be irresistible; and the progress of the race will thenceforward go on with strides of which hitherto we have had no conception.

Such is a scant index of our responsibilities as the peculiar American generation which now stands in the breach to save the territorial area of the nation; to save the essential life of the nation; to save the very soul of the nation, which is but another name for the spirit of Progress everywhere. It is impossible for the human mind to gauge these responsibilities. They stretch almost to infinitude. Were the tremendous destinies depending, under Providence, upon our faithfulness, in this our generation, set before us in anything like their actual reality, the boldest and the calmest would shrink appalled. The exclamation from every lip would be, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The universal feeling would be that finite hands are not fit for such measureless trusts; and the universal impulse a look for some miraculous interposition from heaven.

But there can be no miracle vouchsafed. It is God's way to act in this world through human agents. He has elevated us to the dignity and the responsibility of being co-workers with him. We must stand to the lot he has assigned us, in the assurance that if we are only true, he will give us strength as we need it. It is not necessary that we shall have a complete conception of all the consequences of our faithfulness or of our unfaithfulness. We could not if we would. But we should

penetrate our souls with some more solemn sense than they have ever yet attained of the infinite import of the struggle. Our souls should get enough of it at least to silence faction, to hush complaint, to brace up our constancy, to inspire fresh courage, to light up with a heroic joy all that we do and all that we endure—enough of it to make us realize that as we now bear ourselves, we shall stand in history as the most beneficent or the most maleficent of human generations, and as the most faithful or the most false in the eye of God.

---

### MOTTOES FOR LOYAL MEN.

A friend of ours in the country has put the following pithy and emphatic sentences on a card and nailed it on his front door. He suggests that if others would do the same it would be one of the most expressive demonstrations of their loyalty that could be given :

“THE SUCCESS OF THE SOUTH WILL BE THE TRIUMPH OF THE WORST TYRANNY WHICH THE WORLD EVER SAW. THE SUCCESS OF THE NORTH WILL BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NOBLER FREEDOM THAN THE WORLD HAS YET SEEN.”—[F. W. NEWMAN.

“MY HOPES OF THE FUTURE WELFARE AND GREATNESS OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC WERE NEVER SO HIGH AS IN THIS, TO SUPERFICIAL APPEARANCE, THE DARKEST HOUR OF ITS HISTORY.”—[JOHN STUART MILL.

[Resolutions of the Ohio Legislature.]

“WE WILL HAVE NO DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION ;

“WE WILL HAVE NO ARMISTICE ;

“WE CAN FIGHT AS LONG AS REBELS AND TRAITORS CAN ;

“THE WAR SHALL GO ON TILL LAW IS RESTORED ;

“WE WILL NEVER DESPAIR OF THE REPUBLIC.”



From Richmond Examiner, May 28.

## SOUTHERN PRINCIPLES.

After the first half year, and from six months to six months, our character as a people has been decidedly rising in the world, until now a discerning public, to its own great surprise, almost loves us, and an astonished country begins to doubt whether it is the nineteenth century. For this improvement in the estimation of which we are now held, we do not thank the Spirit of the Age; we thank our President and Gen. LEE, and the other noble chiefs, and our glorious army. If we are able to borrow money abroad, and the capitalists eagerly pour their treasure into our hands, it is not owing to any patronage or fostering care, or engagements of support from their respective Governments; it is because those capitalists know in their utmost hearts and souls (which are in their pockets) that such chiefs and armies will never be conquered; that our independence is sure; and that, therefore, the control of the resources of the country will be in the control of our own Government and people—not of the Yankee enemies.

They are all perfectly certain in Europe that their debt will be duly paid by an independent people—not denied or dishonored by the conquerors of a crushed rebellion. Just so, if we get war ships built in England, it is not that Lord RUSSELL or the English Government encourages the transaction, but that ship-builders in Liverpool or Glasgow cannot be kept from doing an illicit stroke of business for a good employer. If the Confederacy is at a premium, she owes it to herself. And so much the better. We shall be all the more free to run the grand career which opens before us, and grasp our own lofty destiny. Would that all of us understood and laid to heart the true nature of that career and that destiny, and the responsibility it imposes! THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONFEDERACY IS, VERILY, A DISTINCT REACTION AGAINST THE WHOLE COURSE OF THE MISTAKEN CIVILIZATION OF THE AGE. And this is the true reason why

we have been left without the sympathy of the nations until we conquered that sympathy with the sharp edge of our sword.

For "LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY," WE HAVE DELIBERATELY SUBSTITUTED SLAVERY, SUBORDINATION AND GOVERNMENT. Those social and political problems which rack and torture modern society we have undertaken to solve for ourselves, in our own way, and upon our own principles. That "among equals equality is right;" among those who are naturally unequal, equality is chaos; THAT THERE ARE SLAVE RACES BORN TO SERVE, MASTER RACES BORN TO GOVERN. Such are the fundamental principles which we inherit from the ancient world, which we lifted up in the face of a perverse generation that has forgotten the wisdom of its fathers; by those principles we live, and in their defence we have shown ourselves ready to die. Reverently we feel that our Confederacy is a God-sent missionary to the nations, with great truths to preach. We must speak them boldly; and whoso hath ears to hear let him hear.

If we had been crushed in this mighty struggle, it would have been truly a judgment of Heaven against us and against our cause. If we had gained that cause easily, and it were without sanctifying it with such a baptism of sacrificial blood, and if the policy of foreign nations had even induced them to interpose on our behalf, and so saved us from this agony and bloody sweat, our position at this day had not been so high and clear; we should neither so fully apprehend the duty nor possess so completely the power to start in our proud career. We should then have had "spectators," patrons and intermeddlers. We should never have lifted our thoughts up to the height of our great argument, and our national life would have been but a half life, an abortionate compromise.

We start fair when our soldiers shall have sheathed their bloody weapons; then will come the task of our sages and statesmen in building up society, and uttering by word and act the truths which are its base. And, thank God! the Confederates have some statesmen and thinkers up to the mark and level of the situation. There are men in these Confederate

States who have long deeply felt and earnestly striven to express, though timidly and speculatively, on what foundations of fact, with what corner agents of principle, our social situation was one day to be built up fair and bright. Now is the time. Let them speak in no apologetic tone, nor place us at their peril, in any deprecatious attitude. This people has won the right surely 'to be let alone.' They will accept no deduction in politics, in literature, in philosophy; they will not follow but lead, not borrow but lend. They are more than content with their own principle of morals and way of life, and will stand upon it to the end, so help them God.

The foregoing article contains the most outrageous doctrine ever promulgated in the name of civilization.

Although it is but an expansion of the principle set forth by Alexander Stephens at the beginning of the rebellion, it is expressed in blunter and more brutal language, and is a better embodiment of the feeling and intention of the dominant faction at the South. This faction has fallen under the scriptural malediction on all who persist in systematic wickedness, and has really come to "*believe a lie.*" The depravity of the slaveholding conscience has now completely vitiated the slaveholding intellect, and it has lost all hold on reason as well as right, on common sense as well as moral sense.

A people that professes such doctrine in the name of religion, that impiously calls God to witness that it is content with its inhuman and atrocious principles,—such a people is the enemy of the human race. The nation is putting down a rebellion organized on such principles, is not only defending its own existence, but is maintaining the most sacred cause of the rights of men, and is protecting the most precious interests of the whole human race.