

For the gentlemen dare not assert a doctrine and declare it does not go an inch higher up or deeper down, but goes only so far as just suits their case. I think my friend from Prince George's (Mr. Belt) went as far in the support of the principle of secession, if not in name, as any gentleman whose views I have heard expressed upon this floor. I would ask if the people of a single State, setting at naught the interest and peace and safety of an entire nation, may sever their political connection at will, may not half the State sever its political connection on the same ground, and principle, and rule of conduct?

Gentlemen must recollect that the consequences and the considerations, the motives that actuate and the results that spring from the action, in the one instance affect a whole nation of thirty millions of people, involving them in the maelstrom of a fearful civil war; and that in the other case, if it results in a war, it is a war of which both sides, old and young, do not number a million.

I want my friends to understand that I do not believe in their doctrine of secession. It is wrong altogether; and all things springing out of it are, as it is, evil and wrong. But they may force me to a choice between two evils. They may bring me to a point where seeing that both these things are wrong, I may have to choose which of the wrongs is most endurable, and which I will accept. While I have always held secession to be unfounded in any legal or moral right, I hailed with joy the separation of West Virginia from East Virginia, because I saw in it one step towards the cure of the greatest of all wrongs, the disruption and dissolution of the Federal Union. I would accept the secession of West Virginia as an accomplished fact politically, just as in certain diseases of my own system I might agree that the doctors should administer to me certain things in certain doses which are poisonous in themselves.

My friend said that our cheeks ought to mantle with the blush of shame at the bare idea of accepting from Virginia a portion, however small, of her territory. He spoke of the ancient comity between the people of these two commonwealths. That ancient comity has been recently illuminated by a very edifying commentary. They get up bonfires, and do not mind making them out of people's houses, to illustrate this ancient comity. On their own showing, old Maryland is oppressed, down-trodden, tyrannized over, gagged, bound hand and foot; and what have they done? Finding her thus down, they have kicked her because she was thus down and could not resent the kick, and riding through her territory and robbing and despoiling her citizens.

I do not pretend to say that Virginia is responsible for all this. I do not mean to say it. I do not believe it; for it is my belief

that in the Old Dominion there are hearts as true as yours or mine to the land of their fathers. She was kicked, cuffed, dragged into the vortex of disunion. I know it from men who sat in her Convention; from whose lips I learn that while they were sitting there deliberating upon the condition of their State and the country, ruffians were parading around the hall, throwing handfuls of pebbles against the windows, and threatening to throw rocks if they did not pass the ordinance at once. Virginia is true. I pity her from the bottom of my heart. She should not have taken to her embrace that modern Mokanna, that veiled prophet, eternally prating of the rights of States and of people, and riding like Juggernaut over them all.

I am willing for one to accept West Virginia, if she chooses to make the offer, as part and parcel hereafter of the State of Maryland. I say their people are identical in their feelings, their interests, their country, their climate, their production. In everything that constitutes the unity of a people, they are identical. And I should not blush to say to that State, which has an organized government, executive, legislative and judicial, and which has put its thousands of good and true men into the army of this Union, if you brave and true men purpose to unite your political destiny with us in future, we will give you a welcome such as the Scottish poet indicated when he said:

“When death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A time that surely shall come;
In Heaven itself, I'll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.”

This is just the kind of welcome I stand ready to give to West Virginia just as soon as she says she wants to come. It is not based on the action of a few men in a cockpit, here or elsewhere, but the action of the Union masses, who are now standing with sword in hand, and who may be anxious on account of the vast interests at stake, to unite their political fortune with us. I want her to come. I think that that State which should comprise what is now the State of Maryland and what is now the State of West Virginia, with a proper system of labor, and practical enterprise, would soon grow into an empire, of which even my friend from Prince George's (Mr. Belt) would be justly proud.

On motion of Mr. DANIEL,
The Convention took a recess.

EVENING SESSION.

The Convention met at 8 o'clock, P. M.
The roll was called, and the following members answered to their names:

Messrs. Goldsborough, President; Abbott, Annan, Belt, Chambers, Cunningham, Daniel, Davis, of Washington, Dent, Earle, Ecker, Edelen, Galloway, Greene, Henkle, Hoffman, Hollyday, Hopper, Jones, of Somerset, Keefer,