

poured a golden tribute into the National Treasury. Shall all this continue to be lost to us? Shall we madly attempt to hold these States by standing armies—by despotic restraints, or by the good will and co-operation of the people themselves. That is the simple question which presents itself for our solution. The Southern States will hang like a sickly and withering incubus upon the body politic, until their relations to the Union are restored. The issue involves no sacrifice of honor on the part of this Government. It is an issue of prosperity—of finance—of destiny. I should look upon the subjugation of these States and their reduction to territorial dependencies, as the greatest calamity that could befall this country; and we must trust to the wisdom and magnanimity of Congress, to avert the confusion which is certain to flow from the adoption of so suicidal a policy.

“History affords no instance where a people so powerful in numbers, in resources, and in public spirit, after a war so long in its duration, so destructive in its progress, and so adverse in its issue, have accepted defeat and its consequence, with so much of good faith as has marked the conduct of the people lately in insurrection against the United States. Beyond all question this has been largely due to the wise generosity with which their enforced surrender was accepted by the President of the United States, and the generals in the immediate command of our armies, and to the liberal measures which were afterwards taken to restore order, tranquility and law, to the States where all had for the time been overthrown. No steps could have been better calculated to command the respect, win the confidence, revive the patriotism, and secure the permanent and affectionate allegiance of the people of the South to the Constitution and laws of the Union than those which have been so firmly taken and so steadfastly pursued by the President of the United States.”

The Executive, Legislative and Judicial Departments of this Government are clearly defined in the Constitution.—Congress makes laws in accordance with the Constitution and the President executes them. But the Constitution never intended that the President should stand by and witness the passage of unwise laws, without the interposition of his veto power. I am yet to learn that in the exercise of his own, the President has ever encroached upon the functions of the coordinate branches with which he is associated, in his plan of re-construction. There can be no conflict of authority if each keeps within its prescribed sphere, and we may safely assume that an attempt at usurpation will never tarnish the fame of the present Executive.

The great obstacle in determining this vexed question of re-construction, is the future status of the negro race.

The Constitutional Amendments means this and nothing