

war—the hesitation of the people, now fixed, meant war—New York meant war—and the whole Nation, in a trice, bristled up hirsute with bayonets, “like that crop of armed men that sprung from the fabled dragon’s teeth of old.” The small army chiefly posted upon our Western borders, to harass or hold in check a few tribes of ignorant savages, suddenly swelled to a half a million of men, equipped with all the improvements of modern warfare, and face to face with their equals. Gradually that army begins to contract its enormous folds, all along the extended circle of its operations, slowly closing in upon the penned-up foe. Victory is ours upon the 22d of February, 1862! And yet there is no cause for exultation. The victory is over our brethren—and those who must yet be united with us in the bonds of peace.

If they will lay down their arms, we have no humiliating yokes to offer them, under which they must pass, before they can return to their allegiance—we have nothing to offer them but outstretched arms, and welcoming embraces—we will meet them upon their return—ay will recognize them afar off, and greet them, not with a reproach, for the patrimony they have wasted—but as the aged parent met his repentant prodigal. The war as it is prosecuted by us, is prosecuted not in a spirit of revenge—still less of conquest or subjugation. It is a war for the Union—the Constitution and the supremacy of the Laws, and that is all, and that is a war in which the illustrious man whose memory we celebrate this day—would have been, had he been living, the foremost leader. Some times when we look back a year, it seems like a horrible nightmare, that must pass off with the dream that creates it—the cause was so trivial—the disaster is so tremendous—that we can scarcely make up our minds to it as a reality. Take a rare and curiously wrought Venitian vase, and because the microscope detects in its exquisite surface, a flaw not visible to the naked eye, dash it into a thousand pieces. Such madness is wisdom to the course of the American people. And yet the fact is before us, and while we mourn over it, we cannot ignore it. We have forgotten the teachings of Washington—and must return to them, for that wisdom and consolation, necessary for our support during the present trial. We must recollect that the Union was the fruit of mutual surrender and compromise of rights severally enjoyed by the different parties to the compact—and that, while certain rights have been foregone and delegated, on the part of the States, to the General Government, certain other rights have been retained, and cannot, without violation of the fundamental law of the land, be usurped by the Government.

Keeping this in view, we must learn to bear and forbear with one another, and administer the Government in the spirit of its formation—administer it as it was by the