

On this question, Mr. President, I have always belonged to the party of peace and of compromise. I, for one, have not feared to express the desire, the anxious desire, to see this controversy amicably adjusted by fair concessions on both sides. From so declaring, no fear of demagogue denunciations has deterred or shall deter me. I am not to be frightened into a disloyal and ignominious silence by the abandoned but too easily popular cry that the friends of moderation, of reason, and of peace, are "the British party." If against a rash or a gratuitous quarrel we maintain the duty and interests of peace, we are assailed as the friends of England, or of any nation but our own; if we deprecate a war as impolitic as it is unnecessary and unnatural—if we point to the losses, the disasters which will follow a contest so causeless, we are instantly charged with an unwillingness to defend the honor of our country, with timidity and sympathy with the public adversary.

Such is the system of perversion and calumny with which we must now contend, in attempting to do our duty as public agents, as legislators, and as statesmen, in a land of free debate. We may speak, but at the peril of being given over to denunciation, as little less than traitors or cowards. We must speak on no side but one of questions gotten up for the express purpose of dividing the country between the friends of what is moderate and good, and those who are expected to form a larger party—the favorers of every rabid pretension, of every dangerous and violent movement. If we are not personally and in express terms charged with cowardice or want of patriotism, the particular charge is made by innuendo, and the general one by fulmination.

There are certainly those, sir, with whom such political arts as these will succeed; with whom a reputation for courage and patriotism can be made by thus going to extremes on every question here that should be one of grave and sincere deliberation. But I trust that this easy valor and wordy public spirit are not capable of seriously misleading the American people. For myself, I am but one of the many humble citizens who, with no greater interest or timidity than thousands of others, yet fear a conflict with England. I confess that I dread war, and that I have been alarmed in especial at the prospect of a present war with Great Britain. But was this on account of considerations personal to myself? No; they only regarded the country. I consider such a war as the greatest calamity that can befall this nation. But, independently of its havoc of life and property, the desolation it will leave far and wide behind it, I believe a war between us and England will involve much of the civilized world; will inflict upon it an incalculable amount of woe; and will throw back for half a century the advancing cause of civil and religious liberty. As to danger, a war between us and England could bring none to a member of Congress who wished to keep out of it. If such a war comes, my own State is likely to be one of the chief theatres of deadly conflict. There is too much to induce England again to invade Louisiana; her beautiful and exposed capital, her crescent city, will not escape, and we shall see the waters of the majestic Mississippi stained with the blood of its best citizens. It is for this, and not for any abject individual dread, that I fear war. If I chose, I can remain on my plantation, and pursue its avocations unmolested by the enemy; for who need fight that can employ a substitute? It is not the wealthy who have need to fear a war with England; the army will not be made up of the rich, the aristocrats so called, unless they see fit voluntarily to join it. It is the poor man who is to suffer—the mechanic, the day laborer, the hardy ploughman—torn from his home and family, whose life, the sole stay of that family, will be placed in danger; this is the class who will suffer, and these are they whom it is meant to fire with phrenzy, and lead on to war by this outcry against men upon whom the evils of war cannot fall half so heavily. There will, sir, in short, be two sorts of men engaged in this war,

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