

This leads me, naturally, to the third and last point of view, at which I proposed to consider this bill; as a means for the advancement of the objects of the personal, or local ambition of the members of the American cabinet. With respect to the members of that cabinet, I may, almost literally, say, I know nothing of them, except as public men. Against them, I have no personal animosity. I know little of them, in private life; and that little never made me ambitious to know more. I look at them as public men, wielding powers, and putting in operation means and instruments, materially affecting the interests and prospects of the United States.

It is a curious fact, but no less true than curious, that for these twelve years past, the whole affairs of this country have been managed, and its fortunes reversed, under the influence of a cabinet, little less than despotic, composed, to all efficient purposes, of *two Virginians and a foreigner*. When I speak of these men, as Virginians, I mean I cast no odium upon that state, as though it were not entitled to its full share of influence in the national councils; nor when I refer to one of them, as being a foreigner, do I intend, thereby, to suggest any connexions of a nature, unworthy, or suspicious. I refer to these circumstances, as general and undoubted facts, which belong to the characters of the cabinet, and which cannot fail to be taken into view in all estimates of plans and projects, so long as man is constituted as he is, and so long as the prejudices and principles of childhood never fail to influence, in different degrees, in even the best men, the course of thinking and action of their riper years.

I might have said, perhaps, with more strict propriety, that it was a cabinet composed of *three Virginians and a foreigner*; because, once, in the course of the twelve years, there has been a change of one of the characters. But, sir, that change was, notoriously, matter of form rather than substance. As it respects the cabinet, the principles continued the same; the interests the same; the objects, at which it aimed, the same.

I said that this cabinet had been, during these twelve years, little less than despotic. This fact, also, is notorious. During this whole period, the measures, distinctly recommended, have been adopted by the two houses of Congress, with as much uniformity and with as little modification, too, as the measures of the British ministry have been adopted, during the same period, by the British parliament. The connection between cabinet councils and parliamentary acts is just as intimate, in the one country, as in the other.

I said that these three men constituted, to all efficient purposes, the whole cabinet. This, also, is notorious. It is true, that, during this period, other individuals have been called into the cabinet. But they were all of them, comparatively, minor men; such as had no great weight, either of personal talents, or of personal influence, to support them. They were