

is free from blame. I do not call on you to assert that it did wisely in seceding. What I say is that the North declared war against it simply on account of the Southern interpretation of the ambiguous Federal constitution—of a constitution meant to be ambiguous, and intended to hold both opinions.

Out of the 34 States, 13 are old British colonies which rebelled in 1776. The basis of the constitution in every one of these 13 States is either the old one which it possessed while still a dependency of the British Crown, or else that constitution altered by reform bills of its own passing, for in such questions the Federal Congress has no jurisdiction. In the other 21 the constitutions are self-framed on the models afforded by the original set. But whence came the Federal organization which overtops the different States? After the "difficulty" which the Americans had with George III. in 1776, they established a Continental Congress, in whose hands they vested the regulation of matters of national and foreign interest, which were of course mainly the conduct of the war with England and the provision of funds for that object. That Congress, in which executive and legislative powers were ill combined, proved to be a very weak and incomplete instrument for its object of investing thirteen sovereign commonwealths, spreading over many thousand square miles, with the external character of being one power. Accordingly, a more artificial constitution, meant to be permanent, was framed in 1781, under the title of "Articles of Federation and Perpetual Union." The first article set forth that "the style of the Confederacy shall be 'The United States of America'"—the origin of that name. The second stipulated that "each State retains its sovereignty, freedom, and inde-