

Transcription

"The spirit of immediate secession"

THE DAUGHTERS OF VIRGINIA.

[The women of Essex county have desired the Editor of the *Examiner* to make public the following address and resolutions. The kind note in which this request was made, and the accompanying paper enclosed, is signed by the names of forty ladies, among whom he recognizes many belonging to the best known and most highly respected families of the Old Dominion. These signatures are withheld from motives of delicacy, which every mind will appreciate. The Editor of the *Examiner* feels much honored that this request has been made to him, and hastens to comply with it. The spirited and patriotic sentiments expressed by these true daughters of Virginia will find an echo in the hearts of all their sisters, and must, it is hoped, go far to awaken the courage and pride of their brothers, husbands, and lovers.]

To the Editor of the Examiner:

Feeling intensely interested in the momentous issue of the late political proceedings, we the undersigned, ladies of the county of Essex, have adopted a series of resolutions, in which we have clearly expressed our ardent desire for the severance of all connection with the traitorous inhabitants of the North.

Firmly believing that if Virginia, in defiance of all laws of honor, gratitude and policy, turn from our noble kinsmen of the South and give the hand of fellowship to those who have ever proved themselves our bitterest enemies, her conduct will be rewarded with endless shame and degradation—we have at last resolved to try if it be possible to arouse in the hearts of their sons and daughters one spark of that chivalric spirit for which the "gallant Old Dominion" has been so famed in by-gone days. Albeit, the voice we raise be that of a few weak women, yet we cannot see our beloved State hurrying onward to the gulf of perdition and refrain from adding our mite to the efforts of those who labor for her salvation. If our words awake in the hearts of those who hear them one expansive thrill of patriotism, or if any of our countrywomen are emboldened by our movement to uplift in the cause of Virginia a voice more powerful and persuasive than our own, we shall thank heaven for so great a reward to our humble efforts. Hoping and believing that it will be so, we beg leave to make known through the columns of your *truly patriotic* paper our earnest desires for the *honor and independence* of our State.



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Much, Mr. Editor, will depend on *your efforts* to arouse and stimulate to honorable action our infatuated countrymen. Let us then, sign ourselves your sincere well-wishers and sympathizers in the good work.

[Here follow the signatures of forty ladies.]

We, the women of Essex, have witnessed with silent but heartfelt interest the momentous events of the last few months. Trusting implicitly in the wisdom and patriotic virtue of those who have been entrusted with the guardianship of Virginia's honor, we have until lately had no motive or desire to break the decorous silence becoming our sex in regard to political affairs. But now, when we behold our beloved State hurled from her proud pedestal in the gallery of nations, and her base and slanderous enemies standing mockingly around, heaping upon the prostrate form of the fallen queen every indignity of which their degraded natures can conceive—when we see this, we can no longer stifle our emotions of bursting indignation, that brave men should stand by beholding this humiliation, and no voice or hand be uplifted to raise the once regal head of the "Mother of Statesmen" from beneath the ignominious rule of Lincoln and his confederates. We also desire to show to the world that however weakly the [*word torn*] of noble pride is flickering in the bosoms of Virginia's sons, it yet glows with its pristine vigor in the hearts of her daughters, and that if our beloved State is insulted with impunity the dastards who cause her to submit to such degradation are not countenanced at home by our weak and vacillating fears. Therefore be it

Resolved, That we endeavor by every means in our power to imbue with the spirit of immediate secession all our countrymen who come within the range of our influence; assuring them if war be the consequence of this—the only honorable course for Virginians to pursue—they will ever find us ready and willing to cooperate with them to the utmost limit of our power, and that we shall consider it a glorious privilege to share in any privation that may befall them on the road to independence, considering it far preferable to endure the calamities of the most bloody and disastrous war, than to submit tamely to the yoke of insulting adversaries.

Resolved, That an address be prepared appealing to our sisters throughout the State of Virginia for their sympathy and aid in our endeavor to inspire our countrymen with the patriotic spirit of their ancestors.



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Resolved, That we positively refuse to purchase, or countenance the purchasing, of any articles manufactured at the North; regarding the poorest produce of Southern industry as comlier raiment for Virginia damsels than the richest texture of Northern looms.

Resolved, That we purchase by general subscription a flag bearing the device of our native State, and present it to the Essex Cavalry, with our most earnest prayers to the God of our Washington, that the slumbering spirit of Virginia chivalry may be roused by the sight of its glorious motto, and that we may yet behold the radiant Goddess of Southern Freedom standing triumphantly over the prostrate form of Northern despotism.

Our dear sisters: Since it has pleased an all-wise and merciful Providence to place us in these stirring and momentous times, it behoves us to look closely, and courageously around us, and to follow prayerfully the path of duty, even though it be beset with many dangers. How often in times of peace have we listened with approbation while the glowing words of the poet and orator described the beauty and sacredness of our mission. How often have we repeated their words to ourselves with an honest thrill of self-congratulation, how often have our hear[t]s glowed in secret consciousness that, though our voices are not heard in the public council, yet we can send forth an influence as powerfully persuasive as the melodious breathings of a harp. Have we not often boasted that we could arouse to high and noble deeds, that though we might not wield the sword of justice and of right, still we might nerve to greater heroism the arms of those who bore it? That though we went not forth with a bold brow to court the approach of danger, yet when the sword of the warrior was broken, and the hearts of the bravest men failed them, we could endure with a strength bestowed by Heaven, and that it was our glorious privilege, like holy priestesses, to nurse in the temples of men's hearts the sacred fire of patriotism. *This* we have boasted, in times of peace, was our mission upon earth, and now, oh! sisters, when the voice of the outraged South appeals so stirringly to *all* her children, shall we refuse to incite to deeds of valor, shall we suffer the sacred flame to expire? Oh! that we had the gift of words, that we might speak to your hearts and they would be moved, and your ears would be opened that they might hear the voice of Virginia calling for delivery from the insults heaped upon her by the degraded inhabitants of the North. We cannot speak of ourselves, but the Lord who appeared unto Moses in the burning bush, and said unto him, "Now, therefore, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me, and I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppressed



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them," and who said also unto him, "Who made man's mouth, or who made the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thee, and teach thee what to say." Shall He not be with us also, when we would throw off an oppression more odious than that of the Egyptians? Shall He not be with our armies to deliver them from an host more wicked than that of Pharaoh, and keep us safely in our Southern homes, fairer than the promised land of Canaan? Surely *all* patriotism, *all* noble enthusiasm, has not expired in the breasts of those descended from our glorious Revolutionary mothers!— *They* scorned to purchase degrading luxuries, and ignominious safety by base submission to tyranny, and should *we*, their free-born daughters, barter our own and our country's honor for the yet more insulting exchanges of Black Republicanism? Perish the thought! The dead would arise from their graves to reproach us with our degeneracy! Let us with scorn hurl back in the faces of our enemies all insulting compromises; let us sustain at home and abroad our brave brothers with the inspiring enthusiasm and heroic fortitude of true women. Oh! women of Virginia, can we not feel and act as our mothers did when they buckled the swords to our fathers' sides, and sent them forth sustained by their prayers, to the bloody field, to win a glorious liberty, or a glorious death! Can we not do this, or has the last spark of heroism expired while we have been steeping our souls in the enervating delights of prosperity? Must we prove to the world the degrading fact, that fitted only to be the soulless toys of freemen in their hours of relaxation, we dare not encounter the rough breath of adversity in order to sustain them with our presence? Has Virginia fallen so low that her daughters must blush with conscious shame even at accounts of pagan heroism? For is there one among us who, like the pure priestess of the ancient Druids, would plunge the dagger in her own heart, and let her innocent blood flow forth as a propitiation for her country? We know that our God is more merciful. His favor is not gained by shedding innocent blood. But is there one among us who would not rather die with untarnished honor, than live the cringing vassal of a tyrant? Life were then indeed a poor boon—surely we cannot prefer it to any privation, however great that may befall us on the glorious road to independence. If the last be your opinion, (and we cannot but believe it,) denounce it openly, pour into the ears of your brothers, husbands, and sons cheering and sustaining words, and let not your weak fears prove a snare to them. If there be no other road to an honorable separation, let *us* take up the martial trumpet; let our voices call Virginia's sons to the glorious struggle, and our blessings and prayers



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sustain their arms in the good fight. Let us proclaim abroad, so that the world may hear it, that we will bestow infinite scorn upon the dastard who regards his own safety before his country's honor, and the eternal devotion of a true woman to the hero who draws his sword bravely in her defence.

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