

Transcription

Pierpont's inaugural address

A new doctrine has been introduced by those who are at the head of the revolution in our Southern States—that the people are *not* the source of all power. Those promulgating this doctrine have tried to divide the people into two classes; one they call the laboring class, the other the capital class. They have for several years been industriously propagating the idea that the capital of the country ought to represent the legislation of the country, and guide it and direct it; maintain that it is dangerous for the labor of the country to enter into the legislation of the country. This, gentlemen, is the principle that has characterized the revolution that has been inaugurated in the South; they maintaining that those who are to have the privilege of voting ought to be of the educated class, and that the legislation ought not be represented by the laboring class. . . .

This revolution has been inaugurated with a view of making a distinction upon the principles that I have indicated. We of Western Virginia have not been consulted upon that subject. The large body of your citizens in the eastern part of the State have not been consulted upon that subject. . . .

We have been driven into the position we occupy to-day, by the usurpers at the South, who have inaugurated this war upon the soil of Virginia, and have made it the great Crimea of this contest. We representing the loyal citizens of Virginia, have been bound to assume the position we have assumed to-day, for the protection of ourselves, our wives, our children, and our property. We, I repeat, have been *driven* to assume this position; and now we are but recurring to the great fundamental principle of our fathers, that to the loyal people of a State belong the law-making power of that State. The loyal people are entitled to the government and governmental authority of the State. And, fellow-citizens, it is the assumption of this authority upon which we are now about to enter.

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