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A LETTER

FROM

HON. W. T. WILLEY,

ON

THE REDINTEGRATION OF VIRGINIA.

CITY OF WASHINGTON:
1866.

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State to the west? They know very well that complaints to this effect had long ago and frequently been made. I ask you that these complaints on the part of the people of West Virginia have been the source of bitterness and bitter strife for thirty years, frequently menacing the integrity of the State, long before the late rebellion.

LETTER.
You had all the railroads; the Potomac and Norfolk railroad; the Potomac and York River; the Richmond and Potomac; the Orange and Alexandria; the Virginia and Maryland; the Virginia and Tennessee; the Potomac and Lynchburg; and others not necessary to mention forming a perfect network of railways all over the old State. There are no railroads in the new State, and the former of which has been like a veteran canoe on the river of the Commonwealth.

WASHINGTON CITY, January 20, 1866.
To _____, Esq.

DEAR SIR: I have received the Alexandria Journal which you sent to me, containing Mr. Woodson's resolutions in the Virginia Legislature relating to the reunion of East and West Virginia. I have also read the remarks of Mr. Garnett in opposition to said resolutions. You request my opinion of both the resolutions and the speech. Having been frequently solicited within the last two months by gentlemen in each of the States to give to them my views respecting the premises, I shall take the liberty of replying to you through the press, so that if my opinion shall prove to be of any value, it may reach all who have done me the honor to request it.

There seems to be a misconception prevalent in the country in relation to the true cause of the division of Virginia, and the erection of the new State of West Virginia. It is supposed by many to have been simply and only "a war measure." Every intelligent citizen, however, in either of the two States knows that such is not the fact. He knows that there has been perpetual strife between the respective sections now composing the two States for the last forty years, and that a division of the State of Virginia has often been suggested, and sometimes menaced, as the only means of quieting the contention. The war, therefore, merely afforded an opportunity to the people of West Virginia to carry into effect a long cherished desire. If this division had been solely "a war measure," there would be some force in the suggestion that now, when the war is over, the integrity of the old State might be restored.

But in reference to the propriety of the re-consolidation of the two States, I suppose there can be no difference of opinion among all well-informed and well-disposed West Virginians. Nor do I suppose, if the people of (old) Virginia would dismiss from their minds the suggestions

of passion and the influences of State pride, and would calmly and rationally consider the question, that they would desire a reunion of the two States. Indeed, I happen to know that many of them are decidedly opposed to it; not from any such vindictive reasons as are assigned by Mr. Garnett, but because they see that separation is best for the interests of both States. I shall not have sufficient time at my disposal to do more than suggest to you very briefly some of the more prominent considerations against a reunion.

The two States are geographically distinct. There never has been, and there never can be, any real, harmonious, and profitable municipal union between them. They are, and must forever remain, physically separated. To-day, if the people of three fourths of West Virginia were desirous of visiting Richmond, the capital of the old State, they would be compelled to pass around through Maryland and the District of Columbia to accomplish their wish; and they would be indebted to the enterprise of a foreign corporation for the means of doing it.

There is little or no traffic or commerce between the two sections. There has not been any since the system of transportation by pack-horses and pack-saddles has been abandoned. Who carries anything from west of the Alleghenies to eastern Virginia to sell? Who brings anything from East Virginia to West Virginia to sell? There are and have been almost literally no business and no intercourse between the two sections for twenty-five years, excepting what was connected with matters of revenue or legislation at Richmond. There is no State in the Union which has been admitted ten years ago of which the people of East Virginia know less than they do of West Virginia; and, excepting the capital of the State, the people of West Virginia are equally unfamiliar with East Virginia.

Let me direct your attention to another fact.

Let me ask you to cast your eye over the map of Virginia prior to its division and see where her works of internal improvement are located—her railways, canals, or any other character of improvement of extent and dignity sufficient to claim title to a State work. Where are they? All east of the Alleghany mountains; all within the limits of the old State. There you find all the railroads; the Petersburg and Norfolk railroad; the Petersburg and Weldon; the Richmond and Petersburg; the York River; the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac; the Orange and Alexandria; the Virginia Central; the Manassas Gap; the Richmond and Danville; the Virginia and Tennessee; the Petersburg and Lynchburg, and others not necessary to mention, forming a perfect network of railways all over the old State. There, too, are the canals, the James River, Dismal Swamp, &c., the former of which has been like an inveterate cancer on the revenues of the Commonwealth for so many years. All these improvements with many others are entirely within the limits of the old State. Now, what railways or canals, built on State account, do you find in West Virginia? Not one! The boundaries of West Virginia embrace at least one third of the whole area of the old State. Yet we have not a foot of completed railway or canal built on State account within our borders. It is well known that we had to petition the Legislature of Virginia for many years before we succeeded in extorting from it the naked right of way for foreign enterprise, and capital to construct the Baltimore and Ohio railroad through the northwest corner of the State; and that road and the Northwestern railroad connected with it, leading from Grafton to Parkersburg, constitute the only work of internal improvement in our State of any value or consideration. I do not forget the Covington road. But what of that? Some years ago several hundred thousand dollars were expended upon it in different places; and then it was abandoned, before a foot of it was completed within the limits of West Virginia, and the labor and money expended were measurably lost. Nor do I forget the improvement of the Kanawha river, ostensibly looking to a connection with the James river canal. But these partial and unavailing efforts in behalf of the counties now in the southwest corner of our State seem only to have been made to silence our clamors for relief, and to keep us quiet while the grand system of eastern railways, &c., was going on to completion. How will Mr. Joynes, and Woodson, and the members of the Legislature of Virginia, who seem so anxious for reunion, explain this state of the case? Will they admit that it was owing to the jealous and unfriendly legislation of the eastern part of the State, which feared that the development of the immeasurable natural resources of the west, and the consequent increase of wealth and population, would transfer the political power of the

State to the west? They know very well that complaint to this effect had long ago and frequently been made. They know that these complaints on the part of the people of Western Virginia have been the source of bickering and bitter strife for thirty or forty years, frequently menacing the integrity of the State, long before the late rebellion.

Are they willing at last to admit the justice of this complaint? They will hardly venture to deny it altogether. But may they not find a more worthy and creditable apology for this neglect, in physical causes, and the insuperable difficulties growing out of our geographical position, of carrying any improvements into West Virginia which would at the same time be of any utility to themselves? I think so. West Virginia lies on the western slope of the Alleghanies. It properly belongs to the valley of the Mississippi. All, or nearly all, of its streams flow thitherward. Its natural outlets to market, and all its available commercial connections, are diverse from Virginia—south and west with Cincinnati and the Gulf of Mexico; north with Pittsburg and the lakes; east with Baltimore and Philadelphia. The markets in East Virginia are not our markets; and if they were, it would be difficult if not impossible to reach them from the larger part of West Virginia by any direct or convenient means of access. We are cut off from East Virginia by the almost impassable barriers of the Alleghany mountains. With the present crushing public debt of Virginia resting upon her, she would not, even if reunited with us, be able for ages to come to construct, at such heavy cost as must be necessary to accomplish it, any road or other available means of travel and transportation through those mountains into our midst, so as to connect us with the sea-board or any important place of trade or commerce within her borders. Besides, if she had both the will and the ability thus to accommodate us, any such work, when constructed, would only carry us beyond the nearer and better markets already indicated. Any such work, too, would therefore be unprofitable and difficult to sustain; and this fact would necessarily preclude the hope of deriving any aid from the investment of foreign capital in its construction. To go back to Virginia would, therefore, in my opinion, result in the perpetuation of our past and present impoverished and undeveloped condition. It would leave our incalculable mineral, agricultural, and manufacturing resources to slumber for all time to come, as they have done in all past time, in our valleys, hills, and mountains, without any practical value either to ourselves or to others. We should remain hereafter, as we have remained heretofore, "the hewers of wood and drawers of water" to a sectional majority, which, even if it had the inclination, would never have the power, to rescue us from our inevitable degradation.

Will it be urged that we may reasonably expect a more liberal policy in the future if we were reunited, and that hereafter we might be allowed to construct, without reference to any connection with the remainder of the State, such improvements, in such directions as would subserve our local interests? Upon what grounds can we justly predicate any such anticipation? Will it be said that slavery being destroyed, the antagonism heretofore arising between the two sections in consequence of the distrust of the eastern slaveholder growing out of the existence of slavery in the East, and the non-existence of it in the West, would necessarily cease? The truth is, no real antagonism ever did exist on this account. There is not, in all our history, a single fact which would warrant any just apprehension on the part of eastern alarmists in this respect. I think I may challenge the boldest accuser of western fidelity to the laws and constitution of the State to furnish an instance of bad faith, on the part of West Virginia, indicating any purpose of disregarding or compromising the lawful rights of the eastern slaveholder. On the contrary, our legislative annals furnish too much evidence of discreditable subserviency and toadyism toward the imperious demands of eastern slaveholders. No, their assumed distrust was a mere pretext. They knew it was unfounded. They had submitted our fidelity to the severest tests. When real dangers assailed them; when the British, in the war of 1812, were carrying off their negroes and pillaging their property, they did not hesitate to cry to us for help; and with the echo of their call, coming back from our mountains, was mingled the roll of the western drum on their own capitol square. With such alacrity did we fly to their rescue; and our true men stood where their own men had not dared to stand alone, on their own shores, between them and the foe; and many a brave fellow from our hills fell in defense of their firesides. I confess that I am unable to suppress expressions of indignation when I remember the long, loud, and persistent clamors with which they impeached our integrity and loyalty to the rights of the slaveholder. It was a mere subterfuge, under which they hoped to cover up their neglect of our section. This by the way, however.

I must judge of the future by the past. Look at the facts. There is eastern Virginia, covered all over with railways, canals, &c., furnishing every needful facility for developing that part of the State and for trade and transportation. In West Virginia, comprising one third of the territory of the State and containing vastly greater mineral wealth and natural resources, we have none of those facilities, excepting the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, built by a foreign corporation, a few sections of macadamised roads, a few miles of imperfect slackwater navigation, and some dilapidated "mud-pikes." In large and important sections of our State

even these cheap facilities are entirely wanting. I repeat the question, why is this so? If the reasons I have assigned are not satisfactory, I confess I am unable to give any better.

And what is there in the horoscope of the future to indicate relations between the two sections, if they are consolidated, more friendly and just than have heretofore existed? Certainly nothing for many generations to come. Standing as we now do, with hands stained with each other's blood, shed in the late rebellion, it could hardly be expected that our joint counsels would exhibit any increase of harmony, liberality, and good feeling. However we may regret this hostility, we cannot deny the fact that it exists. It may be wrong, but still it does exist. We must recognize the fact. It is an inveterate hostility, increased and intensified by recent events. Would it be wise to attempt to reunite such hostile elements in the same municipal organization in the absence of some potent and overruling necessity? It would be wise, I admit, to remove the cause of disagreement. Can anything accomplish that desirable result short of a separate municipal existence? While the same cause remains the same effect will follow it. And if my view of the difficulties in the way be correct, it is no figure of speech to say that this inveterate hostility, founded on the antagonism of irreconcilable interests, is as immovable as the Alleghany mountains; for while those mountains stand in the way there can be no practical identification of interests, pursuits, State improvements, or commercial relations.

My conclusion is, therefore, that the peace and prosperity of both sides will be best promoted by their remaining separate.

But there are many other considerations leading my mind to the same conclusion. The two States are separated not only by insuperable physical barriers, but they are really, and I might say radically, different in the manners, customs, education, habits, and feelings of the people. This has been obvious to the most casual observer. I mention one illustration, for instance. In eastern Virginia, labor—especially manual labor—is not respectable; that is to say, it excludes the laborer from what they call society. He may be respected, if otherwise worthy of respect. But so was their faithful negro servant; but he does not claim social equality with those who "own labor." It is true that labor is no longer to be "owned" there. Slavery is extinct; but its effects on the character of the people will long exist. In West Virginia, thank God! there has never been any such unworthy discrimination. There personal industry is honorable; and when accompanied by intelligence and integrity, it enhances the respectability and standing of the man.

Who that is old enough to remember it does not recall the indignation with which he read the speech of the justly celebrated Benjamin

Watkins Leigh, delivered in the constitutional convention of 1829, in which he exclaimed, while resisting the extension of the right of suffrage to the western laborer: "What real share, so far as mind is concerned, does any man suppose the *peasantry* of the West?" * * * "can or will take in the affairs of State?" We could hardly expect harmony to exist between a people who cherish such a sentiment as that and the people of West Virginia. The one section is thoroughly democratic; the other is aristocratic. There could be no peaceable political fellowship between them in the same municipality.

I beg to refer you to another consideration which the people of West Virginia will do well to observe. Look at the condition in which the war has left Virginia—her desolated fields and farms and villages; her depleted and bankrupt treasury; her wasted resources; her decimated population. West Virginia, though by no means exempt from similar injuries, is, nevertheless, comparatively free from them. She is crippled to some extent, but by no means exhausted. She is ready and able still to march straight and steadily forward in the new career of development and prosperity which has been opened before her. In this condition of the State it is proposed to unite their fortunes for the future. In suggesting this thought to General Harris the other day, he enforced it by a homely but apt illustration. "Yes," said he, "it is as if there were two owners of conterminous farms. One of them had been provident, industrious, and discreet. *His* farm is in tolerably good repair, well stocked, productive, and profitable. The other has been reckless, thriftless, and neglectful. *His* farm is dilapidated, the fences are gone, the barns are burned, his stock is destroyed, and his means are all wasted. He says to the former, 'Come, let us unite our farms into one. While we are repairing mine we can use yours, and when mine is repaired, restored, and replenished, we will have a nice farm indeed.'" Such, in fact, is the proposition which East Virginia makes to West Virginia. She proposes to avail herself of the benefits of our prudence and providence to repair and supply her want of them. I shall be greatly surprised if the people of West Virginia are willing to enter into any such bargain; and when they remember that these melancholy desolations of East Virginia are not the result of accident or misfortune, but the legitimate consequences of wicked and unjustifiable rebellion against the most benign Government "the sun ever shone upon," and especially when they remember the vigorous and vindictive efforts made to drag them also into the same vortex of ruin and rebellion, I imagine their disposition to accede to the proposition will in nowise be increased. They will most probably consider that it was enough to have given the lives of their fathers, sons, and broth-

ers to repel the aggression without contributing of their means to restore the losses of the aggressor.

Moreover, a reunion of the States would doubtless result in the surrender of those fundamental reforms inaugurated under our new constitution, and the laws made by our Legislature in accordance therewith. It would restore the old county courts. It would surrender our system of free schools and popular education, just going into effect. It would destroy our improved organizations of county police, townships, &c. It would remove our constitutional protection against the creation of burdensome public debts, and place us back again under the domination of a sectional political majority which would go on, in all probability, in the future as it has done in the past, in enlarging our public debt for internal improvements, none of which would ever or could ever find their way into Western Virginia. In short, it would ruin us. Nor may we forget the probable confusion which would ensue in the necessary effort which must follow to reconcile and harmonize the different systems of judicial proceedings, modes of recording title papers, probates of wills, and granting letters of administration, &c., growing out of the new order of things in West Virginia.

But I must forbear this multiplication of reasons adverse to the propriety of reuniting the two States. Many more equally, and perhaps more, cogent must suggest themselves to your own mind.

If you had not requested it I should hardly have deemed it necessary to notice the extraordinary remarks of Mr. Garnett. They were undoubtedly made without consideration, and under the influence of passion. Here they are, as contained in the Journal:

"Mr. Garnett moved the indefinite postponement of the above preamble and resolutions. He was opposed to the proposed reunion. The people of West Virginia had voluntarily withdrawn, and he was willing to let them choose for themselves in this matter. Under the circumstances of their desertion, he could not consent to invite them back." * * * *

"Mr. Garnett again addressed the House on the subject. If a simple resolution of inquiry on the subject had been introduced, he did not know that he should have offered any opposition to it; but look at the preamble! The gentleman from Rockingham had gone too far on this question. We did not drive West Virginia off, nor had she any good or sufficient reasons for the step she has taken. He alluded to the course of East Virginia in giving her such improvements as she desired, while East Virginia had to be taxed to pay for those improvements. In view of the past, he thought West Virginia had exhibited a want of gratitude by voluntarily severing the connection. We did not drive her off—and he should not be the first to invite her back."

Highly complimentary, indeed! "*Under the circumstances of their desertion,*" quoth he. Does he mean that we ever went into the rebellion with him, and then deserted? He cannot mean that. He knows that West Virginia never faltered in her fealty to the Union. He must mean, if his words mean anything, that we refused to follow Virginia into treason and

rebellion. Virginia deserted us. She was the traitor; not we.

"He alluded to the course of East Virginia in giving her [West Virginia] such improvements as she desired, while East Virginia had to be taxed to pay for those improvements."

That was the "unkindest cut of all!" What improvements does Mr. Garnett allude to? Where are they? If Mr. Garnett was not jesting, he is certainly ignorant of the boundaries of West Virginia; or else he has laid himself liable to be suspected of an effort to deceive. Does he refer to any railway? If so, what is it? Where is it? To any canal? Where is that? Or was it the Northwestern Turnpike road? We make our acknowledgments for this small boon, albeit such antiquated improvements are at this day of comparatively little value. Perhaps he had the Kanawha improvement—promising a connection with the James river canal—or the Guyandotte improvement in his mind. Still we are "thankful for small favors." Or was it our "mud-pikes," as being peculiarly suited to "the peasantry of the west," and fully equal to their deserts? For these, too, we are grateful. But what do they all amount to in comparison with the railways traversing every section of East Virginia?

I have no recent official statistics at hand, showing what the State of Virginia has contributed to works of internal improvement, by subscriptions, loans, and appropriations. I do happen to have, however, the report of J. Brown, jr., second auditor of Virginia, bringing these down to the 30th of September, 1850, in which he distinguishes the amounts appropriated in each of the four grand divisions of the State. They are as follows:

In the first grand division, from the sea-board to the head of tide-water, \$793,323 78.

In the second grand division, from the head of tide-water to the Blue Ridge mountains, \$7,445,585 77.

In the third grand division, from the Blue Ridge mountains to the Alleghany mountains, \$2,115,763 85.

In the fourth grand division, from the Alleghany mountains to the Ohio river, \$1,504,098 60—in all \$11,858,772.

But it must be remembered that there are fifteen counties in the said fourth grand division which are not embraced in West Virginia, to wit: Wythe, Wise, Washington, Tazewell, Smyth, Scott, Russell, Pulaski, Montgomery, Floyd, Carroll, Buchanan, Grayson, Lee, and Giles; while only six counties of the third grand division are included in West Virginia, namely: Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, Hampshire, Hardy, and Pendleton—leaving nine counties less in West Virginia than are included in the fourth grand division aforesaid. We may, therefore, fairly deduct one sixth of the foregoing appropriations in the said fourth grand division, *i. e.*, \$250,683 10; leaving the sum appropriated

within the limits of West Virginia to be \$1,253,415 50.

Since I wrote the foregoing, I have received the Wheeling Register of January 15, containing what seems to be a carefully prepared communication from William E. Arnold, Esq., of Weston, West Virginia, from which I make the following extracts. The facts appear to be compiled from official documents, and are, doubtless, correctly stated:

"Anterior to 1858 the sum of \$22,841,474 04 had been expended by the State of Virginia for internal improvements.

To railroads.....	\$13,369,127 50
Navigation companies.....	4,749,666 30
Plank roads.....	386,456 44
Turnpikes.....	2,229,714 13
Bridges.....	133,100 00
State roads.....	1,778,906 61

"At the session of 1858 the additional sum of \$5,917,000 was appropriated, and since paid.

To railroads.....	\$4,664,000
Navigation companies.....	647,000
Turnpike companies.....	166,000

And to this sum may be added \$3,351,000, appropriated to works of internal improvement prior thereto, and not heretofore called for, but since organized, and which may, and doubtless have been, demanded—making in the aggregate the total sum of \$31,609,474 04 paid by the State for works of internal improvement.

"By an examination of the report of J. M. Bennett, Esq., late auditor of public accounts of Virginia, under date of December 10, 1860, it will be seen that the outstanding public debt of Virginia, estimated to the 1st of January, 1861, was \$32,188,067 32; that the unfunded debt of the State was about \$5,000,000, and that by estimating the back interest it would swell the public debt of Virginia in round numbers to \$47,000,000.

"There may exist in the minds of some a difficulty in reconciling the deficiency between the \$47,000,000 of public debt and the \$31,609,474 04 expended for internal improvements. But when it will be recollected that much of the public debt of Virginia is made up of *interest compounded and converted into principal*, we apprehend the difficulty will be easily solved. Take, for example, the James River and Kanawha canal. The original principal of her debt did not exceed \$4,000,000; but by the process of conversion and funding, the principle is now \$16,000,000, upon which the State pays the interest."

What proportion of the expenditures since 1850, which have thus swelled the debt of Virginia to such enormous proportions, has been made for internal improvements within the limits of West Virginia I have no means of ascertaining; but when we remember that most of the railroads of Virginia have either been wholly built or finally completed since 1850, none of which are within West Virginia, we may reasonably infer that the proportion of appropriation for the benefit of West Virginia has been smaller than it was prior to that time. I think I might say that the total amount of appropriations expended for internal improvements within the limits of the new State, from the beginning of the Commonwealth to the year 1861, does not exceed \$3,000,000—does not exceed one tenth, perhaps not one fifteenth of the whole amount. And yet West Virginia contains one third of the whole territory of the old State.

I do not forget the apology frequently offered to excuse this fact, namely, that we paid but a

small portion of the taxes of the Commonwealth, and were, therefore, entitled to but small appropriations in return. This complaint only adds insult to injury. We are reproached with our poverty, which is the result of the policy which impoverished us. "Go, therefore, now, and work: for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks." History often repeats itself. Pharoah still lives in the spirit of his successors. But what are the facts in this respect? The amount of taxes assessed on lands, lots, and all other subjects of taxation, excepting licenses, in the entire State of Virginia for the year 1859 was \$2,608,051 49. Of this sum \$522,863 25 were assessed on the counties embraced within the limits of West Virginia, being about one fifth of the whole amount. She embraces one third of the territory, and paid one fifth of the taxes. The taxes which the counties in West Virginia paid into the treasury of Virginia in 1860 were \$630,726. After all, the difference is not so great. What proportion of our taxes has been returned to us in the way of improvements we have already seen.

But Mr. Garnett continues his complaint. He says:

"In view of the past, he thought West Virginia had exhibited a want of gratitude by voluntarily severing the connection."

This, to any person familiar with the constitutional and legislative history of Virginia, is an astonishing assertion. It required no small amount of audacity to make it. What would a "view of the past," if I had any disposition to revert to it, unfold? I had rather forget it than prolong the bitterness of its memories. But for thirty years or more western Virginia has been petitioning and struggling for a redress of grievances. It has been asking for aid to develop its resources, and receiving none. It has been asking for bread and receiving stones. It has been remonstrating against inequality of representation and inequality of taxation; against principles and policies involving the personal degradation of its citizens; against insult and contumely. It were easy to verify all these allegations, as Mr. Garnett knows very well. Did he not know that down to the breaking out of the war all the negro slaves of eastern Virginia under twelve years of age were exempt from all taxation, while every pig and colt and calf of western Virginia was taxed to its utmost value? That slaves over twelve years of age were only taxed at the average nominal value of \$800 each, while their real average value was upward of \$600 each? Does he not know that representation was based, not on population or suffrage, but on taxes and population combined, so as virtually to clothe a property-holding minority with political power over a popular majority? Does he not know that at the forma-

tion of the constitution of Virginia, in force at the time she seceded, there was a majority of white inhabitants west of the Blue Ridge exceeding ninety thousand, and yet that the basis of representation was so adjusted as to give the minority east of the ridge the control of the Legislature? Does he not know that western white men were taxed to pay for negro slaves executed for crime? Does he not know all this and much more that was equally unjust and derogatory to the rights and feelings of west Virginia? And yet he denounces "her ingratitude by voluntarily severing the connection"—ingratitude for refusing to follow east Virginia into the folly and crimes of treason and rebellion, to suffer the sorrows, disasters, and dishonor which have overtaken her.

But I will not further pursue this theme. Sincerely believing that the separate existence of the two States will best promote the harmony, happiness, and prosperity of both, I would gladly bury the differences of the past, and if we are to have any future rivalry, let it be for the precedence, within our respective spheres, of progress and development in all that can make a State distinguished and honorable. No person will rejoice more sincerely than I shall at the prosperity of east Virginia. And with her ample sea-board and magnificent harbors; with her tide-water rivers and other natural outlets; with her central and most favorable geographical position; with her vast system of railways, only needing to be repaired; with her rich soil and genial climate; with her varied and valuable elements of wealth and power, what is there to hinder her rapid advancement to a preëminent rank among the States of the Union? Why should she seek to disturb us in our humble homes beyond the mountains?

As to the validity of the proceedings erecting the new State of West Virginia, you need give yourself no uneasiness. She is a fixed fact. Her legitimate existence as a State in the Union, entitled to all the rights and respect of any other State, is beyond all controversy. She has been recognized, and fully and formally recognized, by every department of the Government—executive, legislative, and judicial. The "flings" made in the Virginia Legislature, to which you allude, are the result of either ill nature or ignorance. No power can send us back to the old State but the power which gave us our existence as a State. The two States can be reunited only by an act of the Legislature of each of the States respectively, and an act of the Congress of the United States, giving the consent of each to it. This being the case, you may reasonably conclude, I think, that the "redintegration" of Virginia is remote.

Very truly, yours,

W. T. WILLEY.