

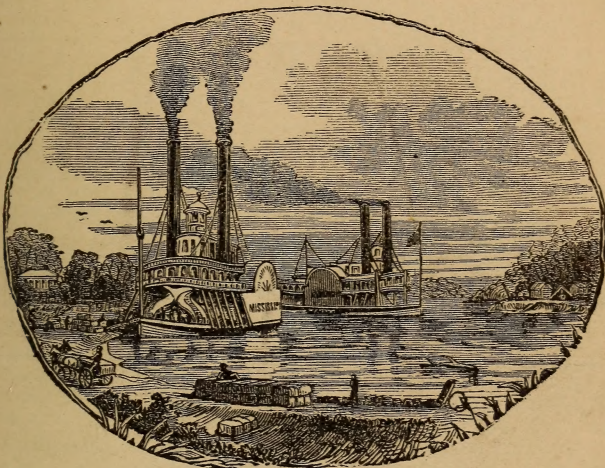
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STERLING'S

SOUTHERN ORATOR:

CONTAINING

STANDARD LECTURES IN PROSE AND POETRY FOR DECLAMATION  
AND RECITATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

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BY  
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PROF. RICHARD STERLING, A.M.,

PRINCIPAL OF EDGEWORTH FEMALE SEMINARY.

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path of right. A felon's doom precedes the martyr's crown. But as there is an actual, so there is a counterfeit conscientiousness in withstanding the ordinances of government—and as the one displays the noblest virtues, the other vainly affects to conceal the basest vices of our kind. There is a race of turbulent and designing demagogues who make profit of simulated public virtue, ever courting a martyr's fame, but instinctively avoiding the hazards of a martyr's fate. The halter is degraded by the wretch who, in a hypocritical pretence of obedience to a higher power, inflames the passions of a quiet people against a benignant government, and, to gratify an insatiate lust for gold or power, would deluge a genial soil in the best blood of thousands of the deluded victims of his craft and his hypocrisy. A Christian people recognize the existence and supremacy of a higher law; but the plea of that higher law on the part of him who has purchased place by the most solemn engagement on the Evangelical of Almighty God, in extenuation and justification of a premeditated breach of the obligation thus intelligently and deliberately incurred, would have shocked the degraded moral sentiment of the court of the Stuarts.

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CLXXX.

THE BIBLE AND CIVIL LAW.—REV. T. V. MOORE, D.D.

WE prize the checks and balances of our constitutional law. Did space permit, we could show that their counterparts all existed essentially in the complicated and admirable adjustments of the Hebrew commonwealth. A Theocracy in its relation to God, it was a republic in its relation to man, and embodied all the great principles of civil liberty that have since been wrought into the free governments of the world. Its executive was elective, first, in the consular form of the judges, and afterward in that of the kings, whose power was limited to that of a mere presidency for life, and regulated, not only by the written law, but also by the prophetic order, which, from Samuel onward, was a standing check on royal usurpation, and guarded Theocratic rights on the one hand, and popular rights on

the other. Its judiciary was of the most efficient kind. Moses required them to elect judges for all the various subdivisions of the people, for thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, thus making a series of appellate tribunals of regular gradation in each tribe; whilst for all the tribes, there was a Sanhedrim, or Senate of seventy, which, like similar bodies in many modern governments, was a high court of appeals for the whole nation. It had its commons, or house of representatives for the whole nation, (as Michaelis has clearly shown,) called "the congregation of Israel," which was the great legislative assembly for the entire people. It had its confederation of independent states, each tribe retaining its separate sovereignty, yet all combined for general purposes in the United States of Israel, whose Union remained unbroken until the great secession under Jeroboam. It had its written constitution and laws, to which every officer was bound to conform. In a word, it had all the parts of a working republic in harmonious adjustment long before the haughty aristocracies of Greece and Rome had usurped this name in the nomenclature of history.

Did time further allow, we could show that these laws have mingled with all the later flow of human history, were studied in Babylon, Persia, and Greece, thus translated to Rome, and thence to the legislation of all modern times. Hence, it is a historical fact that this mighty system of modern law, which stands before us like some grand old oak, whose gnarled branches have wrestled with the storms of centuries, has its roots further back in the past than they are often traced. They reach not merely to the dark mould of the middle ages, nor to the pillars of the Forum, nor the rocky base of the Areopagus, but further, deeper still, until we find them twisted in living and inseparable embrace around the fire-clad rocks of Sinai.

That religion whose sacred records contain the very constitution of God's government on earth; the mighty transactions of covenant and compact, of law and government, of precept and penalty, that stretch from the song of the morning stars to the great white throne, from the creation to the judgment, surely has a claim of the strongest character on the reverence, the study, and the trust of that profession whose science owes so much to this most ancient, most authentic, and most venerable repository of law on earth.