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SPEECH

OF

HON. JOHN A. ^{Handwritten} DIX, OF NEW YORK,

ON

THE THREE MILLION BILL.

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, MARCH 1, 1847.



WASHINGTON:

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1847.

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THREE MILLION BILL.

The Bill appropriating Three Millions of Dollars to enable the President to enter into negotiations for the restoration of peace with Mexico being under consideration—

Mr. DIX said :

Mr. PRESIDENT: I intended to address the Senate on the general subject of the war; but being always more ready to listen than to speak, I have given way to others, who were desirous of presenting their views to the Senate. And I have done so with pleasure, because I knew that they were much more capable than myself of enlightening the judgment of the Senate on the questions before it. I have thought the occasion an appropriate one for recurring to the principles on which our Government was founded; of reviewing its progress; of entering into a critical survey of our position as a nation, for the purpose of estimating intelligently our responsibilities to ourselves and others; of seeing wherein our strength consists; and of determining by what course of policy the permanent interests of the country are most likely to be promoted. If I do not mistake prevailing indications, an opportunity may be afforded hereafter for such a review, and one fully as appropriate as the present. I pass by all these grave considerations. I rise for the purpose of saying a few words in respect to the position taken by the non-slaveholding States concerning the acquisition of territory, and the admission of future States into the Union—a position taken by resolutions passed by the legislatures of nine of these States. This question is presented by the bill passed by the House, and now awaiting the action of the Senate. It has been largely discussed on both sides. New York is one of the States, by which resolutions relating to the question have been adopted. Her course, as well as that of other States, has been the subject of censure here. As one of her representatives on this floor, I wish to say something in her vindication, and in reference to the vote I may be called on to give, probably at too late an hour for discussion. And, in the first place, I desire to state what I understand to be the rights of the original parties to the Constitution, in respect to the subject of slavery within their own limits.

The Constitution of the United States recognised the existence of slavery in

the thirteen original States, which were parties to that compact. The recognition was not in direct terms, but by force of certain stipulations designed to provide for exigencies, which were the consequences of its existence. These stipulations are binding upon all the members of the Union—as well those which were so originally, as those which have since been admitted into it. Whatever opinions may be entertained with regard to the political or social influences of slavery, the obligation of those who live under the protection of the Constitution, to carry out in good faith all its stipulations, is too plain to admit of doubt or controversy. It is a solemn obligation, therefore, to leave the States, in which slavery exists, unmolested, and free to deal with it according to their own interests and conceptions of duty.

Such I understand to be the rights and obligations of the States, which were the original parties to the Federal compact; and they belong equally to those who have since become parties to it.

I pass to the consideration of admitting new States into the Union, with slavery. Whether an organized State, formed from territory not belonging to the United States, or, in other words, whether a foreign State, shall be admitted into the Union at all, is a problem which may be determined (waiving all questions of constitutional power) upon general considerations of expediency, without regard to the particular conditions, on which it is proposed to be received. The admission of Texas is the only case of this kind which has occurred since the adoption of the Constitution. Slavery existed in that republic at the time of the admission, and we did not require that it should be abolished. It is true, the compromise line adopted on the adjustment of the Missouri question was fixed as one of the conditions of the admission. Slavery was prohibited north of $36^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude. But it is equally true, I believe, that there was no settlement then, if there is now, in that part of Texas which lies north of the parallel of latitude referred to. There was no slavery to be abolished. It was an uninhabited wilderness. I believe it to be true, also, that Texas, notwithstanding the fundamental condition on which she was admitted into the Union—that slavery should not exist above $36^{\circ} 30'$ —has extended to her whole territory, without reservation, the provisions of her constitution in respect to slavery; one of which is, that “the Legislature shall have no power ‘to pass laws for the emancipation of slaves, without the consent of their ‘owners; nor without paying their owners, previous to such emancipation, a ‘full equivalent, in money, for the slaves so emancipated.’”

The reasonings which prevailed with some of those, who voted for the admission of Texas, without further restriction, are all resolvable into the single fact, that slavery existed in that republic. We took it as we found it. The same reasonings applied to the acquisition of foreign territory, in which slavery

does not exist, demand that it shall be received as we find it, and that we shall so maintain it as long as it continues to be territory. If it shall at any time thereafter be organized into a State, and admitted into the Union, it is entitled to come in with all the political rights of the original States, and, therefore, free to determine for itself what its forms of organization, political or social, shall be, provided they are not inconsistent with the obligations of the fundamental compact between the States, or with any stipulation or compromise in respect to the territory from which it is formed. If slavery exists when a State comes into the Union, it may be subsequently abolished in such form as the constitution or laws of the State prescribe for expressing the sovereign will or assent. On the other hand, if slavery does not exist when a State comes into the Union, it may be subsequently established by the act of the State, without violating any provision of the Federal Constitution. This freedom of action is inseparable from the sovereignty of the State, and there is no authority to control it by Federal laws.

I have thus stated what I understand to be the conceded rights of the States in respect to this subject. I admit, to the fullest extent, the exclusive control of each State over the subject, within its own jurisdiction. I admit the right of the States to be exempt from every species of intermeddling or interference within their own limits. I have always acted in conformity with this admission. I introduced resolutions in the first meeting ever held at the North in opposition to the movements of the Abolitionists. The meeting was held in Albany in 1835, and its proceedings not only met with the approbation of a large portion of the people of the non-slaveholding States of all parties, but I believe they met also with the approbation of the whole South. They were founded upon the principle I have already stated—perfect freedom in each State, under the guarantees of the Constitution, to determine for itself, without external interference, whether it will abolish, continue, or establish slavery within its own limits.

I return again, for an instant, to the question of acquiring new territory, as territory, belonging to other independent nations. We have done so in two instances—by the purchase of Louisiana in 1803, and Florida in 1820. Slavery existed in both; and, at the time of acquiring them, no provision was made for abolishing or restraining it. They were, in this respect, taken as they were found. I refer to these cases, to show that there has been no interference with slavery by those who are opposed to it in principle, where it has actually existed, when acquiring new territory, and that they have been willing on such occasions to leave it to the silent influences of the moral and physical causes, which must ultimately determine its limits, both in point of time and geographical extent.

A higher question than any ever yet presented to us is made by this bill. It

proposes an appropriation of money to purchase territory from Mexico—a measure of which I approve. I am in favor of the appropriation and the purchase. I have always been in favor of acquiring California on just terms. Its ports on the Pacific ocean would be invaluable to us, and they are of little use to Mexico.

By a fundamental law of the Mexican Republic, slavery is prohibited throughout its political jurisdiction. I know it has been assumed that slavery exists in Mexico; but I believe it will be found that the assertion has been made without sufficient consideration. It is not denied that slavery is forever prohibited by the constitution of Mexico. The prohibition was, I believe, first proclaimed by President Guerrero in 1829; it has since been ingrafted upon the constitution. I am aware that barbarous usages, established under the Spanish rule, still continue, and among them some which enforce the collection of debts by personal restraint of the debtor. But they do not exceed in barbarity the laws of some of the States, in which debt was, until very recently, and is perhaps now, treated as a crime, and punished by imprisonment. The old colonial usages of Mexico do no more than to compel a debtor to pay his debt by labor, and give the creditor a control over his person until it is paid. In the city of Mexico, if a common laborer owes money, his creditor may send him to a bakery, and keep him there until he has paid his debt. It is a usage of the place. The *peones*, as they are termed, are common laborers. The term was, I believe, originally derived from Asia. It was in vogue in the early periods of the Spanish dominion in Mexico. In the second despatch of Fernando Cortez to the Emperor Charles V., (the first is not extant,) in the original Spanish, he speaks of his departure from Vera Cruz with fifteen horse, and “trescientos peones”—three hundred foot-soldiers. The military application of the term is obsolete in Mexico, and it is now applied, I believe, exclusively to common laborers. They constitute, perhaps, a third of the population of the republic. Multitudes of them labor on the large estates (*haciendas*) for their daily bread; and if they become indebted to the proprietor, he may compel them to remain on the estate until they pay him. This is the extent of what is termed slavery in Mexico. It is an arbitrary process of enforcing the payment of debts; and it is decidedly more merciful than imprisonment for debt. It is a usage regulated by colonial laws, which are yet unrepealed, and it must wear out, gradually, like all usages which have become incorporated into the social organization of a people, and which are incompatible with its spirit.

I will read a few passages from a Spanish work on Mexico, (“*Ensayo Historico de las Revoluciones de Mexico*”—Political Essay on the Revolutions of Mexico,) which illustrate the condition of that Republic, in respect to this and

other remnants of her colonial dependence. The author (Zavala) speaks of the laboring classes, or *peones*, thus :

“More than three millions of individuals called suddenly to enjoy the most ample rights of citizenship, from the state of the most opprobrious slavery, without any immovable property, without a knowledge of any art or employment, and without commerce or industry.”

The following passages sketch graphically the struggle which is in progress between arbitrary and liberal principles :

“From the year 1808 to the year 1830, that is to say, in the space of a generation, such a change of ideas, of opinions, of parties, and of interests, has supervened, as to overthrow a recognized and respected form of Government, and to transfer seven millions of people from despotism and arbitrary power to the most liberal theories. Customs and habits alone, which are transmitted in movements, actions, and continued examples, have not changed; for how can abstract doctrines change suddenly the course of life ?

“There is, then, a continual struggle between the doctrines which are professed, the institutions which are adopted, the principles which are established on the one side, and the abuses which are sanctified, the customs which prevail, the semi-feudal rights which are respected on the other; between national sovereignty, equality of political rights, the liberty of the press, popular government on the one side, and between the intervention of an armed force, privileged rights, religious intolerance, and the proprietors of immense estates.”

Mexico is still in a state of political transition, passing from an arbitrary to a liberal system, and time will be necessary to enable her to eradicate and cast off deeply-seated disorders in her social organization. For more than fifty years after the establishment of our independence, debt was punished as a crime in my own State. How can we expect Mexico, in less than half that period, to cast off all the badges of her colonial servitude ? But to return to the point from which I departed—she has a provision in her constitution prohibiting slavery forever.

Shall the territory we acquire from her come to us with this prohibition, or shall it be made an area for the further extension of slavery ? In other words, shall we purchase territory where slavery is now prohibited, and virtually rescind the prohibition ? Shall we ingraft slavery upon territory where it does not lawfully or constitutionally exist, using the arms of the Union to conquer, or the treasure of the Union to purchase, it ? These are the questions presented to us ; and the resolutions passed by the Legislatures of New York and other non-slaveholding States have anticipated and given them negative answers. The New York resolutions declare, that “if any territory is hereafter acquired by the United States, or ‘annexed thereto, the act by which such territory is acquired or annexed, whatever such act may be, should contain an unalterable fundamental article or ‘provision, whereby slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment ‘for crime, shall be forever excluded from the territory acquired or annexed ;” and they instruct the Senators from the State to “use their best efforts to carry into effect the views expressed in the foregoing resolutions.”

This vote of instruction passed the Senate unanimously, the question upon it

having been taken separately from the other resolutions. All parties and divisions of party concurred in the propriety of the instruction, and of course in the subject-matter of the resolutions; for it is not to be supposed that any one would vote to instruct Senators to do what he believed wrong. I ought to state, that three votes in the Senate out of twenty-six, (the whole number,) and nine votes in the House out of one hundred and five, were cast against the resolution containing the proposed restriction; but I believe all the members who gave these twelve votes, with, perhaps, a single exception, avowed themselves in favor of the principle asserted, though they voted against the resolution, because they objected to the form in which it was presented or the time selected for passing it. I believe I may safely say, that there is no difference of opinion in the Legislature on the subject of excluding slavery from any territory hereafter to be acquired. I have no knowledge of the views of the members, excepting so far as they may be inferred from the terms of the resolution. I have had no communication, direct or indirect, with any one of them. But it may be reasonably presumed that their conclusions were strengthened by the fact, that in the territory bordering upon us on all sides, slavery is excluded, and that to receive it without restriction would be, according to the construction of those who oppose restriction, to extend and establish slavery where it is not now permitted to exist. On this question, I believe I hazard nothing in saying, that not only New York, but all the non-slaveholding States, are undivided in opinion.

Mr. President, in the adoption of the resolutions to which I have referred, the non-slaveholding States have taken no new ground. It is older than the Constitution under which we live. It belongs to the era of the Confederation; to the period of partial organization, which intervened between the adoption of the Articles of Confederation and the establishment of the Federal Government. In 1787, when a government was instituted for the territory northwest of the Ohio river, by the same men, or the associates of the same men, who were the authors of the Declaration of Independence and the framers of the Constitution, they included in the ordinance a provision prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude. I will read it to the Senate:

“There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said Territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: *Provided*, *always*, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed, and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service aforesaid.”

The proviso in the bill which came from the House is in substance the same.

I have referred to the year 1787 as the period of the adoption of the provision I have read. But it had, in fact, a still earlier origin. It was proposed in 1784 by Mr. Jefferson, but failed for want of the votes of the requisite number of

States. The thirteen original States then composed the Confederation; the votes were taken by States, each State counting one; seven States, or a majority, were necessary to carry any question; some questions could only be decided affirmatively by nine votes; and this proposition received the votes of only six States. Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, at that time voted against it. North Carolina was divided. Mr. Jefferson of Virginia, the author of the provision, and Mr. Williamson of North Carolina, voted in its favor. The author of the Declaration of Independence and the author of the slavery restriction in the ordinance of 1787, are the same person. The principles proclaimed in the one were doubtless designed by the author to be practically enforced in the other. He stands before the world, as far as the obligations of our social condition permitted, consistent with himself.

The ordinance, of which the provision I have quoted is a part, finally passed in the affirmative in 1787, with a slight modification in its terms. It received the votes of eight States. There was but one vote against it, and that was given by a member from New York, though the vote of the State was given for it. Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, unanimously supported it. Much of the Northwestern Territory was then a forest; and, in the hands of the fathers of the Constitution, its future destiny was placed. They performed their duty under that high sense of conscientiousness and responsibility which seems to have guided all their deliberations in providing for their own government and that of the States then about to spring up in the bosom of the wilderness; and I venture to say that the entire population of that wide-spread territory, now instinct with life, and strength, and freedom, and intelligence, and all the blessings of civilization, looks back with approbation and gratitude upon the conduct of those, who gave direction and shape to the political character of the communities it contains.

The non-slaveholding States have, by their resolutions, placed themselves upon the ground taken by Jefferson more than sixty years ago. Circumstances render the position of Jefferson even higher than that now taken by them. Slavery existed *de jure*, if not *de facto*, in the Northwestern Territory in 1787. The ordinance was a virtual abolition of it. The proposition, originally made in 1784 by Mr. Jefferson, was that after the year 1800 it should cease to exist. He proposed to take sixteen years for its abolition. The ordinance, as it passed, went into immediate effect. The non-slaveholding States only ask, that in the acquisition of territory now free, slavery shall not be established. In the one case, it was abolished where it existed; in the other, it is only proposed to be excluded where it does not exist.

The course of the non-slaveholding States has been denounced as aggressive. Sir, it has, from the earliest period, been liberal and forbearing. They have

acquiesced in all the propositions which have been made from time to time to add southern territory to the Union; they have concurred in appropriating money for the purpose, contributing their own share, and thus bearing a part of the burden of the purchase. They united in the purchase of Louisiana, in the purchase of Florida, and in the annexation of Texas. They have contributed in these cases to the extension of slavery over a geographical area exceeding that of the thirteen original States—equal to four-fifths of that of the original States and their territories. They have voted for the admission of States from Louisiana and Florida, with provisions in their constitutions not only recognising slavery, but prohibiting its abolition by the legislative power of those States. They have acceded to all this upon the principle of leaving the States free to regulate this subject for themselves within their own limits. In Texas, slavery existed only nominally. That republic had an area of more than three hundred thousand square miles, according to the boundaries claimed by its Congress. Its population, bond and free, when admitted into the Union, did not exceed one hundred and fifty thousand souls. It was, for the most part, unpopulated. Its admission into the Union with slavery, was therefore a virtual extension of slavery over an area equal to more than half the area of the original thirteen States. We were told that attempts had been made by foreign Governments to abolish slavery in Texas, and that the success of these attempts would endanger the domestic tranquillity of the southern States. The non-slaveholding States were appealed to, on this and other grounds, to unite in the immediate annexation of Texas. They yielded their assent. In all this they have acquiesced. Sir, they have done more; they have contributed to it; for it could never have been accomplished but by the aid of northern votes. They believe they have fulfilled towards the South every obligation of fraternal duty. And yet they are accused of aggression, because they will not consent to the extension of slavery to free territory.

We have been told by our southern friends, with few exceptions, that they regarded slavery as a moral and social evil, for which they were not responsible—an evil forced upon them by foreign rulers during their colonial dependence. It is under this view of the subject that they have been sustained by their friends in the North, not only in the full possession and enjoyment of all their rights over this subject within their own limits under the Constitution, (this is a duty none should be so unscrupulous as to disregard,) but in purchasing slave territory, and establishing slaveholding States. Acquisition has gone on uninterrupted by us, and indeed aided by us, until there is no longer any slave territory on this continent to bring into the Union. We have literally absorbed it all.

The non-slaveholding States are now asked to go further: to purchase free territory and leave it open to the extension of slavery; to extend to free soil and to free communities an evil which our southern friends have told us was forced upon

them against their wishes and consent. The unanimity with which the Legislatures of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and other States, have acted in reference to this proposition, is but an index to the universal opinion which pervades the whole North and West. They never can give their assent to it. It is regarded by all parties as involving a principle which rises far above the fleeting interests of the day—a principle which they should not be asked to yield; for by yielding it, they would consider themselves instrumental to the extension of what they believe to be wrong, and what, in their opinion, nothing but necessity can justify.

If the principle by which the non-slaveholding States have been governed in acquiring territory is acquiesced in, this question may be settled in a moment, and without agitation. Let the territory, if any is acquired, be taken as it is found—with the provision of the Mexican constitution abolishing slavery forever. Apply to it the principle which was applied to Florida and Texas. The non-slaveholding States have never refused to acquire territory with slavery where it actually existed. Let the South not refuse now to take free territory where slavery does not exist, and leave it free.

We are told that slavery must not be excluded from the territories, because emigrants from the southern States cannot go there with their property, or, in other words, their slaves, and that this would be “an entire exclusion of the slaveholding States.” Sir, I do not so understand it. It is not exclusion to the slaveholder, nor is it exclusion to the free laborer of the South who owns no slaves. The slaveholder who emigrates to territory where slavery does not exist may employ free labor. The free laborer of the South who emigrates to free territory is surely not injured in his condition. It is not so with the free laborer of the North in respect to slave territory. He will not go where he is compelled to toil side by side with the slave. He is as effectually excluded as he would be by a positive prohibition. He will not emigrate with his property to territory open to slaves. The property of the free laborer is in himself—in his powers of exertion, his capacity for endurance, in the labor of his hands. To him these are of as much value as the property which the master has in his slaves. I am not very familiarly acquainted with the internal condition of the southern States; but I suppose there is a very numerous class in them, especially in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Missouri—I mean the non-slaveholding free laborers—who will be benefited by providing that territory, which is free when acquired, shall remain free. I think I am not mistaken in supposing this class to be far more numerous in some, if not all the States I have named, than the class holding slaves. Am I mistaken in supposing, free labor is a powerful, if not a dominant, interest in the States referred to? Wherever free labor has gone forth on this continent, the forest has bowed before it; towns

and villages have sprung up like magic in its track ; canals, railroads, and busy industry, in all its imaginable forms, have marked its progress ; civilization, in its highest attributes, follows it ; knowledge and religion go with it hand in hand. Obliterate everything else, and you may trace its march by the school-house, sowing broadcast the seeds of intelligence, and the spire, "losing itself in air, as if guiding the thoughts of man to Heaven." Sir, I speak of free labor everywhere—in the South as well as the North. Even on the hypothesis of an equality in the claims of free and slave labor, (which I do not admit,) the argument in favor of taking this territory as we find it, appears to me unanswerable.

Mr. President, I would not have voted to connect the proviso in the bill passed by the House, and now awaiting the action of the Senate, with any measure for the prosecution of the war. My State would not have desired it. The resolutions of the Legislature are in favor of all proper measures for the prosecution of the war. From the commencement of the war, my honorable colleague and myself have sustained all measures recommended by the Administration for carrying it on ; and as a member of the Committee on Military Affairs, I have had some share in maturing them. I have voted for the pecuniary means asked for, the number and description of troops which were deemed necessary for the purpose, and a commanding general for the armies in Mexico, with a rank in some degree commensurate with the numerical force to be combined, and moved in combination. I have opposed all propositions to clog military bills with extraneous matter, thus postponing our action upon them at a critical period in the campaign. The bill under consideration is of a different character. It is a proposition to purchase territory. My friend, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, [Mr. SEVIER,] with his characteristic frankness and directness of purpose—qualities as honorable in a legislator as they are in a man—has gone so far as to indicate the extent of the acquisition which, in his opinion, we ought to expect—California and New Mexico. The object, then, is not in doubt. It is avowedly to acquire foreign territory. Under these circumstances, is it not appropriate to know on what terms foreign territory shall become territory of the United States, when on these terms may depend the propriety of applying the public treasure to make the purchase? The Legislature of New York so considered it. The questions of time and circumstances were fully discussed before the adoption of the resolutions. The proposition under discussion is not a measure for the prosecution of the war. It was not deemed an indispensable peace measure ; for when the pecuniary claims are all on our side, an appropriation of money necessarily contemplates objects beyond that of making peace. I say this in justice to the New York Legislature, as well as its Representatives in Congress, who were,

with a single exception, unanimous in favor of the proviso. If it shall fail to receive the sanction of the Senate now, it must again arise on any proposition to acquire new territory, and arise in a form in which a decision cannot be avoided. It will be sustained with greater unanimity; for those who now hesitate on the point of time, or from a natural desire to postpone the settlement of embarrassing issues, will be found in its favor.

Whatever doubt may have been entertained heretofore with regard to the necessity of making the declaration contained in the proviso, I think there can be none now. It is distinctly assumed that there is no power under the Constitution to prohibit slavery in the Territories. While it is contended that there is power under the Constitution to acquire slave territory, and to introduce slave States into the Union, it is denied that there is any authority to restrain or prohibit slavery in free territory. We have gone on and introduced into the Union all the slave territory on this continent; and when we reach free territory, we are told that the extension of the provisions of the Constitution to it renders it, *ipso facto*, by virtue of the compromises of the Constitution, open to slavery. According to this construction, the extension of our Constitution and laws to any portion of the Mexican territory, either by conquest or peaceful acquisition, overturns the local law, overturns the provision of the constitution of Mexico, which declares slavery to be forever prohibited. Mr. President, is this the true interpretation of the Constitution under which we live? Is it armed with full power to bring slave territory into the Union, but void of all power to bring in free territory, and maintain it free? Is this the Government, to use the language of Jefferson, our fathers fought for? The construction referred to would establish as a fundamental provision of the acquisition of new territory that it shall be open to slavery, even though free when acquired. Sir, I have not time, at this late period of the session, to discuss this question with the deliberation and care its importance demands. But a future occasion may come, and I will not shrink from the discussion.

I have heard with great regret the dissolution of the Union spoken of in connexion with this measure. I can hardly think those who so connect the two subjects are aware of the position in which they place themselves. It is virtually declaring, that unless we will consent to bring free territory into the Union, and leave it open to the extension of slavery, the Union shall be dissolved. Our southern friends have heretofore stood upon the ground of defence: of maintaining slavery within their own limits against interference from without. The ground of extension is now taken, and of extending slavery upon free territory. I cannot believe this position will be sustained by the southern States. It is new ground, and it is taken with avowals which are calculated to spread surprise and alarm throughout the non-slaveholding States.

The course of the non-slaveholding States under these new developments will, I doubt not, be steady and firm. No State will stand by the Union with a more inflexible determination to maintain it than New York—none will adhere more tenaciously to all the obligations of the Constitution. And yet, sir, none could hope for a higher career of prosperity, if the States were to be dissevered. In eighteen years, her entire debt, under the provisions of her new constitution, will be paid, and she will be left with an annual surplus income of at least three millions of dollars from her internal improvements, after defraying all the expenses of her government. Standing, as she does, on the line of commercial intercourse between the Atlantic and the great lakes, with the rich and productive States bordering on them, the addition of the custom-house to her internal channels of communication would make her the wealthiest community, in proportion to her population, within the pale of civilization. She would be an empire in herself. But she scorns to enter into an estimate of these advantages. She will not “calculate the value of the Union.” She prefers to stand, as she does, on the same footing with the smallest of the States, herself the most populous and powerful, rather than to stand foremost and preëminent in the field of disunion. In whatever manner this question shall be decided, she will be found on the side of the Union, not to resist dismemberment by force—for disunion is better than intestine war—but to contribute by her influence and her counsels to uphold the fabric of the federative system.

Mr. President, I regret to hear either disunion or civil war spoken of in connexion with this measure. But, I repeat, the former is to be preferred to the latter. In wars waged with foreign countries, deplorable as they always are, there are some moral fruits which atone, in a slight degree, for their accompanying evils. There is the sense of national honor, the parent of high achievement; the sentiment of patriotic devotion to the country, which shrinks from no labor or sacrifice in the public cause; and the feeling of mutual sympathy and dependence, which pervades and unites all classes in the hour of adversity and peril. Far as they are overbalanced by the domestic bereavement and the public evil which war always brings in its train, they serve to purify the thoughts of something of their selfishness, by turning them away from the sordid channels in which they are too apt to run. But civil war has no ameliorations. It is pure, unmixed demoralization. It dissolves all national and domestic ties. It renders selfishness more odious, by wedding it to hatred and cruelty. The after generation, which reaps the bitter harvest of intestine war, is scarcely less to be commiserated than that by whose hands the poisonous seed is sown. Less, far less than these, would be the evils of disunion.

But, sir, we shall have neither. The interests, the feelings, the good sense of the country, all revolt at internal dissension in every form. If this question shall

be decided against the non-slaveholding States ; if their voice shall be unheeded ; New York will not, for that reason, listen to any suicidal project of dismemberment. No, sir ; no. By no agency of hers shall the fraternal bonds which unite her to her sisters be rent asunder. Their destiny, whatever it may be, shall be also hers. Be it for evil or for good, she will cling to them to the last. But I say for her, and in her name, and I believe I do not misunderstand her resolutions, that she can never consent to become a party to the extension of slavery to free territory on this continent. If it is to be extended to new areas—areas now consecrated to free labor—the work must be done by other hands than hers ; and she must leave it to time and to the order of Providence to determine what shall be the legitimate fruits of measures which she believes to be wrong, and to which she can never yield her assent.

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