

E 433

.C32

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00005022435







E433
C32

SPEECH

OF

✓
HON. S. CARUTHERS, OF MISSOURI,

ON

~~25.10~~
5354

THE NEBRASKA AND KANSAS BILL.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 7, 1854.



WASHINGTON:

PRINTED AT THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE OFFICE.

1854.

E 433
C 32

NEBRASKA AND KANSAS.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. CARUTHERS said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The importance of the bill to organize the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, and the immediate interest of the State from which I come in the settlement of the question involved in it, will plead my apology for occupying the time of the committee in its discussion.

I do not propose to dwell upon the necessity of the organization of these Territories. I will content myself by remarking, that the last House of Representatives, in obedience to the known will of the people, passed a bill for that purpose; that the border States, with unanimous voice, as evidenced by the position of their Representatives, their numerous and large conventions, the voice of their press—through every avenue by which public sentiment can be declared—have demanded that the protection of our laws should be extended over that region.

Their organization, as proposed by the bill now before us, is resisted mainly upon two grounds: The one, that it violates our treaty stipulations with the Indian tribes located there, and the other, that it violates our good faith, our party obligations, and our honor, by declaring "inoperative and void" the eighth section of the act of 1820.

With regard to the first objection, so often and so eloquently urged, I have only to say that the rights of the Indians are as well and as scrupulously guarded by the provisions of this bill as they could be by any possible legislation. It provides their lands shall not be wrested from them, nor they included within the Territory proposed to be organized, without their consent.

Sir, it is idle to talk of this feeble Indian barrier resisting the progress of the white man, with all his accompaniments of civilization! The line of our march is westward, and every obstacle in our path must yield to that imperial tread!

The civilized world has always had its West. To go no further back—in the times of the first Cæsar it was Gaul and Britain; in the days of the Pilgrim fathers it was the shores of the Atlantic;

later it was the summit of the Alleghanies; yet later and it was the eastern bank of the "father of floods;" again, and it was the western bank of our great river; now it is the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska. And is it not folly to think of resisting this proud and glorious march; this march that has carried with it, at every step of its progress, the power of empire; that has bridged the Atlantic; that has trod down the Alleghanies; that has subdued a wild world of wilderness; passed over the Mississippi—by the obstacle of a few thousand Indians upon the borders of Iowa and Missouri! I grant you it is sad to think of their fast coming fate. It is sad to think, while the tide of civilization is rolling back from the Pacific and on from the Atlantic, that the Indian tribes must be buried forever beneath the meeting waters, and go down into the black and starless night of annihilation. But it is their fate; fixed for all wise purposes by Him who holds in his hands the destiny of races; and to that decree I bow.

I come now to the consideration of the real question involved in this bill. I come to it solemnly, deeply impressed with its present importance and momentous future consequences. I approach it divested, as far as may be, of all passion, of all partisan or sectional feeling, desiring to meet calmly and fairly the high questions of good faith, of honor, of obligations involved. I will not pause long to dwell upon its party effect; for, in my judgment, the questions involved override all party considerations. It is true, this bill is presented to us as an Administration measure. It is true that I am here as a Whig. But I am not here to give this Administration a factious opposition. I am not here to oppose any measure brought forward by it, merely because it is brought forward by it. I am here uncommitted to a blind opposition or a blind support, to follow to the end the dictates of my own judgment and conscience, and the will of those who sent me.

In this instance I believe the Administration has taken high national ground; that it has planted itself upon a great American principle—the principle of self-government; a principle involved in

none of our party issues; a principle dearer than any party considerations; a principle upon which all sound, national men of all parties, may meet and stand, as upon ground alike cherished and alike dear. It was this principle ingrafted in the compromises of 1850 that commended them so warmly to the American heart; it was this principle which was ratified by both parties in their conventions at Baltimore, and it is for this principle I speak to-day.

Sir, this is no war between the Administration and its opponents—no war between Whigs and Democrats, as such; but, disguise it as you may, it is a war between *Free-Soilism on the one hand, and the right of the people to self-government on the other*. I do not desire to be understood as charging all the opponents of this bill with *Free-Soilism*; for I know the opposition contains men who have taken their positions, from the highest promptings of honor and the purest impulses of patriotism; but it occurs to me these men will find themselves fighting under strange banners and strange leaders. To those Whigs who are endeavoring to embarrass the Administration by thwarting this measure, and to build up a party strength by allying themselves with northern prejudices, I trust I may be pardoned for addressing a few words of “soberness and truth.” It is a fact, attested by all our past history, all our present experience, that no mere sectional party, no *one-idea* party, can command success. To succeed, a party must plant itself upon grounds as broad as our Union. The history of the Whig party for the last few years, glanced at by the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. CLINGMAN,] furnishes us with a useful lesson, and one by which we might well profit. In the midst of the fearful agitation of 1850 the South demanded, as a matter of justice to her interests, and of obedience to the plain requirements of the Constitution, the passage of an efficient fugitive slave law. But three Whig members from the free States were found voting for that bill. When the Whig party met in convention at Baltimore—when it came to act upon the claims of that noble National Whig, Millard Fillmore,—he who had stood so calmly and skillfully at the helm during the wild ragings of the storm that had swept over the land—he whose deep devotion to the Union had been proved in those “dark hours”—he who administered the affairs of this Government with a wisdom, a purity, a moderation, a firmness, only excelled by the the great first President—he who had imbedded himself so deeply in the love and confidence of the good men of all parties in all the Union—he, upon the principle of availability, was sacrificed upon this same altar of northern prejudice,—did the sacrifice—allow me to say, the unworthy sacrifice—propitiate their favor? Did it even gain their votes? No, sir. Though we presented them with a name known and honored throughout the world!—a man whose deeds were the deeds which inspire poets, and glow with immortality on the pages of historians—a man who left us in doubt whether most to admire the magnificent splendor of his achievements, or the milder, yet lovelier, luster of his private life: under this leader, all distinguished as he was, we went into the conflict; but the moral power of the party was broken by the vote to which I have alluded, and the action at Baltimore; and we sustained one of the

most overwhelming defeats that ever overtook an erring party—a defeat which was well nigh an annihilation. Is there no lesson of wisdom in these facts? Unless I greatly misread all the signs of the times, our Democratic friends are being taught something of this same lesson. General Pierce came into power almost by acclamation—the fires of party were well nigh extinguished; even opponents were disposed to approve. Did he not, in the outset of his Administration, in the selection of his constitutional advisers, instead of calling around him the sound national men of his party, to conciliate factions, and sections, and prejudices, call around him a heterogeneous association of extremes, which have given us a series of blunders and inconsistencies which have weakened the nation’s faith, the nation’s confidence, and the nation’s love?

This review, to my mind at least, establishes the great and encouraging fact with which I set out, that no party can gain strength by pandering to sectional prejudices, whether North or South; that no party can stand in this country, except upon a broad national basis! But I desire to come more immediately to the questions involved in the bill before us.

It is asserted, if we pass this bill, its operations will be against the South. To this argument I have only to reply that the doctrine of *congressional non-intervention*, and of the right of the people to determine for themselves the character of their domestic institutions, is just within itself—a sound national policy. If, then, the recognition of these doctrines should bear hard upon any particular section—the South—that section should, in all honor and patriotism, submit to its operations, and will so submit. But is it true? If so, how does it happen that the old recognized avowed enemies to our institution oppose this bill? How does it happen that every political Abolitionist, here and elsewhere, opposes this bill? How does it happen that every Free-Soiler in the land opposes this bill? How does it happen that every man of *Free-Soil proclivities* opposes this bill? How does it happen that the “strong-minded women,” who have unsexed themselves and descended from the lofty and lovely sphere of their appropriate positions, to mingle with free negroes in Abolition conclaves, denounce this bill? How does it happen that Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, who worked out of the foulest prejudices an infamous notoriety, and then went to our old enemies to receive the reward of her treacherous slanders, is endeavoring to bring to bear an organized opposition of her countrywomen against the bill? How does it happen that those reverend fanatics and hypocrites, who have descended from their high places as ministers of God, desecrate His sacred altars in their insane fury against the bill? Sir, the pretext is too shallow to frighten any southern man from his propriety.

Again it is argued that the Missouri compromise line is a “wall of protection” to the South. A *wall of protection to the South!*

Why is it that the classes to which I have alluded are standing the sentinels to guard this wall? Where was its protection when it cut off from the South all that portion of the Louisiana purchase lying north of 36° 30' (except Missouri) upon which slavery had already been impressed? Where was its protection when it cut off from the

South all that portion of Texas lying north of the same line upon which slavery had also been impressed? Where was its protection "when Missouri knocked at the door of Congress for admission with a republican form of government in her hands," and was driven back upon a pretext alike dishonoring to her and to those who made it? As a southern man, I desire the *demolition of such a wall of protection!*

Again, it is said that the Missouri compromise was a compact, and that the South is bound, by every consideration of honor and good faith, to stand by her bargain. I will not travel over the ground so eloquently occupied by the distinguished gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. STEPHENS,] and again by the not less distinguished gentleman from Kentucky, [Mr. BRECKINRIDGE.] I will content myself by submitting it to the candor of this committee, if it has not been established beyond all question, that it was violated by the North in less than twelve months after its passage, by the refusal upon their part to admit Missouri, in obedience to its express stipulations, without another—an independent and different condition. By, if possible, the more conclusive fact, that when Missouri had complied with the other condition, upon the *final vote* to admit her into the Union—the vote by which she was admitted—the majority of the Representatives from the North voted *against her admission*. Was this not an open, solemn, ay, official violation of the contract about which we have heard so much? The South forgave this breach of faith, and still stood firmly by it.

In 1845 the North came back to its bargain—the South held firm, and the Missouri compromise line, by name, was extended through the State of Texas. Look you! Texas was a slave State—the North *was to gain* by the extension, and then we heard nothing of this technical quibble, that the compromise only applied to the Territory of Louisiana. Oh, no! then it was a *great principle*; then in its spirit it extended as far as the subject upon which it could operate extended! The Mexican territory was acquired, *free territory*—then *presto*, change! we hear no more from them of extension—no more of the inviolability of the Missouri compact! But its spirit was ruthlessly trodden down against the repeated, the earnest, the urgent remonstrances of the South! And yet, in the face of these facts, we are to be charged with a violation of our honor for not adhering to the bond! Do you expect the men of the South are mere children—that they will permit you to play "fast and loose" with this line—observe it when it is your interest, and discard it when it works against you? No, sirs; in 1848 you were given to understand that your refusal to extend it would absolve the South from her obligations.

President Polk, in his Oregon message, in an official communication to the Congress of the United States, distinctly declared, if this refusal was persisted in, it would leave the Missouri compromise "*an open question*." The Legislature of my own State, that had time after time resolved in favor of the line, declared the contract broken, but, with the whole South, was willing still to adhere to it, if the North would extend it to the Pacific, as a matter of peace. Add to all this the settlement of these slavery questions, as connected with the organization of our Territories by the compro-

mise measures of 1850, the discarding of latitudinal lines by that settlement, the recognition of the right of the people to determine for themselves the character of their domestic institutions; and I leave it to the candid judgment of candid men of all parties, if the South has not been absolved by these repeated and flagrant violations on the part of the North, by the establishment of a different principle in the legislation of the country, from whatever of obligation rested upon her to observe the compact of 1820?

It is said the Missouri compromise line has stood for thirty-four years on our statute-book—a grand pacificator, a glorious peace measure! Travel back over the record of that thirty-four years, and point me, if you please, to the peace it has given! Sir, the Missouri compromise was a child of storm; was cradled in a tempest, and has been true to its origin. From the day of its passage to 1850, abolitionism had, from year to year, gathered a stronger head; the fires of sectional strife had, from year to year, burned more fiercely. It is true they were smouldered for a time, but it was only to burst forth again with a wilder fury, which, in 1848, threatened to destroy the Union itself in its dread conflagration! Mr. Chairman, it has given us no peace. *Broken, dishonored, discarded, superseded*, why should it not be swept from our statute-book? No man could regret more the agitation that is around us than I; no man could regret more the necessity for a discussion of these delicate questions of slavery. In this regard I totally differ from the honorable gentleman from New York, [Mr. GERRIT SMITH.] I had hoped when the compromise measures passed; when both parties, in their conventions at Baltimore, indorsed them as a *final settlement*, "*in principle*," of the questions involved in them, that those questions would sleep their last sleep—a sleep which would know no waking. I know the country, when aroused and alarmed again by this "fire-bell," will hold the agitators to a fearful responsibility. And I retort back upon the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WASHBURN] the question so boldly asked—as to "who are the agitators?" Is it the friends of this bill, or is it those whose political life depends upon agitation? We but stand square upon the platforms—we adhere to those measures as a *finality*; we recognize the *principle* upon which they were based, as the men of 1845 recognized the latitudinal principle established in 1820, and extended it through Texas, so the men of 1854 should recognize the popular sovereignty principle as established in 1850, and extend it to the Territory of Kansas and Nebraska. As the South submitted un murmuringly then, the North should submit un murmuringly now. If those who opposed the extension were agitators then, those who oppose the extension are agitators now; as we stood by our honor then, you should stand by your honor now. It is, for the most part, the men who opposed the compromise measures—the men who derided and spit upon your platforms—the men who denounced *finalities* and the *principle* established, who are now making their inflammatory appeals to prejudices, and endeavoring to stir the public mind up into an excitement.

I have no desire to indulge in criminations. I desired only to fix the responsibility where it belongs. The question—the excitement is upon us, and we are called upon to meet them—to vote.

From the organization of our Government, these

questions of slavery have been the most delicate, the most agitating, the most dangerous of any by which we have been disturbed. We have built up a strength that can defy the world, if all the world were enemies!—we have attained a prosperity unequalled, and now, far as the eye can reach, they constitute the only cloud to be seen above our horizon; that cloud has rested upon us from the commencement, threatening and portentous. Our fathers endeavored to avoid the storm by the ordinance of 1787, and by the Missouri compromise—by the division of arbitrary lines; and still, through the long lapse of years, that cloud has continued to lower more angrily and fearfully upon us. That the impending storm cannot be averted by this principle is established, beyond all question, by the unerring demonstrations of actual experience. With all the lights of the past—with all the admonitions of danger around and about them, the great men of 1850 came up to the great work of readjustment. They struck out in a new path—they searched deep down amidst the foundations of fundamental truths upon which our Government rests, for a great principle upon which to base that adjustment; they found in the very corner-stone—embodied in the Declaration of Independence—a strong and vigorous principle—the principle which gives to that sacred chart all its power and grandeur!—that has canonized it in the American heart—in the world's heart!—the principle contained in the grand and solemn declaration that “*Governments claim their just powers FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED.*” This principle was strong enough to bear through in triumph three millions, imbued with its majesty and might, in their fearful struggle with the greatest Power of the world! Appealing to its justice and strength, the Congress of 1850 rested these questions of slavery upon it. The people, with almost one voice, ratified the noble act. In the organization of the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska we are called upon to determine the great question, whether we will place the final seal of our approbation upon their work—whether we will leave these questions of slavery in the Territories where they placed them, or whether we will again go out amidst the storms and breakers on the wild sea upon which we have been tossed!

Is it not obvious that we can have no lasting peace until this subject is driven out from the Halls of Congress? While it is here, aspirants will agitate in the country, in State Legislatures; while it is here, the fire brands will be scattered anew, at every session of Congress, among the people. Expel it, and their occupation is gone. Send it to the people who are to be affected by it. They can settle it for themselves better than we can settle it for them. They need no guardians; least of all, congressional guardians. Highly as I respect the body of which I have the honor of being a member, torn, divided, as it is, with its conflicting passions and interests, I regard it as peculiarly unfit for the high duties of guardianship.

Why should we continue this anomaly in our system—this Government without representation? Why is it that the men of the Territories are not as capable of regulating their domestic affairs as the men of the States? Why is it that a man standing upon the western border of Missouri is clad in the full panoply of American rights—an integral part of the sovereignty of the land—with a voice

to be heard, and a vote to be felt, in the formation of the laws which are to govern him? He treads his foot one step beyond, upon the soil of Kansas, and he sinks (by your doctrine) from the high dignity of a man, and a free man, into the helpless imbecility of minority—his attributes of sovereignty fall from around him—congressional restrictions are placed upon him, and you take him into your leading-strings.

Who are these men? Who are the men whose capacity for self-government is vindicated and asserted by this bill? They are those bold spirits, thrown by the dashings of the first waves of emigration upon the bosom of the wilderness of the West!—men whose hearts are as strong as their arms—men who walk forth in a pride and power of manhood unattained by those confined in the hot-beds of your cities, or breathing the impurities of a too pent-up population—men who, without invidious discrimination, I may be permitted to say, have inherited more largely that noble daring of our fathers, which periled all in defense of this great principle, and lined your Atlantic seaboard with sister Republics based upon it, which stand and have stood for more than three fourths of a century the wonder and the glory of the nations! I appeal to the North to give to these men of the Territories their just rights; I appeal to the North to give to the South her just rights; I appeal to them to forbear, in the power of their numbers, striking us down from our just equality in the Union by a dishonoring blow; I appeal to her true men to stand by us in this conflict.

Mr. Chairman, this is no idle struggle. In my judgment a question more momentous in its consequences never occupied the attention of this body. I regard this as the last, final struggle between the sections of the Union—a struggle in which there will be no compromise, and in which there should be no compromise. The principles contained in this bill are just and correct within themselves, just to all sections of the Union. If these questions of slavery cannot rest here, they can rest nowhere, and the country should know it. We want no more temporary and shifting expedients—no more hollow truces—no more unjust discriminations. We want an honorable peace—a lasting peace. Pass this bill—ingraft its principles in the public heart, and in the legislation of the country, and you will roll back the cloud of which I have spoken from our horizon, and blot out forever Mason and Dixon's line as a line of sectional division. Pass this bill, and you draw the bonds of Union still more firmly and closely around the Republic. Pass this bill, and you may go home and tell your constituents you have accomplished a glorious work; that you have removed the only obstacle in the path of our onward march; that you have guided the gallant old ship into a secure haven, where the storms and tempests will beat against her no more. Defeat this bill, and you throw the subject out, again, into the hands of the agitators; you mingle it up in our elections; you unchain the winds, and bid the demon of discord run riot over the land.

In this contest the South stands as she has always stood, in the defensive. She asks you only to let her alone—to let her institution alone. We war not; we have not warred with you; we have entered upon no career of slavery propandism; we desire no laws to force our domestic institutions upon you. Did the South propose that

Kansas and Nebraska should never be admitted as States, without a clause in their Constitution establishing slavery, then the North might fly with fiery zeal to arms; then she might denounce the encroachments of the slave power; then she might, with justice and in honor, agitate this question; then she might marshal her hosts, and come down here in battle array to vindicate her equality and resist the base aggression! We make no such propositions. We only ask you again to let us alone—let our slaves alone.

The same Providence which saw the exodus of the African from his native shore, saw that of the Israelite from his bondage. This Providence will, in its own good time, erect for him his pillar of cloud and of fire; will roll back for him his waters of the Red Sea; will conduct him over his Jordan, and give to him his promised land. It is blasphemous in you to attempt to disturb this march of destiny. We of the slave States are God's instruments—not you—to work out for the African His great purposes. It is through us that the beautiful doctrines of our holy religion are breaking in upon his darkened mind and being ingrafted upon his heart. It is by us that civilization, in its progress, is being conducted to him; it is by his association with us that the gloomy nightshade of superstition is being dispelled from around him. In short, it is our hands that have led him from his wild, and barbarous, and heathen, and miserable existence upon the sands of his native desert, to a knowledge of his God, to an advance in civilization far beyond any point attained by those left behind him, and it is our hands which must conduct him to his future. Let us alone! Talk not to us of the "demoralizing effects of slavery," its "blighting curse." Were you ever in our beautiful and sunny South? Are not our women as fair and our men as brave as yours? Are the records of crime more teeming and dark with us than with you? Are mobs, insanity, pauperism, starvation, more frequent with us than with you? But I will not allow myself to be drawn into sectional contrasts. I enter into no crusade against the North; I cherish no sectional prejudices. Sir, I honor the North. I believe the great body of her people are as true to the Union, as devoted in their patriotism, as those of any other section of our Confederacy. I honor her long roll of great names; the industry that has wrung from a reluctant and sterile soil millions of wealth; the enterprise which has spread our commerce upon every sea, and borne it to every port in the world. I honor the gallantry of her seamen who, in the war of 1812, arrested the proud march of England "upon the mountain wave," and broke up her home upon the deep; her free schools; the

energy which has everywhere dotted her surface with manufactories. I admire the taste that has adorned her with magnificent edifices; and I revere the spirit that has erected the tall spires of her myriad churches, pointing heavenward.

But, while I thus honor and thus love the North, I also love the South, the abused, the calumniated South. I loved her in my childhood, I adore her in my manhood, and I will love her at my death. She, too, has her bright roll of great names, her proud and lofty spirit, her daring chivalry, her open generosity, her fervid patriotism. I call upon the North to remember (in the language of their greatest orator) that "she went hand in hand with you through the dark night of our Revolution;" that her shouts of gladness and triumph mingled with yours at its glorious consummation. That in 1812, when it was your seamen who had been impressed, and your commerce that had been plundered, true to you, true to her own noble impulses, she paused not to inquire whether she *had been stricken*, but she saw her northern brother wronged and dishonored, and she plunged, with all her great soul, into the fight. She has been true to the Union, notwithstanding the chief burdens of Government, through the operation of revenue laws, have fallen upon her. She has been true to the Union, notwithstanding the unjust restrictions under which you have bound her. She has clung to it with unwavering hand, while you poured your fiery torrent of insult and obloquy and defamation upon her. Why should not this North and this South dwell together in unity? Why should they not meet in fraternal embrace upon the altars of the Constitution; and as the blood of their heroes has mingled together upon the battle plain, in war and in death, let the love of their survivors mingle together in peace and in life? United we achieved our independence; united in 1812, we safely guarded the boon; united on the plains of Mexico, we threw a halo of imperishable glory on the altar of our arms. United we have garnered together a treasure house of memories more rich than any of which the world's history tells. United we have left an enduring monument of glory at every step of our progress. Continue this Union, and we will achieve a point of national eminence and greatness beyond even the boldest imaginings of the most sanguine men of our time.

Sir, this Union will continue. Politicians and agitators, North and South, may ripple the surface—may cause the wave and the billow to roll, but beneath there sleeps a calm, quiet, deep ocean of love for the Union and devotion to the Constitution. Upon that love and that devotion I build my hopes, and I will not yield my faith.

W 4
e have
dism;
stitu-
a that





WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grants, Pa
Jan Feb 1989
We're Quality Bound!

