

The Irrepressible Conflict and the Dissolution of the Union.

S P E E C H

OF

CARL SCHURZ, OF WISCONSIN,

AT

VERANDAH HALL, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI,

AUGUST 1, 1860.

Mr. President and Gentlemen:

To deny the existence of an evil they do not mean to remedy, to ascribe to paltry causes the origin of great problems they do not mean to solve, to charge those who define the nature of an existing difficulty with having originated it—these are expedients which the opponents of reformatory movements have resorted to since mankind has a history. An appeal to ignorance or timidity is their last hope, when all resources of logic and argument are exhausted. The old comedy is repeated again and again.

The assertions that the great contest between free and slave labor has no foundation in fact, that the origin of the slavery controversy is to be found in the fanaticism of a few Northern abolitionists, and that those who speak of an "irrepressible conflict" are to be made responsible for its existence—these form the argumentative staple of those who possess either not sagacity enough to discern or not courage enough to state facts as they are.

In investigating the causes of the great struggle which has for years kept the minds of the people in constant uneasiness and excitement, I shall endeavor to act with the most perfect fairness. I shall not indulge in any denunciations. I shall impeach the motives of no one. I shall not appeal to prejudice or passion. I invite you to pass in review the actual state of things with calmness and impartiality.

It is one of the best traits of human nature, that we form our first opinions on matters of general interest from our innate sense of right and wrong. Our moral impressions, the dictates of our consciences, the generous impulses of our hearts, are the sources from which our

first convictions spring. But custom, material interest, and our natural inclination to acquiesce in that which is, whether right or wrong, that *vis inertiae* which has brought so much suffering upon humanity, are apt to overrule the native instincts of our moral nature. They are sicklied over by the pale cast of calculation; the freshness of their impelling powers is lost, and questions essentially moral are imperceptibly changed into questions of material interest, national economy, or political power.

The people of the South have evidently gone through that process in regard to the institution of slavery; they have become accustomed to identify its existence with the existence of Southern society, while even a large majority of the people of the North were rather inclined to silence their moral objections to it, and to acquiesce, until its immediate interference with matters of general interest gave a new impulse to their native antipathy. Although I am not ashamed to confess that the moral merits of the question would alone have been more than sufficient to make me an anti-slavery man, yet I will confine myself to a discussion of its practical effects, in order to make myself intelligible even to those who do not sympathize with me. This is the first time that I have had the honor to address a meeting in a slave State, and even now I owe the privilege of expressing my opinions freely and without restraint to the circumstance that, although in a slave State, I stand upon the soil of a free city, and under the generous protection of free men. [Applause.] Must I call "a privilege" what ought to be universally respected as the sacred birthright of every American citizen? Ask any slaveholder who may be present in

And what assembly whether he does not deem it wrong and unjustifiable that I, an anti-slavery man, should be permitted to give a public expression of my views in a slave State; whether he would not be in favor of silencing me by whatever means within his reach; whether I would not be silenced at once in a strong slaveholding community? I do not mean to blame him for it. Let us give him a fair hearing. The slaveholder will state his political views substantially as follows:

"On a point of astronomy, or chemistry, or medicine, you may entertain and express whatever opinion you please; but we cannot permit you to discuss the relation between master and servant, as it exists here in the slave States; for, in doing so, you would endanger our safety, and undermine our social system. Our condition is such, that the slightest movement of insubordination, once started, is apt to grow with uncontrollable rapidity; we have therefore, to guard against everything that may start it; we cannot allow free discussion of the subject; we have to remove from our midst every incendiary element; we cannot be expected to tolerate opinions or persons among us that are opposed to the ruling order of things. Whenever a mischievous attempt is made, we are obliged to repress it with such energy and severity as to strike terror into the hearts of those who might be capable of repeating the attempt. Our condition requires the promptest action, and if, in cases of imminent danger, the regular process of the courts is too slow or uncertain, we are obliged to resort to lynch law in order to supply its deficiencies.

"Moreover, we must adapt our rules and customs of government to the peculiar wants of our social organization. In order to be safe, we must intrust the Government, in its general administration as well as its details, to those who, by their own interests, are bound to be the natural guardians of the system. Hence our safety requires that the political power in our States should be put into the hands of slaveholders; and where we have no law to that effect, custom upholds the rule.

"In order to put the political ascendancy of those who are most interested in the preservation of slavery upon a solid basis, we must put down anything that would produce and foster independent aspirations among the other classes of society. It would not only be insane to educate the slaves, but highly dangerous to extend to the great mass of poor white non-slaveholders the means of education; for in doing so we might raise an element to influence and power, whose interests are not identical with those of the slaveholder. This is our policy of self-preservation, and we are bound to enforce it."

Sir, I mean to be just to the slaveholders, and, strange as it may sound, as to the propriety of their policy, I agree with them. Having

identified their social existence with the existence of slavery, they cannot act otherwise.

It is a necessity that urges them on. It is true that slavery is an inflammable element. A stray spark of thought or hope may cause a terrible conflagration. The torch of free speech and press, which gives light to the house of Liberty, is very apt to set on fire the house of Slavery. What is more natural than that the torch should be extinguished where there is such an abundance of explosive material?

It is true that in a slaveholding community the strictest subordination must be enforced, that the maintenance of established order requires the most rigorous preventive and repressive measures, which will not always allow of a strict observance of the rules of legal process; it is equally true that the making and the execution of the laws can be safely intrusted only to those who, by their position, are bound to the ruling interest; true, that popular education is dangerous to the exclusive rule of an exclusive class; true, that men must be kept stupid in order to be kept obedient. What is more consistent, therefore, than that fundamental liberties should be disregarded whenever they become dangerous; that the safeguards of human rights in the administration of justice should be set aside whenever the emergency calls for prompt and energetic action; that the masses should be left uneducated, in order to give the slaveholding oligarchy an undisputed sway? In one word, that the rights, the liberties, and the security of the individual, should have to yield to the paramount consideration of the safety of the ruling interest? All this is true; and accepting the premises, all these necessities exist. You seem startled at this proposition, and ask, What is the institution that demands for its protection such measures? The slave States are by no means original in this respect. Look at the Kingdom of Naples, where the ruling power is governed by similar exclusive interests; and acts on the same instinct of self-preservation. Does it not resort to the same means? You tell me that the principles underlying our system of government are very different from those of the Kingdom of Naples, and that the means of protection I spoke of run contrary to the spirit of our institutions. Indeed, so it seems to be. What does that prove? Simply this: that a social institution which is in antagonism with the principles of democratic government cannot be maintained and protected by means which are in accordance with those principles; and on the other hand, that a social institution which cannot be protected by means which are in accordance with the democratic principles of our Government, must essentially be in antagonism to those principles. It proves that the people in the slaveholding States, although pretending to be freemen, are, by the necessities arising from their condition, the slaves of slavery. That is all.

But I am told that the slave States are sovereign, and may shape and govern their home concerns according to their own notions, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. Granted. But the necessities of slavery do not stop there. The slave States are members of a federal family, and, as the King of Naples in his foreign policy is governed by his peculiar interests, so is the policy of the slave States in our Federal affairs governed by their peculiar necessities.

I hear much said of the aggressive spirit of the slave power, but I am almost inclined to acquit it of that charge, for all its apparently aggressive attempts are no less dictated by instinct of self-preservation, than the most striking features of its home policy.

Let us listen to the slaveholder again. He says: "What will become of the security of our slave property, if, inside of this Union, a slave may finally escape from the hands of his master by simply crossing the line of his State? But the fanatical anti-slavery spirit prevailing in the free States will avail itself of every facility the common legal process affords, as the trial by jury and the writ of *habeas corpus*, to aid the fugitive in his escape. We are therefore obliged to demand such legislation at the hands of our General Government as will remove these obstacles thrown in the way of the recapture of our property, and oblige the citizens, by law, to assist us in the reapprehension of the fugitive; so the trial by jury and the writ of *habeas corpus* will have to yield, and the good old common-law principle, that in all cases concerning life and liberty, the presumption be in favor of liberty, goes by the board." This may seem rather hard, but is it not eminently consistent?

The necessities of slavery do not stop there. Let us hear how the slaveholder proceeds: "In order to obtain such legislation from our national councils, it is necessary that the prejudices against slavery existing in the free States be disarmed. It is impossible that the slave interest should deem itself secure as long as a violent agitation is kept up against it, which continually troubles us at home, and exercises upon the National Legislature an influence hostile to slavery. We are therefore obliged to demand that measures be taken to stop that agitation." Nothing more natural than that. The right of petition, held sacred even by some despotic Governments, must be curtailed. Post office regulations have to prevent the dissemination of anti-slavery sentiments by the newspapers. Even in the free States willing instruments are found, who urge the adoption of measures tending to suppress the very discussion of this question. Laws are advocated in Congress, (and that "champion of free labor," Douglas, takes the lead,) making it a criminal offence to organize associations hostile to slavery, and

empowering the General Government to suppress them by means of a centralized police. [Loud cheers.] This may seem somewhat tyrannical, but is it not eminently consistent? [Applause.]

But in order to succeed in this, slavery needs a controlling power in the General Government. It cannot expect to persuade us, so it must try to subdue and rule us. Hear the slaveholder: "It is impossible that we should consider our interests safe in this Union, unless the political equilibrium between the free and slave States be restored. If the free States are permitted to increase, and the slave States stand still, we shall be completely at the mercy of a hostile majority. We are therefore obliged to demand accessions of territory, out of which new slave States can be formed, so as to increase our representation in Congress, and to restore the equilibrium of power." Nothing more sensible. The acquisition of foreign countries, such as Cuba and the northern States of Mexico, is demanded; and, if they cannot be obtained by fair purchase and diplomatic transaction, war must be resorted to; and, if the majority of the people are not inclined to go to war, our international relations must be disturbed by filibustering expeditions, precipitating, if possible, this country into wars, thus forcing the peaceable or chattering the enthusiastic into subservency to the plans of the slave power. You may call this piracy, disgracing us in the eyes of the civilized world. But can you deny that slavery needs power, and that it cannot obtain that power except by extension?

So, pressed by its necessities, it lays its hand upon our national Territories. Time-honored compacts, hemming in slavery, must be abrogated. The Constitution must be construed as to give slavery unlimited sway over our national domain. Hence your Nebraska bills and Dred Scott decisions and slave-code platforms. You may call that atrocious, but can you deny its consistency?

"But," adds the slaveholder, "of what use is to us the abstract right to go with our slave property into the Territories, if you pass laws which attract to the Territories a class of population that will crowd out slavery; if you attract to them the foreign immigrant by granting him the immediate enjoyment of political rights; if you allure the paupers from all parts of the globe by your pre-emption laws and homestead bills? We want the negro in the Territories. You give us the foreign immigrant. Slavery cannot exist except with the system of large farms, and your homestead bills establish the system of small farms, with which free labor is inseparably connected. We are therefore obliged to demand that all such mischievous projects be abandoned." Nothing more plausible. Hence the right of the laboring man to acquire property in the soil by his labor is denied, your

homestead bills voted down, and the blight of oppressive speculation fastened upon your virgin soil, and attempts are made to deprive the foreign immigrant in the Territories of the immediate enjoyment of political rights, which, in the primitive state of social organization, are essential to his existence. All this in order to give slavery a chance to obtain possession of our national domain. This may seem rather hard. But can you deny that slavery, for its own protection, needs power in the General Government? that it cannot obtain that power except by increased representation? that it cannot increase its representation except by conquest and extension over the Territories? and that with this policy all measures are incompatible which bid fair to play the Territories into the hands of free labor?

This is not all. Listen to the slaveholder once more: "Our States," he tells us, "are essentially agricultural-producing States. We have but little commerce, and still less manufacturing industry. All legislation tending to benefit the commercial and manufacturing interests, principally, is therefore to our immediate prejudice. It will oblige us to contribute to the growth and prosperity of the free States at our expense, and consequently turn the balance of political power still more against us. We are, therefore, obliged to demand that all attempts to promote, by Federal legislation, the industrial interest, be given up." Nothing more logical. The system of slave labor has never permitted them to recognise and develop the harmony of agricultural and industrial and commercial pursuits. What is more natural than that they should seek to give the peculiar economical interest in which their superiority consists the preponderance in our economical policy? Hence their unrelenting opposition to all legislation tending to develop the peculiar resources of the free States.

Here let us pause. Is there anything strange or surprising in all this? You may call it madness, but there is method in this madness. The slave power is impelled by the irrepressible power of necessity. It cannot exist unless it rules, and it cannot rule unless it keeps down its opponents. All its demands and acts are in strict harmony with its interests and attributes; they are the natural growth of its existence. I repeat, I am willing to acquit it of the charge of willful aggression; I am willing to concede that it struggles for self-preservation. But now the momentous question arises, How do the means which seem to be indispensable for the self-preservation of slavery agree with the existence and interests of free-labor society?

Sir, if Mr. Hammond, of South Carolina, or Mr. Brown, of Mississippi, had listened to me, would they not be obliged to give me credit for having stated their case fairly? Now, listen to me, while I state our own.

Cast your eyes over that great beehive, called the free States. See by the railroad and the telegraphic wire every village, almost every backwood cottage, drawn within the immediate reach of progressive civilization. Look over our grain fields, but lately a lonesome wilderness, where machinery is almost superseding the labor of the human hand; over our workshops, whose aspect is almost daily changed by the magic touch of inventive genius; over our fleets of merchant vessels, numerous enough to make the whole world tributary to our prosperity; look upon our society, where by popular education and the continual change of condition the dividing lines between ranks and classes are almost obliterated; look upon our system of public instruction, which places even the lowliest child of the people upon the high road of progressive advancement; upon our rapid growth and expansive prosperity, which is indeed subject to reverses and checks, but contains such a wonderful fertility of resources, that every check is a mere incentive for new enterprise, every reverse but a mere opportunity for the development of new powers.

To what do we owe all this? First and foremost, to that perfect freedom of inquiry, which acknowledges no rules but those of logic, no limits but those that bound the faculties of the human mind. [Cheers.] Its magic consists in its universality. To it we owe the harmony of our progressive movement in all its endless ramifications. No single science, no single practical pursuit, exists in our day independently of all other sciences, all other practical pursuits. This is the age of the solidarity of progress. Set a limit to the freedom of inquiry in one direction, and you destroy the harmony of its propelling action. Give us the Roman Inquisition, which forbids Galileo Galilei to think that the earth moves around the sun, and he has to interrupt and give up the splendid train of his discoveries, and their influence upon all other branches of science is lost; he has to give it up, or he must fight the Inquisition. [Cheers.] Let the slave power or any other political or economical interest tell us that we must think, and say, and invent, and discover nothing which is against its demands; and we must interrupt and give up the harmony of our progressive development, or fight the tyrannical pretension, whatever shape it may assume. [Loud cheers.]

Believing as we do that the moral and ideal development of man is the true aim and end of human society, we must preserve in their efficiency the means which serve that end. In order to secure to the freedom of inquiry its full productive power, we must surround it with all the safeguards which political institutions afford. As we cannot set a limit to the activity of our minds, so we cannot muzzle our mouths or fetter the press with a censorship. [Applause.] *We cannot arrest or restrain the discussion of the question, what system of labor*

or what organization of society promotes best the moral and intellectual development of man. [Loud applause.] We cannot deprive a single individual of the privileges which protect him in the free exercise of his faculties, and the enjoyment of his rights, so long as these faculties are not employed to the detriment of the rights and liberties of others. Our organization of society resting upon equal rights, we find our security in a general system of popular education, which fits all for an intelligent exercise of those rights. This is the home policy of free-labor society. Its policy in our Federal affairs must necessarily correspond. Deeming free and intelligent labor the only safe basis of society, it is our duty to expand its blessings over all the territory within our reach; seeing our own prosperity advanced by the prosperity of our neighbors, we must endeavor to plant upon our borders a system of labor which answers in that respect. So we recognise the right of the laboring man to the soil he cultivates, and shield him against oppressive speculation. Seeing in the harmonious development of all branches of labor a source of progress and power, we must adopt a policy which draws to light the resources of the land, gives work to our workshops, and security to our commerce. These are the principles and views governing our policy.

Slaveholders, look at this picture, and at this. Can the difference escape your observation? You may say, as many have said, that there is indeed a difference of principles, but not necessarily an antagonism of interests. Look again.

Your social system is founded upon forced labor, ours upon free labor. Slave labor cannot exist together with freedom of inquiry, and so you demand the restriction of that freedom; free labor cannot exist without it, and so we maintain its inviolability. Slave labor demands the setting aside of the safeguards of individual liberty, for the purpose of upholding subordination and protecting slave property; free labor demands their preservation, as essential and indispensable to its existence and progressive development. Slavery demands extension by an aggressive foreign policy; free labor demands an honorable peace and friendly intercourse with the world abroad for its commerce, and a peaceable and undisturbed development of our resources at home for its agriculture and industry. Slavery demands extension over national Territories for the purpose of gaining political power. Free labor demands the national domain for working men, for the purpose of spreading the blessings of liberty and civilization. Slavery therefore opposes all measures tending to secure the soil to the actual laborer; free labor, therefore, recognises the right of the settler to the soil, and demands measures protecting him against the pressure of speculation. Slavery demands the absolute ascendancy of the planting interest in our economical policy; free la-

the resources of the land, and to harmonize the agricultural, commercial, and industrial interests. Slavery demands the control of the General Government for its special protection and the promotion of its peculiar interests; free labor demands that the General Government be administered for the purpose of securing to all the blessings of liberty, and for the promotion of the general welfare. [Tremendous applause.] Slavery demands the recognition of its divine right; free labor recognises no divine right but that of the liberty of all men. [Loud cheers.]

With one word, *slavery demands for its protection and perpetuation a system of policy which is utterly incompatible with the principles upon which the organization of free-labor society rests.* There is the antagonism. That is the essence of the "irrepressible conflict." It is a conflict of principles underlying interests always the same, whether appearing as a moral, economical, or political question. Mr. Douglas boasted that he could repress it with police measures; he might as well try to feter the winds with a rope. The South mean to repress it with decisions of the Supreme Court; they might as well, like Xerxes, try to subdue the waves of the ocean by throwing chains into the water. [Applause.]

The conflict of constitutional constructions is indeed but a mere incident of the great struggle, a mere symptom of the crisis. Long before the slavery question in the form of an abstract constitutional controversy agitated the public mind, the conflict of interests raged in our national councils. What mattered it that the struggle about the encouragement of home industry and internal improvements was not ostensibly carried on under the firm of pro and anti-slavery? What mattered it that your new-fangled constitutional doctrines were not yet invented, when slavery tried to expand by the annexation of foreign countries? that no Dred Scott decision was yet cooked up, when the right of petition was curtailed, when attempts were made to arrest the discussion of the slavery question all over the Union, and when the trial by jury and the writ of *habeas corpus* were overridden by the fugitive slave law? And even lately, when the slave power, with one gigantic grasp, attempted to seize the whole of our national domain, what else was and is your new constitutional doctrine but an ill-disguised attempt to clothe a long-cherished design with the color of law?

Read your history with an impartial eye, and you will find that the construction of the Constitution always shaped itself according to the prevailing moral impulses or the predominance of material over political interests. The logic of our minds is but too apt to follow in the track of our sympathies and aspirations. It was when the South had control of our Government that acts were passed for the raising of duties on imports for the creation of a tariff which

It was under the lead of the South that the system of internal improvements and of the protection of home industry were inaugurated; it was the South no less than the North that insisted upon and exercised the power of Congress to exclude slavery from the Territories. So long as these measures seemed to agree with the predominant interest, there seemed to be no question about their constitutionality. Even Mr. Calhoun himself said, in one of his most celebrated speeches, delivered in the session of 1815-'16, "That it was the duty of the Government, as a means of defence, to encourage the domestic industry of the country." But as soon as it was found out that this policy rebounded more to the benefit of free labor than that of the unenterprising South, then the same men who had inaugurated it worked its overthrow, on the plea that it was at war with the principles of the Constitution. [Murmurs of applause.] The constitutionality of the ordinance of 1787 was never questioned, as long as the prevailing sentiment in the South ran against the perpetuation of slavery. The Missouri compromise was held as sacred and inviolable as the Constitution itself, so long as it served to introduce slave States into this Union; but no sooner were, by virtue of its provisions, free Territories to be organized, than its unconstitutionality was at once discovered.

The predominance of interests determines the construction of the Constitution. So it was, and so it ever will be. Only those who remained true to the original programme of the fathers, remained true to the original construction. Decide the contest of principles underlying interests, and the conflict of constitutional constructions will settle itself. This way seems a dangerous political theory. It is not an article of my creed—not a matter of principle—but a matter of experience; not a doctrine, but a fact.

Thus the all-pervading antagonism stands before us, gigantic in its dimensions, growing every day in the awful proportions of its problems, involving the character of our institutions; involving our relations with the world abroad; involving our peace, our rights and liberties at home; involving our growth and prosperity; involving our moral and political existence as a nation.

How short-sighted, how childish, are those who find its origin in artificial agitation! As though we could produce a tempest by blowing our noses, or an earthquake by stamping our puny feet upon the ground. [Laughter.] But how to solve, how to decide it? Let us pass in review our political parties, and the remedies they propose. There we encounter the so-called Union party, with Bell and Everett, who tell us the best way to settle the conflict is to ignore it. [Laughter.]

Ignore it! Ignore it, when attempts are made to plunge the country into war and disgrace, for the purpose of slavery extension! Ignore it,

when slavery and free labor wage their fierce war about the possession of the national domain! Ignore it, when the liberties of speech and press are attacked! Ignore it, when the actual settler claims the virgin soil, and the slaveholding capitalists claim it also! Ignore it, when the planting interest seeks to establish and maintain its exclusive supremacy in our economical policy! Ignore it, indeed! Ignore the fire that consumes the corner posts of your house! Ignore the storm that breaks the rudder and tears to tatters the sails of your ship! Conjure the revolted elements with a meek Mount Vernon lecture! Pour upon the furious waves the placid oil of a quotation from Washington's farewell address! [Cheers and laughter.]

It is true, they tell us they will enforce the laws and the Constitution well enough! But what laws? Those that free labor demand, or those that slavery give us? What Constitution? That of Washington and Madison, or that of Slidell, Douglas, and Taney? [Loud and long-continued cheering.]

The conflict stands there with the stubborn, brutal force of reality. However severely it may disturb the nerves of timid gentlemen, there it stands, and speaks the hard, stern language of fact. I understand well that great problems and responsibilities should be approached with care and caution. But times like these demand the firm action of men who know what they will, and will it, not that eunuch policy, which, conscious of its own unproductiveness, invites us blandly to settle down into the imbecile contentment of general impotency. They cannot ignore the conflict if they would, but have not nerve enough to decide it if they could.

The next party that claims our attention is the so called Democracy. As it is my object to discuss the practical, not the constitutional, merits of the problem before us, I might pass over the divisions existing in that organization. In fact, the point that separates Mr. Douglas from Mr. Breckinridge is but a mere quibble, a mere matter of etiquette. Mr. Douglas is unwilling to admit in words what he has a hundred times admitted in fact, for, can you tell me what practical difference in the world there is between direct and indirect intervention by Congress in favor of slavery, and that kind of non-intervention by Congress which merely consists in making room for direct intervention by the Supreme Court? And besides, in nearly all practical measures of policy, Mr. Douglas is regularly to be found on the side of the extreme South. Like that great statesman of yours, (I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for alluding to him in decent political company,) he always votes against measures for the encouragement of home industry, perhaps because he does not understand them. [Laughter.] He is one of the firmest supporters of the ascendancy of the planter's interest

in our economical questions, and, on, to the extension of slavery by conquest and annexation the widest filibusters may always count upon his tenderest sympathies.

So I say I might have ignored him, if he had not succeeded in creating the most deafening of noises with the hollowest of drums. [Loud cheers.]

He proposes to "repress the irrepressible conflict," with what he emphatically styles "his great principle." At first, he defined it as "self-government of the people in the Territories;" but it became soon apparent that under his great principle the people of the Territories were governed by anybody but *self*, and he called it "popular sovereignty." It soon turned out that this kind of sovereignty was not very popular after all, and he called it "non-intervention." [Laughter.] Methinks something will intervene pretty soon, and he will strain his imagination for another name, if it be worth while at all to christen a thing which never had any tangible existence.

But if we may believe him, his "great principle," and nothing but his "great principle," will settle the irrepressible conflict, restore peace and harmony to the nation, and save the Union—and, in fact, Mr. Douglas is about the only one among the Presidential candidates who insists that there is an immediate necessity of saving that ancient institution.

Let us judge the merits of his great principle by its results: Has it secured to the inhabitants of the Territories the right of self-government? Never were the people of a Territory subject to a despotism more arbitrary, and to violence more lawless and atrocious, than were the people of Kansas, after the enactment of the Nebraska bill. Has it removed the slavery question from the halls of Congress? The fight has never raged with greater fierceness, and Congress came hardly ever so near debating with bowie-knives and revolvers, as about the questions raised by the Nebraska bill. Has it established safe and uniform rules for the construction of the Constitution? It has set aside the construction put upon the Constitution by those who framed it; and for the rest, let Mr. Douglas give you his opinion on the Dred Scott decision. Has it given peace and harmony to the country, by repressing the irrepressible conflict? Alas! poor great principle! this harangue of peace and harmony inflamed the irrepressible conflict, even inside of the Democratic party, and rent into two sections an organization which claimed the exclusive privilege of nationality.

These were its immediate results. It is true, Mr. Douglas accuses his adversaries of having created the disturbance. Certainly, if the whole American nation had bowed their heads in silent obedience before Mr. Douglas's mandate, there would have been no strife. Mr. Slidell, Mr. Buchanan, and Mr. Breckinridge, may say the same; so may the Emperor of

Austria and the King of Naples. Such men are apt to be disturbed by opponents, and Mr. Douglas need not be surprised if he has a few!

The true source of the difficulty was this: The Kansas-Nebraska bill was thrown in an ambiguous, illogical measure, between two antagonistic interests, each of which construed it for its own advantage. It brought the contesting forces together, face to face, without offering a clear ground upon which to settle the conflict. Thus it quickened and intensified the struggle, instead of allaying it. Hence its total failure as a harmonizing measure.

What, then, is its positive result? As to its practical importance in the conflict between free and slave labor, Mr. Douglas himself enlightens us, as follows:

"Has the South been excluded from all the territory acquired from Mexico? What says the bill from the House of Representatives, now on your table, repealing the slave code in New Mexico established by the people themselves? It is part of the history of the country, that, under this doctrine of non-intervention, this doctrine that you delight to call squatter sovereignty, the people of New Mexico have introduced and protected slavery in the whole of that Territory. Under this doctrine, they have converted a tract of free territory into slave territory, more than five times the size of the State of New York. Under this doctrine, slavery has been extended from the Rio Grande to the Gulf of California, and from the line of the Republic of Mexico, not only up to 36° 30', but up to 38°—giving you a degree and a half more slave territory than you ever claimed. In 1848 and 1849 and 1850, you only asked to have the line of 36° 30'. The Nashville Convention fixed that as its ultimatum. I offered it in the Senate in August, 1848, and it was adopted here, but rejected in the House of Representatives. You asked only up to 36° 30', and non-intervention has given you slave territory up to 38°, a degree and a half more than you asked; and yet you say that this is a sacrifice of Southern rights.

"These are the fruits of this principle, which the Senator from Mississippi regards as hostile to the rights of the South. Where did you ever get any other fruits that were more palatable to your taste, or more refreshing to your strength? What other inch of free territory has been converted into slave territory on the American continent, since the Revolution, except in New Mexico and Arizona, under the principle of non-intervention affirmed at Charleston? If it is true that this principle of non-intervention has conferred upon you all that immense territory, has protected slavery in that comparatively northern and cold region where you did not expect it to go, cannot you trust the same principle further south, when you come to acquire additional territory from Mexico? If it be true that this

principle of non-intervention has given to slavery all New Mexico, which was surrounded on nearly every side by free territory, will not the same principle protect you in the northern States of Mexico when they are acquired, since they are now surrounded by slave territory?"

Indeed! This, then, is the practical solution of the difficulty which Mr. Douglas proposes: The "great principle of non-intervention," which, according to his own testimony, strengthens slavery, by increasing the number of slave States, and their representation and power in our General Government; to which is to be added the annexation of Cuba and the northern States of Mexico, out of which an additional number of slave States is to be carved. But his Northern friends say that he is the champion of free labor—and they are honorable men.

Oh, what a deep-seated, overweening confidence Mr. Douglas, when he made this statement, must have had in the unfathomable, desperate, incorrigible stupidity of those Northern Democrats who support him for the purpose of baffling and punishing the fire-eaters of the South. Good, innocent souls, do they not see that by supporting Mr. Douglas's policy, which throws into the lap of slavery Territory after Territory, they will strengthen and render more overbearing the very same slave power they mean to baffle and punish? Do they not see that they are preparing a lash for their own backs? It is true, when they feel it, and they deserve to feel it, they may console themselves with the idea that it is a whip of their own manufacture!

At last we arrive at the programme of the slave power in its open and undisguised form, of which Mr. Breckinridge is the representative, and Mr. Douglas the servant, although he does not wear its livery except on occasions of state.

The programme is as follows: The agitation of the slavery question, North and South, is to be arrested; the fugitive-slave law, in its present form, is to be strictly carried out, and all State legislation impeding its execution to be repealed; the constitutional right of slavery to occupy the Territories of the United States, and to be protected there, is to be acknowledged; all measures tending to impede the ingress of slavery, and its establishment in the Territories, are to be abandoned; the opposition to the conquest and annexation of foreign countries, out of which more slave States can be formed, is to be given up; the economical policy of the planting interest, to the exclusion of the encouragement of home industry, is to become the ruling policy of the country.

This is the Southern solution of the irrepressible conflict.

This programme possesses at least the merit of logic—the logic of slavery and despotism against the logic of free labor and liberty. The issue is plainly made up. Free labor is sum-

moned to submit to the measures which slavery deems necessary for its perpetuation. We are called upon to adapt our laws and systems of policy, and the whole development of our social organization, to the necessities and interests of slavery. We are summoned to surrender. Let us for a moment judge the people of the free States by the meanest criterion we can think of; let us apply appositions to them, which, if applied to ourselves, we would consider an insult.

If the people of the free States were so devoid of moral sense as not to distinguish between right and wrong; so devoid of generous impulses as not to sympathize with the downtrodden and degraded; so devoid of manly pride as to be naturally inclined to submit to everybody who was impudent enough to assume the command; tell me, even in this worst, this most disgusting of all contingencies, could free labor quietly submit to the demands of the slave power so long as it has a just appreciation of its own interests? If we did not care, neither for other people's rights nor for our own dignity, can we submit as long as we care for our own pockets? Surrender the privilege of discussing our social problems without restraint! Be narrowed down to a given circle of ideas, which we shall not transgress! Do we not owe our growth, and prosperity, and power, to that freedom of inquiry which is the source of all progress and improvement?

Surrender the national Territories to slavery! Do we not owe our growth and prosperity to the successful labor of our neighbors just as well as to our own? Shall we consent to be surrounded and hemmed in with thriftless communities, whose institutions retard their growth, and thereby retard our own? Abandon all laws like the homestead bill, tending to establish free labor on our national domain! Shall we thus give up the rights of labor, and destroy the inheritance of our children?

Give up our opposition to the extension of slavery by the conquest of foreign countries! Shall we squander the blood of our sons and the marrow of the land in destructive wars, for the profit of the enemies of free labor, while it is a peaceful development to which we owe our power in the world? Adopt the exclusive economical policy of the planting interest! Shall our mineral wealth sleep undeveloped in the soil? Shall our water powers run idle, and the bustle of our factories cease? Shall the immense laboring force in our increasing population be deprived of the advantage of a harmonious development of all the branches of human labor? Shall we give up our industrial and commercial independence from the world abroad? And what price do they offer to pay us for all our sacrifices, if we submit? Why, slavery can then be preserved! How can we hesitate? Impossible! It cannot be thought of! Even the most debased and submissive of our doughfaces cannot submit to it, as soon as the matter comes to a practical test, and there-

fore the success of the Southern programme will never bring about a final decision of the conflict. Suppose we were beaten in the present electoral contest, would that decide the conflict of interests forever? No! Thanks to the nobler impulses of human nature, our consciences would not let us sleep; thanks to the good sense of the people, their progressive interests would not suffer them to give up the struggle. The power of resistance, the elasticity of free society, cannot be exhausted by one, cannot be annihilated by a hundred defeats. Why? Because it receives new impulses, new inspirations, from every day's work; it marches on in harmony with the spirit of the age.

There is but one way of settling the "irrepressible conflict." It is not by resisting the spirit of the times, and by trying to neutralize its impelling power; for you attempt that in vain; but it is by neutralizing the obstacles which have thrown themselves into its path. There is no other. The irrepressible conflict will rage with unabated fury until our social and political development is harmonized with the irrepressible tendency of the age.

That is the solution which the Republicans propose. Their programme is simple and consistent:

Protection of our natural and constitutional rights.

Non-interference with the social and political institutions existing by the legislation of sovereign States. Exclusion of slavery from the national Territories; they must be free because they are national. [Immense cheering.]

Promotion and expansion of free labor by the homestead bill, and the encouragement of home industry. [Cheering renewed.]

Will this effect a settlement of the conflict? Let the fathers of this Republic answer the question, and I will give you the Southern construction of their policy. In a debate which occurred in the Senate of the United States, on the 23d January, Mr. Mason, of Virginia, said:

"Now, as far as concerns our ancestry, I am satisfied of this—they were not abolitionists. On the contrary, I believe this was their opinion: their prejudice was aimed against the foreign slave trade, the African slave trade; and their belief was, that cutting that off, *slavery would die out of itself, without any act of abolition.* I attempted at one time to show, by the recorded opinions of Mr. Madison, that the famous ordinance of 1787, so far as it prohibited slavery in the Territory north-west of the Ohio, was aimed at the African slave trade, and at that alone; the idea being, *that if they would restrict the area into which slaves would be introduced from abroad, they would, to that extent, prevent the importation of slaves; and that, when it was altogether prevented, the condition of slavery would die out of itself;* but they were not abolitionists, far less within the meaning and spirit of the abolitionists of the present day."

Well, I am willing to accept this, as it stands, and Mr. Mason may certainly be considered a good Southern authority. I will not stop to investigate the depth and extent of the anti-slavery sentiments of such men as Franklin, who was the father of an abolition society, and of Washington, who expressed his desire "to see slavery abolished by law;" I am satisfied with Mr. Mason's admission.

This, then, is what the fathers intended to effect: *to bring about a state of things by which slavery would die out of itself.* What else do we want? "You mean, then," I am asked, "to adopt a policy which will work the peaceful and gradual extinction of slavery." And I answer, "Yes; for, if we do not, we shall have to submit to a policy which will work the gradual extinction of liberty." There is the dilemma. Our answer is understood. If Washington, Madison, and Jefferson, were abolitionists, we are. Mr. Mason says they were not; well, then, we are not, for our policy has been theirs, and theirs has become ours. [Loud cheers.]

Will this policy effect a solution of the conflict? It will; because it will harmonize our social and political development with the tendency of our age, by neutralizing the obstacles that stand in its way.

But I am told that these obstacles refuse to be neutralized. They will resist. Resist by what? By dissolving the Union. The dissolution of the Union! This spectre has so long haunted the imaginations of superstitious people, that it is time at least to anatomize the bloodless body.

They threaten to dissolve the Union. Why? First, because we do not stop the agitation of the slavery question. It is true, we do discuss every social problem that presents itself to our consideration; we agitate it, and we do not mean to stop. And therefore, slaveholders, you will dissolve the Union? Do you think we shall make haste to stop the agitation, to muzzle our mouths and our press, after you have dissolved it? United as we are with you at present, we certainly are not devoid of fraternal sympathy; but let the acrimonious feelings arising from a divorce embitter our relations, will not the agitation, which annoys you now, be a hundred times more dangerous to you then? [Cheers.]

Second. You threaten to dissolve the Union, because we do not show sufficient alacrity in the catching of fugitive slaves. True, we are not much inclined to perform for the slaveholder a menial, dirty service, which he would hardly stoop to do for himself. [Enthusiastic cheering.] And, therefore, you will dissolve the Union! Do you not see that, while now, indeed, a great many slaves escape, the North would, after a dissolution, scorn to surrender a single one? Would not what is now the Canada line be removed right to the banks of the Ohio?

Thirdly, You threaten the dissolution of the Union, because we do not mean to surrender the Territories to slavery. True, we mean to use every constitutional means within our reach to save them for free labor. And, therefore, you will dissolve the Union! Do you think, that after a dissolution we shall contentedly, invite slavery to make itself comfortable on our national domain? As things are now, "champions of free labor," such as Douglas, may occasionally offer you a chance to acquire for slavery a Territory "five times as large as the State of New York," but will that be possible after the Union is dissolved? Mark well what position the North will take, if, by a revolutionary act against our National Government, you should attempt to cut loose from the Union. The Territories are the property of the Union as such; those who in a revolutionary way desert the Union give up their right to the property of the Union. That property, the Territories, will remain where the Union remains, and the slave power would do well first to consider how much blood it can spare, before it attempts to strip the Union of a single square foot of ground. [Tremendous cheers.] Thus, while, according to Judge Douglas, you now have a chance to acquire slave territory by the operation of his "great principle," that chance will be entirely gone as soon as by a secession you give up the least shadow of a right to the property of the Union.

Lastly, you threaten to dissolve the Union, if the North refuses to submit to the exclusive economical policy of the planting interest. You want to establish the commercial and industrial independence of the slaveholding States. For years you have held Southern Conventions, and passed resolutions to that effect. You resolved not to purchase any longer the products of Northern industrial labor, but to build your own factories; not to carry on your exporting and importing trade any longer by Northern ships, but to establish steamship lines and commercial connections of your own. Well enough. Why did you not do it, after having resolved it? Was it want of money? You have an abundance of it. Was it want of determination? Your resolutions displayed the fiercest zeal. What was it, then? And, indeed, the failure is magnificently complete. Senator Mason's homespun coat, sewed with Yankee thread and needle, adorned with Yankee buttons, hangs in the closet, a lone star, in solitary splendor. [Loud laughter.] After trying to establish a large shoe factory for the South, you came after a while to the irresistible conclusion that you must wear Massachusetts shoes and boots, or go barefooted. And even your Norfolk steamships are not launched yet from the dry docks of Southern imagination. [Laughter.] How is this? I will tell you. The very same institution for the protection and perpetuation of which, you want to establish your commercial and industrial independ-

ence is incompatible with commercial and industrial labor and enterprises.

For this there are several excellent reasons. First, that class of your society which rules, and wants to perpetuate its rule, does not consist of working men. The inspiration of regular activity is foreign to their minds. Living upon the forced labor of others, they find their pride in being gentlemen of leisure. But it requires men of a superior organization to make leisure productive; men of the ordinary stamp, who have too much leisure for doing something, will, in most cases, do nothing. But it requires active labor to make us understand and appreciate labor; and we must understand and appreciate labor, in order to be able to direct labor. Hence the slaveholders cannot take the lead in such a commercial and industrial movement, without changing the nature of their condition. But you may object, that they can, at least, encourage commerce and industry, and leave the execution of their plans and wishes to others. Indeed! But you must not forget that, in modern times, the most active and enterprising class of society, as soon as it becomes numerous, will inevitably become the ruling class. How can, therefore, the slaveholders do as you say, without undermining the foundation of their own ascendancy? But it is just that ascendancy by which they mean, not to weaken, but to fortify. Do not bring forward this city of St. Louis as proof to the contrary. Your commerce and your industry are indeed largely developed; although Missouri is a slave State; but do you not see that in the same measure as they rise, the ascendancy of the slave power disappears? [Repeated cheering.] Thus this has become a free city on slave soil.

But this is not all. Not only are the slaveholders, as a class, unfit to direct the commercial and industrial movement, but their system of labor is unfit to carry it out. Commerce and industry, in order to become independent, need intelligent labor. In the North, every laborer thinks, and is required to think. In the South, the laborer is forbidden to think, lest he think too much, for thought engenders aspirations. [Laughter and applause.] With us, progress and enterprise derive their main support, their strongest impulses, from the intellectual development of the working classes. We do not dread the aspirations arising from it; it is the source of our prosperity, and, at the same time, of our safety. Our laboring man must be a freeman, in order to be what he ought to be—an intelligent laborer. Therefore, we educate him for liberty by our system of public instruction. In the South, the intellectual development of the laboring classes is necessary for intelligent labor would create aspirations dangerous to your domestic institutions. Your laboring man must be a brute, in order to remain what you want him to be—a slave. Therefore, you withhold from him all

means of intellectual development. Among our farms and workshops there stands an institution, from which our system of labor derives its inspirations; that is, our school-house, where our free laborers are educated. On our plantation-fields there stands another institution, from which your system of labor derives its inspirations; and that is your school-house, where your slaves are clogged. And you speak of establishing the commercial and industrial independence of the slaveholding States! Do you not see that, in order to do this, you must adapt your system of labor to that purpose, by making the laborer intelligent, respectable, and at the same time aspiring? But if, by making the laborer intelligent, respectable, and aspiring, you attempt to force industrial enterprise in a large measure upon the slave States, do you not see that your system of slave labor must yield? To foster commerce and industry in the slave States for the purpose of protecting slavery! Would it not be like letting the sunlight into a room which you want to keep dark? Hence, the slave States can never become commercially and industrially independent as long as they remain slave States. They will always be obliged to buy from others, and others will do their carrying trade. At present, they do their business with friends, who are united to them by bonds of Union. They speak of dissolving that Union; then, as now, they will be obliged to transact the same business with us, their nearest neighbors; for if they could do otherwise, they would have done so long ago. Would they prefer, by the dissolution of the Union, to make enemies of those on whom they will always be commercially and industrially dependent?

Thus, you see, would the dissolution of the Union in all points of dispute defeat the very object for which the South might feel inclined to attempt it. It would effect just the contrary of what it was intended for, and, indeed, if there is a party that can logically and consistently advocate the dissolution of the Union, it is the party of extreme abolitionists, who desire to extinguish slavery, and to punish the South by a sudden and violent crisis. But as to the slave States, as long as they have sense enough to understand their interests, and to appreciate their situation, they may thank their good fortune if they are suffered to stay in the Union with confederates, who are, indeed, not willing to sacrifice their own principles and interests to slavery, but by the radiating influence of their own growth and energy will, at least, draw the Southern States also upon the road of progressive development.

But we are told that the people of the slave States are a warlike race, and that they will gain by force what we are unwilling peaceably to concede. War! What a charm there is in that word for a people of colonels and generals! Well, since that old German monk invented that insignificant black powder, which blew the

strongholds of feudalism into the air, war has done more and more under the head of mathematical sciences. Don Quixote, who, undoubtedly, would have been a hero in the seventh century, would certainly be the most egregious fool in the nineteenth. I have nothing to say about the bravery of the Southern people; for aught I care, they may be braver than they pretend to be; but I invite them candidly to open their eyes, like sensible men.

I will not compare the resources of the South, in men and money, to those of the North, although statistical statements would demonstrate the overwhelming superiority of the latter. We can afford to be liberal, and, for argument sake, admit that the South will equal the North in numbers, and, if they insist upon it, excel us in martial spirit. But it requires very little knowledge of military matters to understand that, aside of numbers, equipment, courage, and discipline, the strength of an army consists in its ability to concentrate its forces, at all times, upon the decisive point. Providence is on the side of the big battalions, said Napoleon. That means, not that victory will always be with the most numerous army, but with that which is always able to appear in strength where the decisive blow is to be struck. An army that is always scattered over a large surface is, properly speaking, no army at all. Even by a much less numerous, but concentrated enemy, it will be beaten in detail, division after division; it is defeated before having lost a man. This is plain.

The South thinks of going to war for the benefit and protection of slavery. But slavery is not merely an abstract principle; slavery consists materially in the individual slaves—in so and so many millions of human chattels scattered over so and so many thousands of square miles. In order to protect slavery, it is essential that the slaveholders be protected in the possession of their slaves.

I say, therefore, that slavery cannot be protected in general without being protected in detail. But how can you protect it in detail? By guarding fifteen hundred miles of Northern frontier and two thousand miles of seacoast against an enemy who is perfectly free in his movements, and, aided by an extensive railroad system, always able to concentrate his forces wherever he pleases? It is impossible; the dullest understanding sees it. It may be said that it will not be necessary; indeed, for the free States, it would not. They may, in order to concentrate their forces, expose their territory, for the damage done by an invasion is easily repaired. The retreating invader cannot carry the liberties of the invaded country away with him. [Cheers.] Not so with slavery. A Northern anti-slavery army, or even a small flying corps, invading a slaveholding State, would perhaps not systematically liberate the slaves; but, at all events, it would hardly squander valuable time and

health in enticing the runaways. The probability, therefore, is, that whosoever a Northern army appears, the slaves will disappear, and slavery with them—at least, for the time being. Invade a free State, and the restoration of liberty, after the attack is repulsed, requires only the presence of freemen. But the restoration of slavery will require capital; that capital consisted principally in the slaves; the slaves have run away, and with them the capital necessary for the restoration of slavery.

The slave States, therefore, cannot expose their territory without leaving unprotected the institution for the protection of which the war was undertaken. They have to cover thousands and thousands of vulnerable points, for every plantation is an open wound, every negro cabin a sore. Every border or seaboard slave State will need her own soldiers, and more too, for her own protection; and where will be the material for the concentrated army? Scattered over thousands of miles, without the possibility of concentration.

Besides, the slave States harbor a dangerous enemy within their own boundaries, and that is slavery itself. Imagine they are at war with an anti-slavery people, whom they have exasperated by their own hostility. What will be the effect upon the slaves? The question is not whether the North will instigate a slave rebellion, for I suppose they will not; the question is, whether they can prevent it, and I think they cannot. But the mere anticipation of a negro insurrection (and the heated imagination of the slaveholder will discover symptoms of a rebellious spirit in every trifle) will paralyze the whole South. Do you remember the effect of John Brown's attempt? The severest blow he struck at the slave power was not that he disturbed a town and killed several citizens, but that he revealed the weakness of the whole South. Let Governor Wise, of Virginia, carry out his threatened invasion of the free States, not with twenty-three, but with 2,300 followers at his heels—what will be the result? As long as they behave themselves, we shall let them alone; but as soon as they create any disturbance, they will be put into the station-house; and the next day we shall read in the newspapers of some Northern city, among the reports of the police court, Henry A. Wise and others, for disorderly conduct, fined \$5. [Loud laughter and applause.] Or, if he has made an attempt on any man's life, or against our institutions, he will most certainly find a Northern jury proud enough to acquit him on the ground of incorrigible mental derangement. [Continued laughter and applause.] Our pictorial prints will have material for caricatures for two issues, and a burst of laughter will ring to the skies from Maine to California. And there is the end of it. But behold John Brown with twenty-three men raising a row at Harper's Ferry—the whole South frantic with terror; the whole State of Virginia in arms;

troops marching and countermarching, as if the battle of Austerlitz was to be fought over again; innocent cows shot at as bloodthirsty invaders, and even the evening song of the peaceful whippoorwills mistaken for the battle cry of rebellion. [Incessant laughter.] And those are the men who will expose themselves to the chances of a war with an anti-slavery people! Will they not look upon every captain as a John Brown, and every sergeant and private as a Coppie or Stevens? They will not have men enough to quiet their fears at home. What will they have to oppose to the enemy? Every township will want its home regiment, and every plantation its garrison; and what will be left for the field army? No sooner will a movement of concentration be attempted, than the morose panic will undo and frustrate it forever. Themistocles might say that Greece was on his ships; a French general might say that the Republic was in his camp; but slavery will be neither on the ships nor in the camp; it will be spread defenceless over thousands of square miles. This will be their situation: either they concentrate their forces, and slavery will be exposed everywhere; or they do not concentrate them, and their strength will be nowhere. They want war? Let them try it! They will try it but once. And thus it turns out, that the very same thing that would be the cause of the war, would at the same time disable them to carry on the war. The same institution that wants protection, will at the same time disarm its protectors. Yes, slavery, which can no longer be defended with arguments, can no longer be defended with arms.

There is your dissolution of the Union. The Southern States cannot desire it, for it would defeat the very objects for which it might be undertaken; they cannot attempt it, for slavery would lay them helpless at the feet of the North. Slavery, which makes it uncomfortable to stay in the Union, makes it impossible for them to go out of it. What then will the South do, in case of a Republican victory? I answer that question with another one: what *can* the South do in case of a Republican victory? Will there be a disturbance? The people of the South themselves will have to put it down. Will they submit? Not to Northern dictation, but to their own good sense. They have considered us their enemies as long as they ruled us; they will find out that we are their friends as soon as we cease to be their subjects. They have dreamed so long of the blessings of slavery; they will open their eyes again to the blessings of liberty. They will discover that they are not conquered, but liberated. Will slavery die out? As surely as freedom will not die out.

Slaveholders of America, I appeal to you: Are you really in earnest when you speak of perpetuating slavery? Shall it never cease? Never? Stop and consider where you are, and in what days you live.

This is the nineteenth century. Never, since mankind has a recollection of times gone by, has the human mind disclosed such wonderful powers. The hidden forces of nature we have torn from their mysterious concealment, and yoked them into the harness of usefulness; they carry our thoughts over slender wires to distant nations; they draw our wagons over the highways of trade; they pull the gigantic oars of our ships; they set in motion the iron fingers of our machinery; they will soon plow our fields and gather our crops. The labor of the brain has exalted to a more bridling and controlling of natural forces the labor of the hand—and you think you can perpetuate a system which reduces man, however degraded, yet capable of development, to the level of a soulless machine?

This is the world of the nineteenth century. The last remnants of feudalism in the old world are fast disappearing. The Czar of Russia, in the fulness of his imperial power, is forced to yield to the irresistible march of human progress, and abolishes serfdom. Even the Sultan of Turkey can no longer maintain the barbarous customs of the Moslem against the pressure of the century, and slavery disappears. And you, citizens of a Republic, you think you can arrest the wheel of progress with your Dred Scott decisions and Democratic platforms? [Enthusiastic cheers.]

Look around you, and see how lonesome you are in this wide world of ours. As far as modern civilization throws its rays, what people, what class of society, is there like you? Cry out into the world, your wild and guilty fantasy of property in man, and every echo responds with a cry of horror or contempt; every breeze, from whatever point of the compass it may come, brings you a verdict of condemnation. There is no human heart that sympathizes with your cause, unless it sympathizes with the cause of despotism in every form. There is no human voice to cheer you on in your struggle; there is no human eye that has a tear for your reverses; no link of sympathy between the common cause of the great human brotherhood and you. You hear of emancipation in Russia, and wish it should fail. You hear of Italy rising, and fear the spirit of liberty should become contagious. Where all mankind rejoices, you tremble. Where all mankind love, you hate. Where all mankind curses, you sympathize.

And in this appalling solitude you stand, alone against a hopeful world, alone against a great century, fighting your hopeless fight, hopeless, hopeless, as the struggle of the Indian against the onward march of civilization. Exhaust all the devices which the inventive genius of despotism may suggest, and yet how can you resist? In every little village school-house, the little children who learn to read and write are plotting against you; in every laboratory of science, in every

machine shop, the human mind is working the destruction of your idol. You cannot make an attempt to keep pace with the general progress of mankind, without plotting against yourselves. Every steam whistle, every puffing locomotive, is sounding the shriek of liberty into your ears. From the noblest intricacies of our hearts, down to sordid greediness of gain, every impulse of human nature is engaged in this universal conspiracy. How can you resist? Where are your friends in the North? Your ever-ready supporters are scattered to the winds as by enchantment, never to unite again. Hear them, trying to save their own fortunes, swear with treacherous eagerness that they have nothing in common with you. And your opponents? Your boasts have lost their charm, your threats have lost their terrors upon them. The attempt is idle to cloak the sorrows of Lazarus with the lion skin of Hercules. We know you. Every one of your boasts is understood as a disguised moan of weakness—every shout of defiance as a disguised cry for mercy. That game is played out. Do not deceive yourselves. This means not only the destruction of a party—it means the defeat of a cause. Be shrewder than the shrewdest, braver than the bravest—it is all in vain; your cause is doomed.

And in the face of all this, you insist upon hugging, with dogged stubbornness, your fatal infatuation? Why not, with manly boldness, swing round into the grand march of progressive humanity? You say it cannot be done to-day. Can it be done to-morrow? Will it be easier twenty, fifty years hence, when the fearful increase of the negro population will have aggravated the evils of slavery an hundred fold, and with it the different ties of its extinction? Did you ever think of this? The final crisis will come, with the inexorable certainty of fate, the more terrible the longer it is delayed. Will you content yourselves with the criminal words, "after me the deluge?" Is that the inheritance you mean to leave to coming generations? an inheritance of disgrace, crime, blood, destruction? Hear me, slaveholders of America! If you have no sense for the right of the black man, no appreciation of your own interests, I entreat, I implore you, have at least pity for your children!

I hear the silly objection, that your sense of honor forbids you to desert your cause. Sense of honor! Imagine a future generation standing around the tombstone of the bravest of you, and reading the inscription: "Here lies a gallant man, who fought and died for the cause—of human slavery." What will the verdict be? His very progeny will disown him, and exclaim: "He must have been either a knave or a fool!" There is not one of you who, if he could rise from the dead a century hence, would not gladly exchange his epitaph for that of the meekest of those who were hung at Charlestown.

dishonorable to give up the errors of yesterday for the truths of to-day? to prevent future disasters by timely reforms? Since when has it ceased to be the highest glory to sacrifice one's prejudices and momentary advantages upon the altar of the common weal? But those who seek their glory in stubbornly resisting what is glorious, must find their end in inglorious misery.

I turn to you, Republicans of Missouri. Your countrymen owe you a debt of admiration and gratitude to which my poor voice can give but a feeble expression. You have undertaken the noble task of showing the people of the North that the slaveholding States them-

selves contain the elements of regeneration; and of demonstrating to the South how that regeneration can be effected. You have inspired the wavering masses with confidence in the practicability of our ideas. To the North you have given encouragement; to the South you have set an example. Let me entreat you not to underrate your noble vocation. Struggle on, brave men! The anxious wishes of millions are hovering around you. Struggle on, until the banner of emancipation is planted upon the capitol of your State, and one of the proudest chapters of our history will read: Missouri led the van, and the nation followed!

1
4