

S P E E C H

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R. W. THOMPSON,

U P O N

THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE SLAVERY QUESTION,

—M A D E—

At a Public Meeting of the People,

I N

Terre-Haute, Indiana,

—O N—

The 11th day of August, 1855.

TERRE-HAUTE, IND.

EXPRESS POWER-PRESS PRINT.

1855.

1891

W. W. THOMPSON

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILL., U.S.A.

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SPEECH

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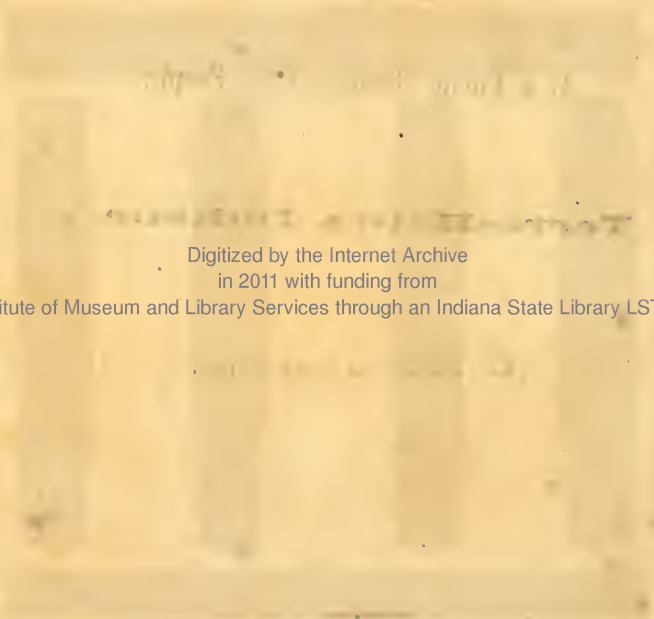
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THE POLITICAL SPEECHES OF W. W. THOMPSON



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CORRESPONDENCE.

TERRE-HAUTE, August 14, 1855.

Dear Sir : The undersigned, your Whig friends and neighbors, who have long been identified with the fortunes of that Party, heard, with great pleasure, the Address delivered by you to a crowded audience, on Saturday last.

Fully sympathizing with you in the sentiments of that Address, and in the high *National* views inculcated by it, we cannot deny to ourselves the pleasure of asking that you furnish a copy of the same for publication. While false teachers are bent on precipitating upon the country, a *purely sectional contest*, against the admonitions of the Father of his Country, and the teachings of the great men of the Whig Party—our CLAYS, and HARRISONS, and TAYLORS—we feel assured that the publication of your Address will add to the love which the People feel for the *Union and Indivisibility of the American States*.

Hoping that it will be in your power to oblige us,

We remain, very truly,

Jacob D. Early,
George W. Clippenger,
Bateman Ross,
William Naylor,
David S. Danaldson,
John W. Jones,
Thomas I. Bourne,
Thomas Dowling,
Charles Groverman,

M. W. Sedam,
Wm. Durham,
James H. Turner,
M. M. Hickcox,
John P. Baird,
Rufus St. John,
C. H. Bailey,
W. J. Ball,
W. R. McKeen.

We were not present, owing to absence from town, but have heard the speech spoken of in the highest terms, and cheerfully concur in the above request.

Albert Lange,
Wm K. Edwards.

TERRE-HAUTE, August 15, 1855.

Gentlemen : Your letter of yesterday, requesting a copy of the speech made by me on Saturday last, for publication, has just been handed me, and I hasten to say to you that I shall endeavor to comply with your request.

The speech, as you are aware, was made altogether without notes, and I may find some difficulty in recalling the train of argument and mode of expression.— But I will endeavor, in writing it out, to do both as nearly as possible.

I beg to assure you that your letter has excited in my mind the most gratifying emotions. At this time, when so many others are inclined to give encouragement

to sectional controversy, it is exceedingly grateful to my feelings to know that the *National* sentiments expressed in my speech, are sympathised with by you. The consciousness that you, my neighbors and friends, with whom I have so long associated in political action, approve of what I said, is the highest reward I desire.

I shall endeavor to furnish you with a copy of the speech, as soon as my business engagements will permit me to get it ready. This may be delayed some days, owing to its great length.

Very Respectfully,

Your obedient serv't.,

R. W. THOMPSON.

Messrs. J. D. EARLY and others.

SPEECH.

FELLOW-CITIZENS: There may be some here, to-day, who think that I shall speak with pleasure. But I beg to assure them that it is not so. I shall experience none whatever, in saying what I think a sense of duty requires me to say. I know that I shall express sentiments from which some personal friends, whose feelings I would not willingly wound, will dissent. But they will excuse me for considering the time to have arrived when personal considerations should not restrain us from discharging our duty to the country.— We are about to be precipitated upon a most important and dangerous political crisis, and our dearest interests are at stake upon its issue. I verily believe that we are advancing towards the very verge of a precipice, beyond which there is a yawning abyss we may not escape, unless we shall retrace our steps, and maintain again those *national* principles which we once cherished with such earnest devotion; unless we shall get back to where the fathers of the Republic stood. If I can aid in turning us all away from this precipice, I shall have accomplished the only object I design. But whether I do so or not, I shall utter the sentiments I really entertain, freely and without reserve. And I can promise you that they are sentiments, not formed to-day or yesterday, but constantly entertained throughout life. They will, therefore, have about them the merit of sincerity, if no other.

I have been puzzled to know why it is, that, at this particular time, when no election, involving national questions, can occur, in this State, for fourteen or fifteen months, it is considered necessary by those who would take the exclusive management of our affairs into their own hands, to have us all mounted upon *new* political platforms; especially when they are multiplying so rapidly that it is almost impossible to compute their number. Without any just or proper occasion for it, we find ourselves in the midst of exciting public discussion, upon political topics, which, more than all others combined, are calculated to excite bad feeling and to convulse the nation. I see no necessity for this. The storm of political controversy will be fierce enough when it shall properly come, and it is not the part of wisdom to plunge into it before we can learn how fiercely it may beat upon us, or whether or no there is a haven in which we may expect to escape its fury. I would, if it were possible, arrest this course of events, and persuade you back again to the points from which some of you have departed; that we may reason together as those who are to share a common destiny and that we may

move onward in the future, as though a single spirit of *nationality* animated us all.

And I am at a loss to know, why we are asked to adopt a political faith, which is, in fact, confined to a single question. The great administrative affairs of the country are all overlooked; its commerce, its manufactures, its internal improvements, and the development of its immense resources, all seem to be forgotten or passed by as things of no moment, in an angry contest for the balance of political power between the two sections of the Union. One question only, and that the most difficult, dangerous and exciting, is kept before us to arouse and inflame our passions, as if *with* slavery our country is destined to be cursed, and withered, and consumed by an almighty power, and *without* it, every thing else of glory and renown, and greatness, shall come to us unbidden. I have not learned our history correctly, if this course does not retard our prosperity, rather than promote it, and if our happiness may not be advanced to a point, higher than it has ever yet reached, if we shall *let this question alone just where it is*. And my chief purpose at present, is to convince you that it is our duty to let it alone.

It is hard, I know, to approach the discussion of the subject of slavery without feeling a sense of embarrassment, at the difficulties which surround it. The very first feeling it excites in the mind is opposition to the idea that one man shall subject another to his will, without his consent. Every man will readily concede that this, as an *abstract* proposition, is opposed to the law of nature, which recognises the universal equality of mankind; and if the proposition were now an *original* one, whether slavery should be introduced here for the *first* time, we should all, every where throughout the country, yield to the influence of this sentiment, and exclude it without hesitation. It is this *abstract* view of the question of slavery, about which our political agitators are so clamorous. They seem to think that their time is mis-spent unless it is employed in fierce denunciation of it, and in announcing general sentiments upon political freedom which are not denied by any body. This is what they call the *moral* view of the question.

But I deny, at the outset, that slavery, as it exists in this country, presents a *moral* question for our consideration, or that we of the *free* States have any just right to discuss it as a *moral* question.—The day for such a discussion has passed by—it passed in the times of our fathers, when our institutions were formed. Had we lived in the Patriarchal age of Abraham, when, with his hundreds of slaves he occupied the plains of Canaan, and when a law promulged by him might have governed the world, we might have employed our powers of eloquence and persuasion to induce him to abolish the slavery that existed in his dominions. But as none of our moral reformers lived in his day, to instruct him in the duties belonging to his condition, he seems, and that without hesitation, so far as we are informed, to have permitted slavery to become a part of the political institutions which he built up, under the immediate

protection of Providence. He allowed it to pass down to Isaac and to Jacob and to the Patriarchs who followed them, by way of inheritance, and when Moses was called as the great religious and political leader of Israel, he found it existing amongst the Jews.—It was not *Negro* slavery, so far as we know, but it was the weak reduced to servitude by the strong—the inferior subjected to the will of the superior. It was servitude rendered without consent. It violated natural rights. It was accompanied with all the horrors of buying and selling, and where the slave was a stranger and not a Jew, it continued for life. In this form it existed in the days of Moses, and yet there is not one word in all his writings that condemns it as *immoral*. It existed as a *political* institution—intertwined with the Jewish polity, and as such, *he let it alone*, except so far as he *regulated* it by law. When God gave him the law amid the lightnings and thunders of Sinai, he did not direct him to *abolish slavery*. He commanded that *man-stealing* should be punished with death, but immediately following the delivery of the tables upon which he had written the decalogue with his finger, he declared the law in relation to the *purchase of slaves*. And in the Levitical code it is more fully and plainly written that the heathen “shall be your *bond-men forever*.” How could all this have been, if Moses had considered it his duty to *abolish* slavery, as a violation of the law of morality, and, therefore, of the law of God? If he had so thought, and the question had been with him an original one, and not already fixed and settled by the Jewish people, would he have permitted it to exist? God, through him, by the word of his power, might have broken the bonds from every Jewish slave and have made him as free as his master. But he did not. He permitted slavery to continue, not only during the days of Moses,—but those of Joshua and all the Judges and Governors who followed him—even down to the coming of his Son. And when the Saviour came upon the earth, he found it existing, just as it existed in the days of Moses. And he left it, when he ascended to his Father, just as he had found it. The Jews had looked for his coming, as a temporal Governor, but he came only to teach the heart, and to set before them the example of a holy life. He did not come as a *politician* to interfere with the civil and internal policy of those amongst whom he sojourned. He subjected himself to the higher powers of government, without murmur, and uttered no complaint against their mode of exacting obedience from himself or others. Yet, in the great moral code which he has left us, there is not a word to be found, in denunciation of slavery, nor of any other political institution. I do not mean to say or to infer that he justified its existence. Not at all. He found it existing and he let it alone. And his example of *non-intervention* should not be lost upon us. We have no part in the State Governments where it exists. Our national compact of Government provides for its existence, where we of the free States cannot reach it, and is it not folly, more than folly, for us to be disturbing ourselves about an abstract question of morals, which

do't concern us, for which we are, in no way, answerable, and which the civilized world has settled many thousand years ago!

And the Apostles, following after the example of their Master, let slavery alone as he had done. They did not forbid it as immoral, or advise the master to let the bond-men go free. When Onesimus, a slave, escaped from Philemon, his master, and went to St. Paul, at Rome, he did not advise him not to return to slavery—he did not attempt to conceal him—he did not contrive to send him still farther from his master, that he might enjoy the sweets of personal freedom, as some of our own modern *philanthropists* would have done. Far from it. He knew that the law made Onesimus a slave, and that his services, as such, were due to his lawful master, and, as a good citizen, he obeyed the law, and *sent the slave back to his master*. It was no part of his mission to oppose the law. He, like his great prototype, was no politician; to teach men disobedience to authority. But, on the other hand, he counselled them to be subject to the higher powers, and laid down rules of conduct for both master and slave—commanding the one to protection and the other to obedience. I would advise those who have the means and curiosity to do so, to look into what is said by the ablest and most orthodox commentators upon the Bible, on this subject, and especially what is said by Dr. Adam Clark—that they may see whether slavery is considered by them to be a *sin*, and whether there have not sprung up, in our day, certain new men, wiser and better than they, who would interpolate the word of God with a new faith. For one, while I would not *create* slavery—while I would do nothing to extend it—while every principle of my nature, rebels at the idea of involuntary servitude, because it is against the law of nature, yet I repudiate, utterly and entirely, this new idea that we commit a *sin* by letting slavery remain in this country—a doctrine which would consign even Washington himself to the regions of the damned.

And slavery thus let alone, by the great lights of the christian world, has had a continual existence since their day, in almost every civilized nation upon earth—passing down, throughout the whole of them, from the Patriarchal age to the present time. It has had this continued existence, because God, in his Providence, has made one race of men superior to another—because he has made us all the creatures of interest, and because he has permitted us to violate other laws of nature without making it an offence against him.—Why he has done this, it is not necessary for me to inquire. I take his dispensations in this instance, as I do in a thousand others, without being enabled to fathom his purpose. It is enough for me to know what he has declared and what he has permitted. But if I may, without presumption, attempt to look into his motive for permitting African slavery to exist in this country, I would say, that he has designed it as the means of elevating the African race, and of ultimately raising them up to christianity and civilization.—Through its instrumentality, the native and degraded African, a miserable slave at home, has been brought in contact with our peo-

ple and our institutions, and this contact has raised him up to a condition of comparative superiority. Through him, sent back to his original home, we have conveyed the light of our institutions to the darkest spot upon earth, and it may be, that, in his own good time, Providence will permit the brightness which, through our means, shines on Liberia now, to dispel the thick cloud of degradation from the whole continent of Africa. But when this result will be worked out, neither you nor I can tell; for none of us can look forward, so as to know what even a single day may bring forth. If that interpretation of prophecy which assigns to the millenium a near approach, be the true one, there may be those now living who will witness this great result. But I have no speculation even, to offer upon the subject—except to say, that, in all human probability, until the millenium shall come, slavery, in some form or other, will continue to exist amongst the nations of the earth.

At the discovery of this continent, there were no slaves in America, but the adventurous European had scarcely planted himself here, before, feeling his superiority above the native Indian inhabitants, he began the policy of subjecting them to bondage. The Spaniards in South America made slaves of thousands of them, and forced them to labor, against their will. But there were amongst the Spaniards of that day, some men who had obtained distinction as philanthropists, who thought they saw, as, in fact, they must have seen, that the Indian was entitled to a higher destiny than that of servitude—that nature had endowed him with superior faculties, with the highest courage and with the most ennobling qualities. *Las Casas* was the most distinguished amongst these, and he visited the court of Ferdinand, to persuade that great sovereign to consent to the introduction into Spanish America, of slaves from Africa, so that they might take the place of the Indian slaves, and thus release that nobler race from bondage. Ferdinand, in the end, consented, and thus the *slave trade* began—that abominable trade upon which the civilized world has set the curse of its condemnation, and which all concede that the law of God denounced when it declared, that “he that *stealeth* a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” And it was pursued as a source of profit not only by the Spaniards, but by the Dutch and English. By the latter it was prosecuted with the greatest possible industry and perseverance, under the special protection of the Government of Great Britain. I have now before me, but have not time to read it, an account of this trade as it existed in England, before the American Revolution, which I have taken from a leading and standard work—Postlethwayt’s *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, published in 1766. He shows, in a few words, that the government of Great Britain considered the colonies as opening a new field for the enlargement of the slave trade, and that as the supplying them with slaves would be “*a continual source of wealth*” to all engaged in it, the profits were secured, by chartered grants, to “the merchants or London, Liverpool and Bristol;”—the descendants of whom

are now living in luxurious ease upon the wealth secured by this trade, while they profess to be perfectly horrified at the idea that any man should consent to keep a human being in bondage! In the year 1752, during the reign of George II—a company was chartered by Parliament, especially to carry on this trade. It was composed of more than a hundred members, and besides these, there were more than one hundred and fifty others engaged in it. Mr. Postlethwayt gives a list of eighty eight vessels used for this purpose, with the capacity to transport 26,050 slaves. And these were the means employed by England to force slavery upon us. And she employed them without scruple. Mr. Hume, in his history, tells us that both the Germans and Anglo-Saxons commenced the practice, as early as 1066, of, selling themselves and their children into slavery. And, therefore, the English descendants of the Anglo-Saxons had no conscientious scruples at stripping the African from his home and selling him to the colonies, rather than to continue the slavery of their own race. The colonies remonstrated against the traffic. They denounced it, in almost every form and mode of denunciation. Yet they could not arrest it. It was continued until slavery was introduced and became a part of the political institutions of all of them. The first slave-ship that ever landed a cargo of slaves within what are now the United States, was owned, says Mr. Bancroft, by “a member of the church of Boston”—the next was owned by the Dutch of Holland and landed in James River, in Virginia. The New England colonies were unsuited to slavery. The climate was too cold and the country too exposed. The soil was not sufficiently fertile or the country sufficiently extended to justify its cultivation by slave labor, and the slaves that were owned there, were carried to the South and sold to those who were engaged in the cultivation of tobacco, rice, sugar and cotton. The climate of the South was more congenial to the negro—it was like that of his native country to which he had been accustomed. And these were the reasons, why slavery found its way to the South and was confined there. It was to the interest of the South to have slaves, and to the interest of the North to get rid of them. Therefore, the North sold them and the South bought them. That was the well understood and avowed motive on both sides. It was a plain business affair—that involved no question of *morals*, and did not excite the horror of our plain and honest old fathers. Did they live in this day, they would shudder at the curses bestowed upon them, and would wonder at their utter ignorance of the principles of right and justice. But the “*old fogies*” have long since paid the debt of nature, and have not been permitted, except from the spirit land, to know how their own descendants calumniate their memory.

And thus introduced, it existed here, when our National Independence was declared in 1776—our fathers being compelled to deal with it as they found it. To suppose that they intended, by saying that “all men are born free and equal,” to declare that slavery was *immoral* and could not, therefore, legally exist in this country, is

to suppose that they intended to stultify themselves before the very nations to whom they submitted the justice of their revolt. In that sentiment, they spoke only of freedom and equality by the natural law; but, at the same time, by the act of forming their government as they did, they enunciated the *political* truth that a republican government could exist and yet tolerate the institution of slavery. They knew very well that in every state of society and in every form of government, the natural law is invaded and natural rights are surrendered, and they entered upon no idle crusade against the mode in which these things have been done from a time "to the contrary of which the memory of man runneth not." They dealt with the world and with society as they found it, and when they founded our infant government, with slavery covering half its territory, were not ashamed to leave the justness of their determination to Almighty God, and submit the issue of their struggle to his direction. The North had no slaves and the South had—yet they mingled their blood upon the common battle fields of both North and South. Slavery furnished no argument to the North against a union with the South, and thus in the convention that formed the present constitution of the United States, the representatives of all the States met upon grounds of equality, to act for each and all.—And it is well for us to observe their action, that by worshipping at a shrine so pure and uncontaminated, our own patriotism may be refreshed. For it is true, disguise it as you may, that we have "*fast men*" amongst the politicians of these days; men who set at bold defiance all that the wisdom of the past has consecrated, and who seem resolved that they will not be hampered in their progress, by even the recollection of our common ancestry. It may not be amiss to let such men know, that there is a mesmeric chord still passing from the American heart back to the days of the Revolution, and that the pulsation of that heart still beats, in earnest and patriotic response, to the admonitions of our fathers.

At the time of the meeting of the National Convention, in 1787, there were two great leading interests in this country—commerce and agriculture. The people of the New England States had been induced, from the sterility of their soil, to invest their wealth in commerce, and therefore this interest was peculiarly guarded by them. Those of the South were engaged in planting—because their soil and climate invited it—and therefore they were agricultural.—How far any rivalry may have existed between these two interests before the Convention met, it is not important to enquire, but it is enough for my present purpose to know, that, in the Convention, this rivalry exhibited itself: perhaps, as much on one side as the other, though that is not material. It will be recollected that, after a general debate of more than a month, in the Convention, upon the several plans of Government proposed, it was finally referred to a Committee of five members to prepare and report a Constitution:—being called the Committee of Detail. This Committee was elected by ballot and was composed of one member from South Carolina, one

from Virginia, one from Massachusetts, one from Connecticut, and one from Pennsylvania—thus giving the majority to the *free States*. On the 6th August 1787, this Committee reported a plan of Government, and I desire to call your attention to two of its provisions, that you may understand fully how these two opposing interests of which I have spoken were harmonized—how, in other words, some of the great compromises of the Constitution were made. I beg that you will observe, not particularly what I say on this subject, but the facts as they are recorded both in Elliotts Debates and the Madison papers.

The *fourth* section of the *seventh* article of this reported plan, was in these words:

“Sec. 4. No tax or duty shall be laid by the Legislature on articles exported from any State, *nor on the migration or importation of such persons as the several States shall think proper to admit; nor such migration or importation be prohibited.*”

This, you will observe, provided for the continuance of the *slave trade* without limitation—although it was reported from a Committee, a majority of whom were from the *free States*. It took away from Congress the power to prevent the importation of slaves into any of the States, by providing that it should neither tax nor prohibit the importation—thus leaving to the States to do, what they already had the power to do—to carry on the importation at their pleasure. When this section came up for consideration, the first part of it, relating to an export duty, was agreed to,—but a motion was made by *Mr. Luther Martin of Maryland* to amend the remainder, by giving Congress the power to put a “*prohibition or tax on the importation of slaves.*” This motion came, therefore, from a southern man and a slave-holder; and was a proposition to provide a plan for the *suppression* of the slave trade, in the place of the plan for its *perpetual continuance* that had been reported by the Committee of Detail. And it was sustained by the mover, expressly upon the ground that it was “inconsistent with the principles of the Revolution, and dishonorable to the American character.” As we had comparatively few slaves in this country at that time, here was a proper occasion for determining the question, at once and forever, whether, by the sanction of the National Government about to be formed, any more should be added, by importation, to the number already here. It was distinctly presented by the motion and could not be escaped. There was no attempt to escape it, but the question was met directly and at once. And it was met, too, in a discussion, which it would be well for some of our modern *moralists* to read—especially that part of it, in which *Mr. Ellsworth of Connecticut*, afterward Chief Justice of the United States, said, that “the *morality* or wisdom of slavery are considerations belonging to the States themselves;” and that other part, wherein *Mr. Roger Sherman of Connecticut* declared, that the “public good did not require” that the States should be prevented from importing slaves; and still that other part of it, wherein *Mr. Elbridge Gerry of Mas-*

sachusetts, said that "they had nothing to do with the conduct of the States as to slaves." All these gentlemen were great men—very great men—and represented Northern constituencies. But they did not fear to say what they felt, and I have never heard that their sentiments were then disapproved by the States they represented.—While they opposed Mr. Martin's motion and acted in concert with the representatives of the states of South Carolina and Georgia, in favor of the continuance of the *slave trade*, they were opposed by *Mr. Martin of Maryland*, *Mr. Mason of Virginia*, (who denounced it as an "*infernal traffic originated in the avarice of British merchants*," which he said had already been prohibited in Virginia, Maryland, and, North Carolina;) by *Mr. Dickinson of Delaware*, and by *Mr. Langdon of New Hampshire*. All these gentlemen, save one, were from *slave States*—yet they were decided and earnest against the continuance of the slave trade, finding formidable opposition to their policy and sentiments from the extreme *North!* This I hope you will observe, for I shall have occasion to recur to it again.

While the debate was going on, and before it had produced any practical result, a proposition was made by *Mr. Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania*, to refer "the whole subject" to a Committee, "including the clauses relating to taxes on exports and to a *navigation act*." "*These things*," said he, "*may form a bargain among the Northern and Southern States*." There had, as yet, been no bargain formed. The two extremes of the Union, had not yet come together, though, it is evident, that what was done by the Northern gentlemen I have referred to, was done with the hope of bringing about concert between them. The clause in relation to navigation had not yet been acted on, and, therefore, the Northern men could not know what might be the fate of their commercial interests. Nor could the men of the extreme south, who were anxious that the States should not be forbidden to carry on the slave trade, know what might be the result of their proposition. Therefore, both these interests were embraced in the motion of Mr. Morris, that they might form the basis of an arrangement or compromise; a *bargain* as he called it. That you may see how this was to be effected I will read the article in relation to navigation, to which the North was opposed. It was Section 6, article 7, and was in these words:

"No navigation act shall be passed, without the assent of two thirds of the members present in each House."

In debating the proposition of Mr. Morris, *Mr. Gorham of Massachusetts* distinctly announced the ground upon which the Eastern States stood in the Convention. He said—"he desired it to be remembered, *that the Eastern States had no motive to Union, but a Commercial one*. They were able to protect themselves. They were not afraid of external danger, and did not need the aid of the Southern States." These sentiments showed clearly, that the commercial interests of New England would furnish the basis of a *bargain*, as Mr. Morris had suggested, and his proposition was, ac-

cordingly, adopted. The whole matter was referred—both in reference to the slave trade and a navigation act—to a Committee composed of one from each State represented in the Convention, and, in their hands, both questions were placed.

On the 24th August, this Committee reported a Compromise upon which they had agreed, in reference both to the slave trade and a navigation act. This was the report:

“Strike out so much of the fourth Section as was referred to the Committee, and insert. ‘The migration or importation of such persons as the several States now existing, shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Legislature prior to 1800, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such migration or importation at a rate not exceeding the average of the duties laid on imports.’

“The 5th Section [in relation to a capitation tax,] to remain as in the Report.”

“The 6th Section [in relation to a navigation act,] to be stricken out,”

This was the bargain, so far as these two propositions were concerned. By it, the extreme Southern States were to secure the slave trade for *twelve* years, and the extreme Eastern or New England States were to secure protection to their Commerce—which Mr. Gorham said, was their object in going into the Convention. It was well understood, because it was so declared, that neither of them would agree to any form of National Government which did not accommodate its local and sectional interests; and, therefore, the bargain was made, in good faith. But, in the form in which it was reported from the Committee it was not acceptable to South Carolina and Georgia, and when it came up for consideration, a motion was made by *Genl. Pinckney of South Carolina*, to amend the Section reported by striking out the words—“*the year 1800*” and inserting the words, “*the year 1808*”—so as to continue the slave trade *twenty* instead of *twelve* years. The motion was seconded by *Mr. Gorham of Massachusetts* and opposed by *Mr. Madison of Virginia*. How strange it seems, *now*, that *Massachusetts* was then in favor of and *Virginia* opposed to continuing the *slave trade*! Yet it is the truth of a history which the virulence of faction cannot assail. Mr. Madison spoke of it as “dishonorable to the American character,” and fully supported what his colleague, Mr. Mason, had said, when he denounced it as an “infernal traffic.” But this Southern opposition—this *Virginia* opposition to the continuance of the slave trade—although it came from such men as Washington, Madison, Randolph, Mason, Blair, and Wythe—did not avail any thing against the *bargain* that had been made. In despite of it, the proposition to extend the trade to 1808, was adopted by the vote of seven States to four. *New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut* voted with the Southern States for the extension of the time to *twenty* years, while *New Jersey, Pennsylvania Delaware and Virginia* were the only States that voted against it. This test vote having been taken, the clause as it now stands in the Constitution was agreed to; thus bringing into this country the slaves which twenty years of importation would accumulate; with the consent and by the votes of the three

great New England States, *Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut!* How strong must have been their anxiety to form a Federal Union, when they could have paid such a price as this for protection to their Commerce! And how irresistible is the obligation now resting upon their descendants to abide by all the consequences of the bargain. I will not yet believe that the *people* of New England will seek to be released from this compact which their fathers made. They have too much reverence for the past, to be thus driven, by demagogues and politicians into acts of hostility to a Union formed under the circumstances referred to.

When it was objected to that part of the report which had reference to the duty to be paid upon the importation,—that it was “acknowledging *men to be property*, by taxing them as such under the character of slaves” it was distinctly announced by *Mr. Rufus King of Massachusetts* and *Mr. Langdon of New Hampshire*—both of whom were on the Committee—that they “*considered this as the price of the first part.*” I hope you will observe this language—for we hear much said now about there being no such thing as *property in men*. You will perceive, however, that Northern men did not so understand it in the Convention, but that the recognition of the doctrine that *slaves were property* was the price they paid for the Union and for the protection they secured to their commerce. Upon its being stated by *Gen. Pinckney of South Carolina*—who was also on the Committee—that *Mr. King* and *Mr. Langdon* had truly stated the bargain, the Compromise was ratified by the Convention, with the understanding expressed by those gentlemen as to its effect and extent. And that was the first feature of the Compromise that was to benefit the South.

Afterwards the proposition to strike out the 6th Section, for the benefit of the North, came up, and, while it was under consideration, *Gen. Pinckney* explained the whole nature of the Compromise. His remarks are too important to be omitted. He said—

“It was the true interests of the *Southern States* to have *no regulation of Commerce*, but considering the loss brought on the *Eastern States* by the Revolution, *their liberal conduct towards the views of South Carolina*, and the interest the weak Southern States had in being united with the strong Eastern States, he thought it proper that no fetters should be imposed on the power of making Commercial regulations, and that his constituents, though prejudiced against the Eastern States, would be reconciled to this liberality. He had, himself, he said, prejudices against the Eastern States before he came here, but would acknowledge that he had found them as *liberal and candid as any men whatever.*”

What was done in the Convention to change, so suddenly, the views and opinions of *Gen. Pinckney* in relation to Eastern men? What was the *liberality* of which he spoke? *Mr. Madison* explains it, in a note to this debate, where he says:

“He” [*Gen. Pinckney*,] “*meant the permission to import slaves*. An understanding on the two subjects of *navigation and slavery*, had taken place between *those parts of the Union*, which explains the vote on the motion depending, as well as the language of *Gen. Pinckney* and others.”

After this explanation of the motives for adopting the Compro-

mise, the compact with the North was carried out by the South, by the unanimous agreement to strike out the 6th Section—as the North desired. And that being done, Mr. Butler of South Carolina, in still further execution of the compact or bargain, moved an additional clause to the Constitution to secure the delivery of fugitive slaves when they should escape from the slave to the free States. I hope you will observe these facts closely—for they are important. Mr. Butler's proposition was moved *on the same day* on which the 6th Section of the 7th article was stricken out, and directly after that was done, as every member of the Convention knew that the right to import slaves amounted to nothing, if they could escape into the free States and thereby be released from service, for, by the common law, their escape into the free States would have made them free. And it was *unanimously* agreed to, in substance, as it now stands in the Constitution, and in these words:

“If any person bound to service or labor in any of the United States, shall escape into another State, he or she shall not be discharged from such service or labor, in consequence of any regulations subsisting in the State to which they escape, but shall be delivered up to the person justly claiming their service or labor.”

Mr. Luther Martin, in his celebrated letter to the Legislature of Maryland, after the adjournment of the Convention, when speaking of this compromise on the subject of slavery, says:

“I found the Eastern States, notwithstanding their aversion to slavery, were very willing to indulge the Southern States, at least with a temporary liberty to prosecute the *slave trade*, provided the Southern States would, in their turn, gratify them, by *laying no restriction on navigation acts*; and after a very little time the Committee, by a great majority, agreed on a report, by which the general government was to be *prohibited from preventing the importation of slaves* for a limited time, and *the restrictive clause relative to navigation acts was to be omitted.*”

And Mr. Madison, speaking, afterwards, in the Virginia Convention, said of the clause relating to fugitive slaves:—“*This clause was expressly inserted to enable owners of slaves to reclaim them;*” to secure, said he, “that *property* which we now possess.” And Mr. Iredell of North Carolina, in the Convention of that State, explained why the word *slave* was not used in the Constitution. He said:

“Though the word *slave* be not mentioned, this is the meaning of it. The Northern delegates, owing to their particular scruples upon the subject of slavery, did not choose the word *slave* to be mentioned.”

I have been thus particular in presenting you with these facts in our early history that you may see and understand fully the true nature and extent of the Compromises of the Constitution in relation to slavery; that you may see that the Constitution could not have been formed without them—and, more than all, that you may see how strongly and sacredly they are still binding upon all parts of the Union and upon all classes of our people. It is impossible to escape their effect or their meaning. They are plain and palpable facts; that can be no more disputed than they can be avoided. The framers of the Constitution understood them, and while they lived there was only here and there a demagogue bold

and reckless enough to attempt a perversion of their meaning. But now that these great men, with the father of his country at their head, have been called away to receive the reward of their patriotism and are no longer here to rebuke those who would assail them, our ears are continually saluted with idle and vapid declamation about a "higher law" that is above the solemn compact which they made. They were not only great men, but they were good men; as true to their own integrity and the honor of their country as the needle to the pole. We teach our children to revere their memories with a devotion but little less than that with which we teach them to reverence God. They constitute the pride and glory of our country. And, in my judgment, it is almost sacrilege to charge them that in making the compact I have named, they were guilty of an act of *immorality*. If slavery in a *National* sense, is immoral—if it is a violation of the law of God—then they were guilty of treason against Heaven itself. And this is the effect of the whole abolition argument. Phillips and Garrison and all that school of fanatics understand it so, and, to be consistent, they so declare; but those less bold, who have not yet been permitted to enter the inner chamber of the abolition court, while they do not directly and openly avow these sentiments, yet cannot escape the consequences of the fact, that their position and associations endorse and approve them.

These men charge upon the *South* what they call the sin and curse of slavery, and claim that it is the high destiny and duty of the *North* to wipe off the foul blot from our national escutcheon. Now, although I might with great propriety as one of the sons of the South—proud of my ancestry and incapable of forgetting the home of my youth—enter upon her defence, yet I will not, because she does not need it. To borrow the language of Mr. Webster: "There she is—behold her and judge for yourselves. There is her history: the world knows it by heart. The past, at least, is secure." But I will say to my New England friends who often tauntingly charge the South alone with the responsibility for this blot upon our institutions, that *their* ancestors and not *mine* fixed it there. At every stage of the controversy in the Convention, *New England favored the continuance of the slave trade* while my native State of *Virginia* opposed it with all the power of her great men who were there. Had New England voted with Virginia, the twenty years of slave importation would have been cut off, and there then, in all probability, would, by this time, have been very few, if any, slaves in the United States. How many were brought here within those twenty years? They and their descendants constitute, doubtless, the great bulk of the present slave population of the South, and to their existence we are indebted to *New England votes!* I do not speak it in censure of New England—for my feelings towards her are such as to forbid that I should speak unkindly of her. But I utter only a fact of history,

which is necessary to be known that we may see how slavery became so extended in the United States. The man who would now declare the wish that slavery should be extended over a single foot of territory where it does not exist, would be pronounced by the descendants of these New England Statesmen, as fit only to be an outcast from their association and as a walking libel upon the name of American. Their terms of denunciation against such a man are violent and unmeasured, and they, in their madness, consign him, at once, to "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." And yet the very men from whom they descended—the great statesmen of New England, who gave renown and brightness to her early history—made a compact to extend it, and voted to extend it, by sanctioning the bondage of, perhaps, not less than a million and a half of the slaves now in the South! Do they not rudely and rashly assail the memory of these statesmen? Do they not forget that a large share of the glory of New England comes from these early patriots, who laid the foundation of her institutions and helped to build up the present Union? Without those Statesmen and without this Union, New England might now have been the dependent colony of a foreign prince—her churches, her school-houses, her domestic altars might have been torn down—and her Puritan greatness might have passed away to be remembered no more forever. And will not her sons who now sit in so much happiness and prosperity upon her hills and in her valleys—who have mingled with our people every where, in every part of the Union—who are distinguished for intelligence and enterprise—will they not cherish a remembrance of these things? For the sake of the Union, will they not remember them? It will not do for them to say that they cannot justify the *wrong* their fathers did, and that their consciences bind them to resist and denounce it. They cannot thus escape the responsibility of their position. I told you that I did not consider the question of slavery a *moral* question, in this country, and here I repeat it. I have shown you the *compact* that was made in regard to it, between the North and South, and you know that upon this compact the Union was founded. Now, it is that compact which makes the question of slavery, peculiarly and emphatically, a *political* question, and not a *moral* one. Morality has nothing to do with it, except that it binds both North and South to the compact. You men of the North cannot escape the obligation. Your fathers pledged their faith to its performance, and "the recording angel" wrote down the pledge in Heaven. They never shrank from its execution. Like patriots and honest men as they were, they pledged their honor for its fulfillment, and they redeemed the pledge. While you inherit their names, their fame, their glory and all that they possessed, and boast of the inheritance, do you not likewise inherit the obligation of obedience to their political contract with their brethren and with yours? When were you released from this obligation? What

tribunal having the power of remission, granted you a dispensation to disobey it? Here is the contract,—plainly written,—clearly defined,—well understood;—it has not a word of ambiguity about it. Your fathers upon the one side, living in the North, and my fathers, upon the other side, living in the South, made this contract,—this *political bargain*. They put it into the Constitution,—they made it a part of the fundamental law,—and provided and declared that it should be binding upon them and all their children after them, throughout all time. They made no reservations, mental or otherwise, but openly announced that it was fairly and honestly made, on both sides. And, now, with that contract in my hand, I call upon you to stand by it and to execute it even with your lives. I speak not for the South,—for I have no authority to speak for her,—but I speak for the Union. And in the name of the Union—in the name of the past,—in the name of your fathers,—in the name of all that is sacred in the pledges of patriotism and honor, I call upon you men of the North, to *stand to the compact*, to abide its terms, and to let no miserable faction, in your name, assail the Constitution that contains it. As men, as honorable men, as the sons of honorable sires, you are bound to do it. You have the *power* to disregard it, I concede. You may forget the honor and even the names of your ancestry. You may even tear, with sacrilegious hands, from New England history, the pages that record their honorable and patriotic deeds. You may declare the contract cancelled, and set it aside. You may withdraw the North from a union with slave states, or you may force the South out of the Union. You may do all this, and even more,—for the South is numerically weak, and the North is numerically strong. But I beg you to recollect that there is yet in Heaven, a God of justice, who rules the destinies of men, and before whom the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Before his tribunal you must answer for the penalty of the violated bond. And when you of the North, shall be summoned there to meet the accusation of having forced the bonds of this union asunder, recollect—I pray you, recollect, that your sires will be there,—that the compact they made for you will be there,—that the proof of its violation will be there,—and that the avenging arm of justice will be there.

Talk not to me about the *wrong* that you say your fathers did, to the cause of humanity, when they made this compact. They did no wrong, and you asperse their memory by the charge against them that they did. They did an act which, for sublime grandeur, was never equalled amongst the governments of the world. They gathered together the atoms that were floating through a political chaos, and moulded them into a form of government, the most beautiful that the world ever saw. They trusted in Divine Providence, who directed the work of their hands, and when that work was finished, God, looked out upon it and “saw that it was good.”

I beseech you that you do not mar its beauty,—that you do not soil the lofty structure, but that you let it stand, as it has stood since the days of your fathers, with its pillars deeply planted in our soil—every where, both North and South,—that the world, by our example, may yet be led to throw off the shackles of political oppression.

But you say that it is the South that threatens to go out of the Union, and if she will go, let her go. The South loves the Union, as well as the North. She has more than once, and upon many a battle field, mingled her blood with the blood of the North, in defence of the Union, and if an alien foe to its integrity shall ever assail it, while it exists, she will do so again. She will forget her own wrongs, if she has them, to defend, with the life of her best sons, the common honor of the whole country. She does not desire to go out of the Union. But she came into it upon terms of *political equality* and when you seek to degrade her,—to mock her institutions, which you of the North, helped her to create,—to assail her honor and her integrity which are as dear to her as life,—when you seek to place her in dependence upon your power or your bounty, in violation of your constitutional compact, shall she stand still and submit to the degradation without murmur or complaint? She would be faithless to the admonitions of her great statesmen, if she did. The North would not do it. The North would not remain in a Union, where she had to be disgraced and degraded. The North would not submit to indignity and to contumely and reproach. But I propose to refer to another portion of our past history to show, that when the North supposed her *interest* merely, not her honor, to be assailed by the Federal Union, she, herself, proposed and seriously meditated its dissolution. And this will also enable us to see and understand, a little better, the origin of the present controversy for political power, between the two sections of the country. Bear with patience the tediousness of this detail—for these are times when the great danger to be feared, is, that the ship of state will be carried too far away from the course to which she was accustomed, when she had true and faithful men at her helm.

The two great interests which existed in this country, at the formation of the constitution,—commerce and agriculture,—continued to exercise influence over the two sections of the Union, after the Constitution went into effect. What was deemed necessary for New England commerce, was supposed to be injurious to Southern agriculture, and the struggle for ascendancy between these two interests begun at an early period. Virginia as a leading Southern and agricultural State, through her great statesmen of that day, took the lead in that system of measures which was calculated to advance the interests of agriculture. She did not desire to oppress commerce, but claimed that agriculture was the great leading interest upon which all the others depended and to which the

country would have to look for ultimate and permanent prosperity. She saw this, even before the Constitution was formed, and in 1784, in response to the call of the old confederation, ceded her immense territory in the North West to the United States, upon the express condition that it should be laid out into new States. She knew well enough, even at that early day, that our institutions would spread themselves throughout the valley of the Mississippi, and therefore she attached that condition to the grant. But it was not until the administration of Mr. Jefferson, that important discoveries were beginning to be made in regard to the immense resources of this valley. He initiated many of the means of these discoveries, and soon became satisfied that here, in the territory granted by Virginia to the United States, would, in the end, be the great field of agricultural enterprise. He set on foot, in 1803, the expedition of Lewis and Clarke, by which the country between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean was first explored, and it became a leading and favorite measure of policy with him, and with *Southern* Statesmen under his lead, to foster and protect the interest of this valley by the Federal authority. But he saw,—with that far reaching sagacity for which he was distinguished,—that, in the then condition of the country, the produce to be raised here could find no market. There were no rail-roads or canals or steam-boats, by means of which it could reach the Atlantic Sea-board, and the mouth of the Mississippi river, as well as its whole western shore, to its very source, was owned by a foreign power. He, therefore, purchased *Louisiana* from Napoleon, not only for the benefit of the Union, but especially for the benefit of the agricultural interests of the North West. This was the avowed and chief object of its purchase, and the question of slavery had nothing to do with it. He met with opposition from the North, especially New England,—for you all know how angrily the contest was carried on between the North under the lead of the elder Adams, and the South under the lead of Mr. Jefferson. It was not a contest about slavery. It was a struggle between the commercial and agricultural interests, as to which should control the policy of the government. The Northern was called the *British* party, because Great Britain desired New England enterprise to be confined alone to commerce, that she might furnish her people with manufactures. The Southern was called the *French* party because it was charged that Mr. Jefferson, by his progressive notions of government, would wreck our institutions in the same gulf that had swallowed up those of France. But his great and leading progressive measures were those which were intended to advance the interests of the North West,—bring the North-Western States into the Union, and give them the means of developing their vast resources. And it was not only a matter of pride and boast with him, because of these great objects, but because he was engaged in carrying out a leading measure of Virginia and Southern policy; of Virginia

policy, because it was accomplishing the object she designed by conveying this country to the United States; and of Southern policy, because it was strengthening the *agricultural* interests of the Union. But strong as the commercial interest was at that time, Mr. Jefferson's administration had too much strength to be resisted by it, and he succeeded in all his leading views in reference to the advancement of the North-West. To us of the States formed out of the munificent donation of Virginia, this controversy should be peculiarly interesting, because it was the great turning point in our fortunes. Had the policy which did prevail been defeated, and the commercial interests obtained possession of and the ascendancy in this government, the probability is that the forests would still be standing, where now our fields are loaded with the rich fruits of our industry.

While the system of measures initiated by Mr. Jefferson were in progress, during the administration of his immediate successor, Mr. Madison, in consequence of the aggressions of Great Britain, war was declared to vindicate our national rights. For, it should not be forgotten, that, however much our people may oppose each other, or whatever rivalry may spring up between them and their interests, whenever a foreign foe wounds our national pride, seeks to dishonor our flag, or to assail any of our interests, every arm, both North and South, is ready to avenge the wrong.

"Divide as we may in our own native land,
To the rest of the world we are one."

The South did not forget, any more than, if circumstances had been reversed, would the North have forgotten, that the war was one that involved the national honor, and it was prosecuted with all the power of the nation. But notwithstanding all our energies were required to meet our ancient and powerful enemy, yet when *Louisiana* applied for admission into the Union in 1811, her admission was strenuously and earnestly resisted by the commercial interest. But the question of slavery did not cut much figure in this opposition. It was prompted by jealousy of the agricultural sections of the country, and that alone. It was another step in the great political struggle that had begun with Mr. Jefferson. True, there were mutterings of dissatisfaction at the representative feature in the Constitution in relation to slaves, but they were soon silenced by the stern rebukes of the venerable framers of the Constitution who were then left amongst us; and who held up the compact of government in their hands, and drove back by its sanctity, the opposing faction.

To give you some idea, at this remote period, of the fierceness of this struggle for power between commerce and agriculture—between the North and South—I will read to you an extract from a speech made, during its progress, in the House of Representatives, by Mr. *Quincy of Massachusetts*. These are his words:

"If this bill passes, [the bill for the admission of Louisiana,] it is my deliberate

opinion, that it is virtually a *dissolution of the Union*; that it will free the States from their moral obligation; and as it will be the right of all, so it will be the duty of some, to *prepare for a seperation, amicably if they can,—VIOLENTLY IF THEY MUST.*"

The leading organ of the commercial party in Boston, thus spoke; at the time, of the system of measures which had been begun by Mr. Jefferson and were then in progress, during the war, under Mr. Madison's administration:

"Should the present administration, with their adherents in the Southern States, still persist in the prosecution of this wicked and ruinous war—in *unconstitutionally creating new States in the mud of Louisiana (the inhabitants of which country are as ignorant of republicanism as the alligators of their swamps,)* and IN OPPOSITION TO THE COMMERCIAL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF NEW ENGLAND, much as we deplore a *separation of the Union, we deem it an evil much less to be dreaded than a co-operation with them in these nefarious projects.*"

The bill passed, however, and Louisiana was admitted into the Union as a State, upon an equal footing with the original States; and Southern policy in reference to the valley of the Mississippi prevailed. But the prevalence of this policy did not heal the dissensions between the two great sections of the country, and the two great interests they respectively represented. It made it, indeed, more violent, for it was now apparent to the commercial interest that there was a complete union between the South and West for the protection of agriculture. This violence soon demonstrated itself in a more active form. And here I reach another part of our history which I beg you to observe. It will serve to show you the origin of that Constitutional doctrine, now so prevalent, which denies to new States admission into the Union, as well as to demonstrate the character of the policy that would exclude them. But I fear some of my friends here will not like the company in which they will find themselves. They may, however, be consoled with the reflection that it do'n't matter much, what sort of political company a man keeps, now and that when he goes to bed at night it is almost impossible for him to tell in what company he will find himself in the morning. They must, therefore, learn to be accustomed to any associations into which they may find themselves fallen;—and I should think, if they can stand *abolitionism*, they will have no difficulty in standing any thing else under the sun.

That to which I shall refer is the history of the "*Hartford Convention.*" Startle not at the name, I beseech you, for it is not a live animal, with flesh and blood, capable of mischief. It was a veritable body of men, brought together in New England, by the *commercial* interests of that section of the Union, for the purpose of putting a stop to the growth of our agricultural interests here in the West, and, through that and other means to reach the South; because the South was the friend of the West. I hope you will remember this—that it was *at the West*, and *the South*, that its policy was directed. I hold in my hand the History of this celebrated Convention, written by Theodore Dwight, its Secretary, with its "*Secret Journal*" attached. It con-

tains a report in which the Convention embodied the result of its labors, and set forth the grievances of which it complained, and its remedies for removing them. After going on to characterize the policy of which it complained as "a weak and profligate policy," and the administrations of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, as "bad administrations" for which they deserved "disgrace," it did not hesitate to admit that the North and South were "nominal friends" yet, so far as they were concerned, they were "real enemies, inflamed by mutual hatred and jealousy," and then to suggest, with great coolness and deliberation, the *best mode of dissolving the Union!* It then proceeded to point out its causes of complaint against the South,—the chief of which was the "deliberate and extensive system for effecting a combination" with the *Western States*, which I have already explained, and as an incident to it, the policy of the South in favor of the "*admission of new States into the Union, formed at pleasure in the Western region.*" This, it alleged, "has destroyed the *balance of power* which existed among the original States, and deeply affected their interest." Here were the causes of complaint, from which you will see that the batteries of this celebrated Convention were made directly to bear upon us, here in the "Western region." Now for the remedy proposed. Here it is. It was two-fold, and so important that the two branches of it constituted the most prominent feature in the plan. The first was to amend the Constitution, so as to *destroy that part of its representative feature which has reference to slaves*, so as to weaken the representation of the South, destroy its influence in the government, give the balance of power back again to the commercial interests, and thus *put a stop to the growth of the West and the admission of new States and make agriculture dependent upon commerce.* The second was,—to secure the consummation of the desired policy beyond doubt,—to so amend the Constitution that "*no new State shall be admitted into the Union, in virtue of the power granted in the Constitution, without the concurrence of two thirds of both houses.*" And the last, was not only deemed important, but "in fact *indispensable,*" for the simple reason, that "by the admission of these States that balance [of power] has been materially affected, and unless the practice be modified, must ultimately be destroyed." And then it immediately proceeds to tell what it fears the consequences of destroying this balance of power will be. It was not pretended that it would be the adoption of any bad or injurious system of measures, by which the public honor or welfare would suffer. It was no higher consideration than that the *South and West* would combine "*to govern the East,* and finally the *Western States*, multiplied in number, and augmented in population, *will controll the interests of the whole.*"

Mr. Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, in the Convention that formed the Constitution, when speaking of the probable increase of States in the *West*, said. "They will, if they acquire power, like all men abuse it. *They will oppress commerce, and drain our wealth into the Western country.* To guard against these consequences, he thought it

necessary to limit the number of new States to be admitted into the Union, in such a manner that they should never be able to outnumber the Atlantic States." He then moved to limit the representatives of the new States, so that they should never exceed the number from the States agreeing to the Constitution. Four States voted for this motion—Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware and Maryland, and five against it;—New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Pennsylvania was divided and New Hampshire did not vote. So that even in the Convention, the West was assailed by the *commercial interests*, and would then have been deprived of its proper representative character and weight, but for the *South*.

"Here was the great object designed by the 'Hartford Convention;'—to prevent the growth of the West, because the West and South were both agricultural and, therefore, their interests were the same. It was willing to unite with the South against the West, and let the Constitution stand as it is,—but as the South would not do that—as it would not desert the West—the assault was made upon the Constitution. Here, those of you who advocate the doctrine of excluding new States from the Union, and of destroying the representative feature of the Constitution in reference to slaves, have a *history of its origin*. I commend to you a careful study of the doings of this celebrated Convention, that you may become familiar with the arguments by which these doctrines are to be sustained. You need not flatter yourselves that they are new with you, or that the abolition party of this day is entitled to any credit for their origin. They are nothing more nor less than the cast off doctrines of a set of men upon whom, for their utterance in the "Hartford Convention," the condemnation of the whole country has rested, with the crushing weight of a millstone, for years. They have been repudiated long ago, because there has been no party so poor as to avow them. Whether they can be dignified into life and position again, by the abolition party, time alone must prove. But how any man, who calls himself a *Western* man, can give them countenance, and thus stab the West and the South too at the same time, is, to me, utterly incomprehensible. When the West was an infant the South was her guardian, and the East her deadly foe. Beneath the blows of that foe she would have fallen, if she had been left alone to defend herself. But the South stood by her. The South stretched out her arm to sustain her;—to hold her up. And now that she has grown up to manhood,—with her sons scattered over the very territory which the South gave to the Union, she is asked to take up the weapons that were aimed at her life, and hurl them at her old friend and ally. Will she do it? I trust not. I feel within me the conviction, that she will not. If the Constitution and the integrity of the Union, were not strong enough to restrain her, a sense of gratitude would do so. And who ever knew a really Western heart to be deficient in this high and ennobling quality?

So intense was the feeling in the East, at the triumph of the western interests through the aid of the South, that the abuse heaped

upon both the West and South was of the most unmeasured character. A single specimen will give you its character, but I have others. The leading organ of the commercial party, from which I have already quoted, used this language:

“Long enough have we been the submissive slaves of the *senseless representatives of the equally senseless natives of Africa*, and of the **SEMI-BARBAROUS HUNSMEN OF THE WESTERN WILDERNESS.**”

Complimentary indeed!—placing the Southern people and the negroes on a precise equality, and the *Western people still lower down* in the scale of humanity. But now they ask these “semi-barbarous huntsmen” to lend themselves, without challenge or enquiry, to the very purposes they were then seeking to accomplish!

What! the West arrayed, in deadly conflict, against the South. Most unnatural contest! It is the child against the parent—It violates all the laws of our being, and rises up to Heaven in accusation against those who wage it. There is no point in our history, which a Western man should cherish, with more fondness, than that wherein the South fought and gained the great political battle, that brought the West into being. All the thunders which the artillery of commercial opposition could employ;—all the threats of dissolution that were heard;—and even the shafts of the “Hartford Convention,” could not drive the South from the support of the West. And I cannot believe that these same thunders, these same threats, these same shafts, all combined, with the addition of a thousand more such, will persuade the West to strike at the South a vital and paracidal blow. No, it cannot be. The West is magnanimous—she is generous—she is noble. It cannot be.

It was the representative principle of the Constitution in reference to slaves, that, in this struggle for the existence of the West, gave the South strength enough to help us. Without it, the commercial interest would have triumphed, and have crushed the agricultural under its heel for ever. And that which we are now asked to do, is, to strike from the Constitution this representative principle—to take away that which alone was our security when we needed protection. It is an insult to Western character and integrity to ask it, and should be so sternly and severely rebuked, that those who ask it may be taught a lesson they will not soon forget.

But the merchants and politicians of New England were not able, with all the power and appliances of the “Hartford Convention” to aid them, to make the great body of the people of New England forget that they had an interest common with that of the South, in the preservation of the Union. Therefore, this Convention failed, entirely, of its object, and sank into merited contempt and obscurity; where it would have remained, perhaps forever, but for the fact that its views of policy are now being galvanized into life again, to accomplish, by indirection, what it sought by openly assailing the Constitution. And the men who got it up, finding themselves unable to sever the strong ties of sympathy between the West and South,

and that they were prevented by the South from putting a stop to the growth of the West, abandoned their party organization and sought other modes of attack.

The first new mode of attack occurred when Missouri applied for admission into the Union; and then for the first time after the Constitution was formed, this party, who had always been opposed to admitting new States at all, added to their former objections, that of *slavery*. This question they seized upon with avidity, because they supposed that it would be the means of bringing the whole North over to them, and ultimately of breaking up the bond of Union and sympathy between the West and the South—as the Western were all *free States*. They knew that the general sentiment of the free States was against slavery, and to this they now commenced their appeal with strong hopes of ultimate success. As the drowning man catches at the first straw within his reach, so these politicians, seized upon this exciting question, with which to accomplish one of two objects, both of which they had designed before, either *to destroy the agricultural interest or destroy the Union*. For more than half the period of our existence, they have pursued this object, with varying prospects of success. They have seemed occasionally almost to have secured their object, but men like Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster and others have been enabled to arrest them in their course. Whether they will be more successful now, when these great men have gone, and their places are unfilled, remains to be seen. The eye of Omniscience alone can see, through the future, the result of the present struggle.

By the purchase of Louisiana we acquired the territory extending from the Gulf of Mexico about 29 deg. of latitude, to the source of the Mississippi river, about 47 deg. 30' of latitude. The whole contained, according to Stoddard, in his sketches, 1,307,260 square miles or 836,646,400 acres—*enough territory to make THIRTY-FIVE States as large as Indiana!* This fact may startle you, but it is, nevertheless, true. And the whole of this immense district of country was *slave territory*. Slavery existed throughout all of it, by both Spanish and French law. The whole population consisted of 50,720 whites, 40,120 slaves and 2,500 free people of mixed color,—making a total of 93,340. As these 50,720 whites had the right before our treaty for the purchase of the country, to occupy any part of it—from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canada line,—with their slaves, and as this right was guaranteed to them by the treaty, it continued, of course, after the treaty was ratified. And in the enjoyment of it, they did occupy both Upper and Lower Louisiana with their slaves. At St. Louis, the capitol of upper Louisiana, slaves were held soon after its settlement in 1764. They were afterwards increased in number by the fact that the French who had held slaves in Illinois, were unable to retain possession of the country, and emigrated, with them, to the West of the Mississippi,—and by the additional fact that the same character of emigration took place to St. Louis, after the passage of the ordinance of 1787, prohibiting sla-

very in the North-West. This right, therefore, to hold slaves throughout the whole territory of Louisiana, not only existed, but was not questioned. It was by virtue of it, that slavery existed in Missouri, at the time of her application for admission into the Union. The acts for the organization of a Territorial government over that part of Louisiana which constituted Missouri, did not interfere with slavery, either while it was a part of Indiana Territory or afterwards,—for the clause of the ordinance of 1787, prohibiting slavery, extended only over the country ceded by Virginia to the United States. Slavery in Missouri, therefore, at the time her Constitution was made, was the inevitable consequence of this condition of things, and it was apparent to the whole country that her rejection from the Union, merely on the ground that slavery existed there, would inevitably dissolve the Union. All the disaffected interests that had been created by hostility to the policy which had enlarged the area of the West and acquired Louisiana, were combined in opposition to the admission of Missouri,—backed and sustained and obtaining their chief support, from the strong commercial interest to which I have referred already. For a time it was feared they would succeed, so powerful were their combinations, and so strongly backed were they by commercial wealth and influence. But these combinations were the work more of politicians than of the people, and when the latter became aroused to a sense of the danger into which the Union was placed, their voice reached the Halls of Congress and commanded a settlement of the difficulty. This was brought about chiefly, as is conceded on all hands, by the instrumentality of Mr. Clay, who urged upon Congress the adoption of what is known as the “Missouri compromise” which prohibited slavery North of 36 deg. 30 min. of latitude, and which was understood by Mr. Clay and every body else at the time of its adoption, to recognize the slavery that existed South of that line. That was, indeed, its legal effect, and it could have had no other. As slavery already existed South of the line, and the compromise did not pretend to abolish or interfere with it, of course it existed there afterwards and still exists there. This is a proposition which no lawyer will dispute. Now, by this compromise, the *South was the looser*—considering it as a question affecting the balance of political power merely. This will be seen from the fact that, as 36 deg. 30 min. was the highest Northern point to which slavery could go, outside of Missouri, so the South retained, to be occupied as slave States, only 7 deg. 30 min. of latitude, while she gave up to the North, for free States, all the remainder, or 11 deg. of latitude—less the contents of Missouri. By this arrangement about 550,000 square miles were reserved for slave States, while about 750,000 square miles were given up for free States. Thus the South gave to the North an excess of about 200,000 square miles, which will make nearly four States as large as Illinois; nearly six as large as Indiana, and three as large as Virginia, which is the largest slave State in the Union, except Texas. I hope you will observe these facts

and recollect them when I come to notice that accusation of which you have lately heard so much, *that the South with her slavery, has always been upon the aggressive*,—for that, like much else that you hear in these days, exists only in the imagination of a certain class of our politicians. I repeat that the South was the looser greatly by this compromise, and that it was a concession made voluntarily, by her to the Union—for I heard some pains taken the other day to explain to you that the *South forced this compromise upon the North!* Nothing else but a love of the Union could have prompted it;—as a few words will explain.

Louisiana was acquired for the benefit of the whole Union. I know there are those so contracted in their views, as to say that it was acquired for the benefit of the South alone. The facts of history show the reverse, as I have already partially explained. So far as we of the West are concerned, we are compelled to admit that the purchase was of essential benefit to us, for, from the date of the purchase up to this time, the navigation of the Mississippi river and the free egress from its mouth, have been of the last importance to us. As it was obtained, therefore, for the benefit of the Union, and the acquisition was supported upon higher grounds than a mere contest for the balance of political power, it was received as slave territory;—as territory into every part of which the people of the South had the clear legal right to go with their slaves. Had not the South the right then to insist, since it was acquired as slave territory, for the *benefit of the Union*, and for *national purposes*, and as Congress had no power, under the Constitution to abolish slavery where it legally existed, that it should not attempt to interfere with this right; but should let slavery go throughout the whole limits of the purchase, where it was guaranteed under the treaty with Napoleon? Some portions of the South did so insist,—but the greater portion yielded both their opinion and interest for the sake of the peace and harmony of the Union, and the whole South, in the end, gave up the question, in favor of the compromise, but with the express understanding that there should never be any interference with the right to form slave States south of 36 deg. 30 min. This was conceded by the whole country to be the true character of the compromise, as has been repeatedly declared by Mr. Clay and others who participated in it. It is quite clear, therefore, that the South was the looser and the North the gainer;—in other words, that the South conceded and gave up an advantage to the North, which they were under no legal or constitutional obligation to do. As the South had a legal right, under the Constitution and the treaty, to occupy all Louisiana with their slaves, the North could not have taken it away without a violation of the Constitution and the treaty. Is not the North, then, indebted to the conciliatory spirit of the South, for the concession? Nothing but that conciliatory spirit could ever have given sanction to the compromise, for as Congress has no power to *create*, so it has no power to *abolish* slavery where it legally exists. It can Legislate for the Territories, but when ter-

ritory is acquired, by purchase, with legal and vested rights existing in it, such as the right to hold slaves, it has no power to interfere with or disturb those rights. But in the case of the "Missouri compromise" the power was admitted only because it was a *compromise* for the peace of the Union, and upon no other ground.

And it furnished a precedent in the case of the territory acquired by the annexation of Texas. You know that I regarded that annexation as wrong,—as having been accomplished without constitutional power. I could never see but a single ground upon which to excuse it, and that was the sympathy which our people always feel towards those who are striving for republican institutions. But that I do not propose to discuss. It is past, and Texas is a part of the Union, to be cherished and protected as any other State. Her star has taken its place upon our flag, and borrowing light from all the other stars that surround it, it keeps its "sentinel watch" in our national sky. When it came into the Union, it was agreed, by both North and South, that the principles of the Missouri compromise should be extended over its territory, although slavery existed all over it. It was agreed that all North of 36 deg. 30 min. should be free, and that South of that line slave States should be admitted whenever it was deemed right and proper that Texas should be divided. The vote in the House of Representatives for admitting Texas, with this stipulation that slave States should be formed South of the line, was *eighty* from the South and *fifty* from the North;—and in the Senate *fourteen* from the South and *thirteen* from the North. Now, I may well stop here to inquire whether this act is not binding upon the honor and conscience of the Nation? It is *the law*, standing upon the Statute-book, and ir repealable. Is not every citizen bound by the law?—bound to render it obedience? Can he escape its consequences, because his individual opinions are against it? Is its obligation confined only to those who voted for it, or to that party which passed it? This would put an end to all law and all government. Yet we are now asked to pledge ourselves that *no more slave States shall come into our Union*. That is the new platform upon which the country is asked to place itself. Mr. Webster, when speaking upon this same question, in 1850, used this emphatic language:

"I may have no vote to give on the occasion, but I wish it to be distinctly understood, to-day, that, according to my view of the matter, this Government is *solemnly pledged, by law and contract, to create new States out of Texas, with her consent, when her population shall justify and call for such a proceeding, and so far as such States are formed out of Texas territory lying South of 36 deg. 30 min. to let them come in as slave States*. This is the meaning of the resolution which our friends, the Northern Democracy have left us to fulfil, and *I for one, mean to fulfil it, because I will not violate the faith of the Government*. What I mean to say is, that the time for the admission of new States formed out of Texas, the number of such States, their boundaries, and the requisite amounts of population, and other things connected with the administration, are in the free discretion of Congress, except this, to wit, that when new States, formed out of Texas, are to be admitted, *they have a right, by legal stipulation and contract, to come in as slave States*."

The South, by this "law and contract" that Mr. Webster considered so binding and inviolable,—as she had done when the Mis-

souri compromise was adopted,—gave up to the North and to freedom, a part of her slave territory. Yet it is the constant cry of our Northern politicians, that slavery has always been aggressive, and that the South is constantly guilty of aggression upon the rights of the North. The fact is, and it should not be forgotten, *that the United States never owned a foot of free territory this side the Rocky Mountains, except what the South made free by her own policy and votes.* Virginia gave them all of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, when it was all slave territory. Yet she and all the other Southern States, consented to make it free, and when Indiana Territory asked a suspension of the ordinance of 1787, so as to allow the introduction of slaves here, she, through her representatives in Congress, refused to permit it. The provision of the ordinance of 1787, relative to slavery originated with Mr. Jefferson, who reported it to the Congress of the Confederation in 1784, from a committee composed of himself, Mr. Chase of Maryland and Mr. Howell of Rhode Island:—*a majority from slave States.* It is therefore of *Virginia* origin. It was not adopted till 1787, when there were but *eight* States present in Congress,—it requiring, by the articles of Confederation, a concurrence of *seven* States before it could be passed. These States were Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia:—five slave and three free States. It was adopted unanimously. Therefore, it is a measure of *Virginia* policy, originating with Mr. Jefferson, and was adopted by the South as a measure of Southern policy, by the votes of *all the Southern States.* It is just, therefore, to say that Virginia and the South gave up all the North West to freedom. The Northern States had no power of themselves to do it.

Southern votes passed the Missouri compromise and made free territory of all North of 36 deg. 30 min;—absolutely forced it upon the North, against Northern votes, when the country given up for that purpose composed more than half of Louisiana. And so the South consented to give up part of Texas for the same purpose: Where then is slavery aggression and the aggression of the South upon the North? Does it consist in having set apart all the North West for *free* States, and more than half of Louisiana for the same purpose? Why, at the time the Confederation was formed, all the unoccupied territory within its limits, belonged to the Southern States, except what now composes the States of Vermont and Maine. Look at the new States formed since that time, within the boundaries of the “old thirteen.” Vermont, was formed out of part of New York; Kentucky out of a part of Virginia; Tennessee out of territory ceded by North Carolina; Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin ceded by Virginia; Mississippi ceded by South Carolina; Alabama ceded by South Carolina and Georgia; Maine out of the territory of Massachusetts. Within those limits, therefore, the Union is indebted to the South for *nine* States, and to the North for *two.* And a majority of these States, for which the Union

is indebted to the South, are *free* States—that is Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. If the South, especially Virginia, had not been liberal towards the Union, all these nine States would have been reserved for *slave* States and would now have been in the Union as such. Then where is the aggression of slavery? Do you not see that it exists only in the heated imagination of those who make the accusation?

But let us carry the matter still farther, and see how it stands outside the original limits of the Union, and this side the Rocky Mountains. We have seen that the South acquired Louisiana, for the benefit of the Union, and set apart, of her own accord, 750,000 square miles of it for *free* States, while she retained only 550,000 for *slave* States:—that is, she gave to the North enough to make *fifteen free States*, and retained for herself only enough to make *eleven slave State*. There was, certainly, no aggression in this.—Considering that the only Northern party that then existed was avowedly struggling for the balance of political power, it was an act of great liberality. Then, Florida composes only *one* State, and if this were added to the States to be formed South of 36 deg. 30 min. in the Territory of Louisiana, it would only increase the number of slave States to *twelve*, still giving the North the advantage by *three* States. Every body considered Florida, however, as a necessary purchase, because it was impolitic, in every sense, that the narrow strip of Territory of which it is composed, should belong to a foreign power, which would give that power the control of the Gulf of Mexico. Then Texas was annexed,—but I have shown you that the North had as much to do with that as the South,—so that the South is not alone chargeable with the act. But if she were,—and Louisiana, Florida and Texas were all to be charged up against her, as wrongs for which she was to be tried at the bar of public opinion, let us aggregate the whole matter, since the Confederation was formed and see how the account stands. In the first place, the North, from her position and geographical extent, was unable to give but the two States of Vermont and Maine to the Union,—while all the balance of the country belonged to the South, or, according to those who find fault with her, was acquired by the policy of the South. Then the account stands thus:—the North has given but *two* States to the Union, Vermont and Maine;—while the South has given *fifteen*, to wit, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa,—and the Territories of Minnesota, Nebraska and Kansas. And then when it is considered that in these States, where the character of the climate, the nature of the productions, and other things affecting the question, have required it, the South made the States *free*, is she justly chargeable with unfairness towards the Union? If we are proud of our Union as it now is—and feel what we say when we boast of its extent and power; and the number of our States, must not candor compel us to admit our obligations to the South? I do not mean to say that the South, in all

this, has shown a higher degree of patriotism than, under like circumstances, the North would have done. Far from it, for I believe that the patriotism of this country is not confined to the narrow spots where we happen to be born, but that it is real, genuine and national in all parts of the Union. The North from her position could do no more, but the South having, within her reach, more means of advancing the power of the Union, has done it, nobly, magnanimously and patriotically.

But let us carry this matter still further. The party who charge aggression upon the South, also charge it with having brought on the war with Mexico, and with having initiated the measures, for the benefit of the slavery interests, that led to the acquisition of territory from Mexico. You know my views about that war. I have expressed them fully in and out of Congress. I was opposed to it. I thought it wrong, and still think so. But we have now only to do with its effects. We have acquired an immense territory by it, about which, in connection with the slavery question, I shall remark presently,—out of which one *free State* has already been formed. It is conceded too, that whenever the remainder of this territory is settled the greater portion of it, if not all, must, from its character and geographical position, be formed into free States. Then we have Oregon, which furnished another example for the adoption of the principle of the Missouri compromise, and which will soon come into the Union as a free State;—for as Oregon was entirely above 36 deg. 30 min. the South did not ask to have slavery go there, but consented to its organization as a free territory, with a positive stipulation against slavery. Now then, according to the argument against her, the South has done all this, out of which this immense *Northern strength* is to be gained;—this immense accession of *free States*. In any possible future event, this will give an immense preponderance to the free States in point of numbers, and that preponderance will be still greater, in reference to population and representation;—so that, in either view, the balance of power must always be, where it is now, in the hands of the North. What then becomes of the charge of slavery aggression? Or what need we of the free States complain, in the future? And what, indeed, have we justly to complain of *now*, when we look at the relative strength of the two sections of the Union? In 1790 the slave States had a population of 1,852,504, and the free States 1,786,499,—showing a small excess in favor of the South of 66,000. The two sections of the country were then nearly equal. In 1820 the North had 4,844,161 and the South 4,388,337,—showing an excess of 455,824 in favor of the North. And as a considerable portion of the emigration to the North-Western States was from the South, it was owing, therefore, to the success of Southern policy in reference to the creation of Western States,—which I have already explained,—that the North obtained this excess. If the Northern policy had prevailed, these Western States would have been kept out of the Union, and the South would have retain-

ed her population which she lost by emigration. And she would have continued to retain the balance of power,—for having more territory than the North, she could offer many more inducements than the North to emigration. No body will dispute the fact, I suppose, that there has been a great deal more emigration from the North to the South, than from the South to the North,—perhaps, ten to one. But as Southern policy prevailed over Northern, and the new States of the North West came into the Union, the proportionate increase of the North, became greater. Now, for instance, the Northern or free States have a population of 13,434,922, while the slave States have only 9,664,656—showing an excess, in favor of the North, of 3,770,266, which is 131,262 more than the whole population of the Union in 1790. And although the existence of slavery may have had *something* to do with this increase of population in the free States,—considering it, merely, as effecting the emigration of native born citizens—yet it has not had so much to do with it as is generally supposed. For example, take the great State of New York and the State of Tennessee—one always free and the other always slave territory, and see the ratio of increase in each. While in New York it has been, for sixty years, only 810,68 per cent, in Tennessee it has been 2,784,58 per cent;—showing a more rapid proportionate increase in Tennessee than New York, although the latter has an immense foreign population and the largest city in the Union. Take the present representative strength in Congress, and the proportion in favor of the North is still more striking. The North has 143 members of the House of Representatives and 34 Senators, while the South has but 90 members of the House, and 28 Senators. What should the North fear from the South, with this great preponderance of numerical and representative strength in her favor? Has she any thing to fear? Are not all the advantages on her side? And were they not given to her, as I have shown, voluntarily, by the South? Does she seek still farther advantage, that she may exercise her power, wantonly, to oppress the South? I beg you to consider that the South is not a dependent province—but that she is the equal of the North, existing under the same Constitution and sharing the same heritage; and that between you and her this struggle for power seems unnatural and unwise. It is like members of the same family to whom an inheritance has descended, who quarrel over it until all is destroyed. That may be the result of your quarrel with the South, unless a sense of common justice or of common danger shall put an end to the strife between you.

But it is said that we must have a still greater preponderance of power than we have, in order to guard against the intrigues of Southern Statesmen;—that the South always gets whatever she wants. I admit that in this respect the South has somewhat the advantage of the North,—that her Statesmen, as a general thing, have been more able and more distinguished. But slavery has

nothing to do with this, unless it be that, in the South, Statesmen have more leisure to prepare themselves for their public duties.— However that may be, the cause lies in the people, there being, in point of fact, as much talent in the North as the South. It is this;—that when the Southern people find a man they have confidence in and can trust, they keep him in office and train him to the service of the country and to understand his public duties. Whereas, here in the North, a man scarcely gets warm in his place, before somebody or another—and it is just as apt to be one of his own party as any body else—begins to jostle him out again. Though there are demagogues and office seekers in the South, they do'nt find so large a field for operations as the same class do here. They are so numerous here that in order to give as many of them as possible a chance at the public crib, somebody must be always stepping out of the way. Let a man stay three or four years away from one of our Legislatures and when he goes back again he will find himself a stranger. And we see the effect of having so many new men, in the constant changes in our statutes,—with which not even the bar can keep up. Now, in the South, they have not near so much of this evil. They hold on to the same men and the same laws as long as possible. I first entered Congress only fourteen years ago, and yet in the last Congress there were not *half a dozen* men from the whole North who were there at that time—and not one from this State. Now, if you want better men—those who will be more able to contend with the South in legislation, you must hold on to good men when you get them. And, as I am out of office and have no wish for one of any sort, I may say this, without having my motives suspected. I am very sure that it is the true remedy, for many of our evils in the North.

Having thus shown, I think, that the South, in her policy, has not been aggressive upon the North, and that the North has such a preponderance of population and Representative strength, that we cannot, justly or reasonably, have any fear; let us see with what faith the South has adhered to the principles of the Missouri Compromise. I have stated, and it is conceded on all hands, that it was a Southern measure, forced upon the North. It is not likely, therefore, that the South would have sought to violate it, without what she supposed to be some cause from the North. Let us see how the matter stood. The compromise was adopted in 1820. For thirty years it remained without an attempt to violate it by the South. Although originally applicable only to the Territory acquired from Louisiana, its principles were extended, within this time, to Texas and Oregon,—the South, in each instance, consenting. This repeated recognition of these principles had given a sort of sanctity to the compromise both North and South.— Both parties professed to be ready to abide by its terms, and both understood that, by those terms, all the States North of 36 deg. 30 min. were to be free and all South were to be slave. I am my-

self entirely convinced that if there had been no departure from that understanding, we should have been saved much of the trouble into which we have been plunged.

It became perfectly apparent during the war with Mexico, that, at its termination, we should acquire a portion of her territory, by way of indemnity. To this there were two grounds of opposition—first that it would probably enlarge the area of slave territory, and second that we already had territory enough. As both these objections existed, chiefly, in the North, those who entertained them readily found a common ground of action, adopted for the purpose of preventing the acquisition. This consisted in what was misnamed the “Wilmot Proviso”—a measure introduced into Congress, while the war was progressing, and which was designed to declare, that, if any territory should be acquired it should be forever free. This proviso was, of course, resisted by the entire South, as unjust. They claimed that as the territory would be, when acquired, the common property of the whole Union, fought for and paid for by both North and South, it would be unequal, unfair and derogatory to them, to deprive the people of the South of the right to occupy a portion of it. Pending this controversy a Presidential election was had, and Gen. Taylor was elected. He was a Southern man and a slave holder, known to be opposed to Congressional Legislation on the subject of slavery—but he was elected chiefly by Northern votes. The territory, however, was acquired without the enactment of the “Wilmot Proviso” and we all remember the excitement and difficulties it occasioned. They shook the Union to the centre, and the best and wisest men in the country were, for a long time, alarmed at the result. Various modes of adjustment were proposed and amongst them one by the South, as the ground of compromise. Relying upon the good faith with which both sections of the Union had maintained the principles of the “Missouri compromise,” and the re-adoption of those principles in the cases of Texas and Oregon, the South proposed to apply them to the newly acquired territory, by extending the compromise line of 36 deg. 30 min. to the Pacific. The effect of this would have been about an equal division of the territory between the free and slave States;—giving, if either obtained it, a small advantage to the North. The past fidelity of the South to the principles of the compromise, since its adoption, was a guarantee that this proposition was made in good faith. But it was rejected by the North, upon the ground that as the whole territory was then free, it should remain forever free. The South met this argument by saying that she had given up a large portion of her slave territory for *free* States, and it was, therefore, nothing but fair and just, that a portion of this newly acquired territory should be given up to the slave States. But the argument was of no avail. The North had the power to reject the proposition and did so. Every body knows the result. It has been the admission into the Union of one *free* State—Califor-

nia—and the formation of two *free* territories;—part of which is South of the line of 36 deg. 30 min. So, considering the question as affecting the balance of political power, the South gained nothing and the North gained all. The whole matter may be summed up thus:—that all the territory acquired before the war with Mexico was slave territory, yet the South, voluntarily, set apart more than half of it for *free* States, besides having given to the Union, through Virginia, the five *free* States of the North-West;—while all the territory acquired from Mexico was *free* territory and the North refused to let slavery go into a foot of it. Is it any wonder then that the South should have felt herself released from the principles of the Missouri compromise, when the North refused to extend those principles to the territory acquired from Mexico? That she did so consider, certainly goes but a little way towards proving that slavery has been aggressive. But I shall speak of this presently, when I come to notice the repeal of the compromise.

I have said that pending this controversy, several plans of settlement were proposed, but it was my own opinion at the time that the one proposed by Gen. Taylor was the best. I advocated it under that impression, and it was generally approved by the Whig party. I have no doubt it would have been adopted at once, but for the party opposition of Democrats in Congress, who were unwilling to give to his administration the credit of settling so serious and embarrassing a difficulty. Let us see what it was, that we may also see how far we are likely to get away from it now. For my own part I have been trying to stand upon the same ground yet;—for, say what you please about your reform parties,—that have about as many names as there are letters in the alphabet,—there is still something in the good old conservative principles of the *Whig* party that are wonderfully attractive to me. I have served that party from my boyhood up, and whether or no it shall be always hereafter an “obsolete idea” as the Democrats call it, I shall continue to reverence the memory of the great men who adorned it, and to maintain the principles they taught. It was, in my judgment, the best and purest party we ever had, and it will be in the future as it has been in the past, that whenever the country is in danger, it will find safety in its doctrines and in the conservative counsels of the eminent and illustrious men who were its acknowledged leaders.

In 1849, Gen. Taylor, in his message to Congress, recommended that Congress should await the action of California and New Mexico in forming State Governments for themselves, and when this should be done, if they were conformable to the requirements of the Constitution and Republican in form, he recommended that they should be admitted into the Union. This was intended to supersede the “Wilmot Proviso,” and was recommended by him expressly upon the ground that it would avoid “all causes of uneasiness” and preserve “confidence and kind feeling.” Hence he

thought that Congress should have nothing to do with questions of a "sectional character," and enforced his views by repeating the solemn warning of Washington "against furnishing any ground for characterizing parties by geographical division." In a special message shortly after, he repeated these recommendations, and said :

"Under the Constitution, every State has the right of establishing, and from time to time, altering its municipal laws and domestic institutions, independently of every other State and of the General Government; subject only to the prohibitions and guarantees expressly set forth in the Constitution of the United States."

This was nothing more nor less than the submission of the whole question of slavery to the people forming the new State,—and proposing to admit them into the Union, regardless of the manner in which they should settle it. I so understood it, as a member of the Whig party, and earnestly advocated it. Immediately after the recommendation, I published in the "National Intelligencer" several articles over the signature of "Americus" in support of it, expressly calling upon both the North and South to "unite in recognizing the principle that the people of the Territories have alone the right to settle the question of slavery." But as I am a politician no longer, it is not necessary that I should defend my own consistency. I merely refer to my own opinions at the time, to show what I then understood to be the policy of a Whig administration;—in no other view, are they at all important.

Gen. Taylor died before he witnessed the success of his policy, but it was adhered to by Mr. Fillmore. Under it, California came into the Union, and New Mexico and Utah were organized into territories. For, whatever were the details of the great compromise of 1850, its main features were based upon the general principles avowed by Gen. Taylor. It could not, indeed, have been based upon any other, because a departure from them would have driven the North back again to the "Wilmot Proviso," which had created all the difficulty, and which the recommendations of Gen. Taylor were designed to avoid.

The compromise of 1850 was regarded as a "finality." It was so characterized by both the Whig and Democratic parties, in the last Presidential contest. The whole country, except the abolitionists and "fire-eaters," was in favor of it, and the only question seemed to be, which of the parties would adhere the more closely to it. The Democratic party succeeded and the Whigs acquiesced in the popular verdict. They began, indeed, to abandon their party organization, and leave the political field clear to the victors. And the Democrats, finding no common adversary to unite them, commenced quarrelling amongst themselves. Gen. Pierce undertook to do, what, with all the patronage of the government, it was impossible for him to do,—that is, to unite the Democrats who were opposed to the compromise, and who, therefore, had opposed his election, with those in favor of it, who had supported him. He thought he could create such a cohesion amongst Democrats,—

hards, softs and all other sorts,—that, throughout, all coming time in our history, there should never again spring up a party to oppose them. But he failed and divided those of his friends who had united to secure his election. And this State of things led to the subsequent repeal of the “Missouri compromise.” It was not so designed, for the repeal was entirely an afterthought.

Kansas and Nebraska should have been organized consistently with the principles of the compromise of 1850 and with the recommendations of Gen. Taylor. By this course, the whole question of slavery would have been let alone until the people got ready to form a State Constitution, when they would have had the power to settle it as they pleased—according to the admitted principles of the Constitution. But Congress initiated a new policy, which is called the doctrine of “*Squatter Sovereignty*” and which is nothing more nor less than surrendering the power of Congress to the people of the territory, to legislate upon the question of slavery and to determine whether or no slavery shall exist during the existence of the territory. The effect of this is to invite legislation by the territorial legislature, which creates excitement,—but beyond that it confers no power upon the people of the *State*, which they had not before, or which they could not exercise, without the consent of Congress, when they should come to form a State Constitution. So far, therefore, as the practical working of this principle is concerned, there is this difference only between it and Gen. Taylor’s plan, that Gen. Taylor, without Congressional or Territorial Legislation, proposed to let slavery in the territories alone; whereas the Democratic policy submits its discussion and agitation to the people of the territories. This is wrong, in my judgment, but yet it cannot, in any way, affect the ultimate right of the people of a *State*. That right Congress can neither give nor take away:—it is derived from the Constitution. The policy of delegating legislative authority to a territory, on the subject of slavery, then, is, manifestly bad,—because if by this means, the *territory* should be slave, yet the *State* may be free; and if it should be *free*, the *State* may establish slavery, when admitted into the Union. Giving this authority to Kansas has invited discussion, and discussion has produced excitement by opening up a question which was closed, by what we all considered a “finality.” And thus we have been precipitated upon a bitter and dangerous controversy. We see the effects of it every day, and the best men in the country are trembling for the future. Nobody can even see the “beginning of the end.”

To the ultimate principle involved in this matter,—that is, the right of the people of a *State* to settle all domestic questions for themselves, there can be no reasonable objection. There certainly can be none from *Whigs*, who sustained Gen. Taylor. I know of but one *party* in the country that has ever objected to this principle, and that is the *abolition party*. They want Congress to

abolish slavery wherever it can, so as to separate the general government from slavery entirely, under the pretence that *then* they will let slavery alone. But this is all pretence, and a very shallow one at that—for they will then insist, as they now do, that Congress shall exercise the power in reference to every territory, of excluding slavery, whether the people desire it or no. So, with them, there is no avoiding Congressional legislation. According to the doctrine of both the Whig and Democratic parties, this takes away from the people a clearly existing constitutional right, and, therefore, both these parties have always repudiated abolitionism as dangerous to the Union. But the abolition doctrine cannot be maintained. If it be true, according to Gen. Taylor, that the Constitution gives the right to the people of a State to settle slavery for themselves;—(and who can make even a *decent* argument to prove the contrary?)—then the whole power is in them, without qualification or limitation. It does not depend upon Congress—who can neither confer it nor take it away. It is derived from the Constitution. Therefore, although Congress has the power of legislation over the territories, while they are such, yet that power ceases when they become States. Take the case of our own State. The ordinance of 1787 prohibits slavery here forever. But this word “forever” has a necessary limitation by the Constitution. We are a State, having the same powers as one of the original States. They had entire power over all domestic questions, including slavery, and so have we. All the power not delegated to Congress is reserved to the States, and to the people, says the Constitution, and this is one of those reserved powers. Then we have full power over slavery, and can establish it in this State whenever we please. If we cannot, we are *not a State* in the sense of the Constitution, and instead of being equal to are greatly inferior to the old States. The ordinance of 1787, therefore, had a legal obligation upon us only while we were a territory. The moment we became a State, it was of no force as a law. But it is preserved for a different reason;—for although but a law, yet we regard its principles as having acquired a sort of sanctity by time, and then we, as a State, are opposed to introducing slavery here under any circumstances. For that reason, we stand by this ordinance, and no other, for it has no legal or Constitutional validity. And yet it is a very common thing to hear it talked about, as second only in point of dignity and sanctity to the Constitution itself;—indeed, with abolitionists it is far higher than the Constitution. Yet it never was any thing but a mere law and that not passed under our present Constitution. It was passed by the Congress of the Confederation, before the Constitution was formed, and has been adhered to because the people who are affected by it, approve its provisions. Does any body suppose that, if the people of Indiana, chose to adopt a law opposed to its provisions, it would stop them? It would be utterly ineffectual to do so. But I will not pursue this view of the question, except to say that

the people of Kansas and Nebraska have this same right when they shall come into the Union.

And these principles, acquiesced in by the whole country, in the compromise of 1850, would have been applied to Kansas and Nebraska without difficulty, or question,—except from abolitionists,—but for the unfortunate repeal of the Missouri compromise.

That repeal involves a question distinct from the one of power, for as the compromise was a mere legislative enactment, it could not impair the Constitutional rights of the States. It involved only a question of expediency, for, like all other acts of Congress, it was undoubtedly the subject of repeal. Its virtue consisted in its being a *compromise*, which should never have been violated; for like a contract, good faith between the parties to it, required its faithful execution. My own opinion is, that it was inexpedient and wrong to repeal it, and, for that reason, I was opposed to it, and should have voted against it. But whatever might have been our personal objections to the repeal, it is our duty to do justice to all the parties concerned. We should not suffer our prejudices to drive us from our propriety upon this subject,—for as justice between man and man is the great cement of society, so, between the American States, it is the great bond of union. Like mercy, it comes down from Heaven, and, like that divine attribute, should be forever cherished in the hearts of men. And in talking about this repeal we must not forget that the questions it suggests, are those, the settlement of which involves the welfare of the nation, and that it is our duty to disregard its probable effect upon *political parties*.

I have already shown you that the Missouri compromise *was the act of the South*,—and that is not disputed. I have also shown you that the South adopted its principles in the cases of Texas and Oregon,—and that is not disputed. Had not the South, then, some reason to expect that, after this adherence to the principles of it for so many years, they would be recognized and adopted by the North? It was introduced and passed for the purpose of giving up *slave territory to freedom*;—and did not this create some obligation on the North, to show afterwards, some liberality to the South? A compromise, by its very nature, imports an obligation binding on two parties. One party cannot make a contract, and as a compromise is but a contract, so one party cannot make a compromise. Yet, when the South asked that the principles of this compromise should be extended over the territory acquired from Mexico, to the Pacific Ocean, the North refused. Was it at all wonderful then, that the South should have considered itself released from its obligations? Considered then as a mere contract, affecting only the balance of power, the South was, in point of law and fact, released. And the men who make the most noise and clamor about it now, have no right to complain, for *they were opposed to the principles of the compromise before the repeal*. If it existed to day, they would be equally opposed to them, for they resist the

admission into the Union of a slave State, *any where*, whether North or South of the compromise line. And yet they ask for its restoration, avowing, at the same time, that when it is restored, they will violate what every body understood to be its meaning at the time it was adopted, by continuing to oppose the admission of *slave States south* of the line. Did you ever before know a party organized for the purpose of accomplishing an object to which it was opposed,—to restore a measure that it intended to violate as soon as it was restored? And yet that is the precise condition of the men who are convulsing this country with excitement and agitation, by crying out against the injustice of a measure which their own conduct and opinions favored. I would have voted against the repeal, because I was in favor of the compromise, as explained and understood by Mr. Clay,—but these men are in favor of the restoration, *because they are opposed to the principle*. If I were again in Congress I would test their sincerity, by moving to *restore the compromise and extend it to the Pacific Ocean*. I hope somebody will do it. I hope the South will do it. If she does it will be consistent with her former course of attachment to the Union:—ready to compromise on any question, for the sake of the Union, which does not affect her honor. But if such a proposition shall be moved, in the next Congress, it does not require the spirit of prophecy to foretell that these newly converted *friends of the Missouri compromise* will then become *its enemies again*. There might be conservatism enough in Congress to pass such a proposition, with the aid of the South, but who supposes that it would get half a dozen votes from amongst all the members of this newly organized abolition party? Their patriotic devotion to the compromise would then all ooze out at their finger's ends, and they would turn right around, cry out against the iniquity of the act, and organize for another campaign upon the single idea, that *the compromise should then be repealed!*—because it would admit slave States *south* of the line. The fact is, it is impossible to satisfy these people. If you yield an inch to them to day, they will demand an ell tomorrow. Nothing will pacify them but the *agitation of the slavery question*. That they must talk and declaim about continually—morning, noon and night—seeming to labor under the hallucination that every man who can rant and rave and “saw the air” in behalf of, what they call, the universal rights of man, will be regarded as a statesman. One side of a question suits them about as well as the other, so it enables them to *agitate*. That is what, as a party, they live upon. They snuff excitement from every breeze, and go forth, like the war horse, always ready for battle, *provided the rights of the negro are assailed!* They can listen perfectly unmoved to the wrongs of the *white man*. His cries and agonies do not reach their ears. To his voice of supplication, they are always deaf. Hundreds of thousands of their own race may be slain upon the field of “*inglorious war*,” and their unburied and decaying bodies may

turn whole plains and valleys into "lazar-houses of the dead," yet no sympathetic groan escapes them:—*there is no political capital to be made out of it!* But if a single lash is drawn across the back of a disobedient slave, they shriek aloud with holy horror at the thought. They roll up their eyes to heaven, and put up hypocritical prayers for the slave, while they consign, with impious curses, to the regions of the damned, their own brethren and kindred. They curse your institutions. They curse your Union. They curse Washington and all your fathers. They curse christianity. They curse the Bible. They curse the Whigs. They curse the Democrats. They curse Harrison, Clay, Webster,—and consign them all to the infernal regions. And these are the men with whom you and I are asked to unite in political action,—whose party we are asked to join,—with whom we are asked to stand side by side, on the same platform, and march in the same procession to the polls. You, of course, will do as you please:—for one, I WILL NOT DO IT. The spirit of the departed dead forbids it. The voice of my fathers crying to me from the tomb, forbids it. All my past associations forbid it. My devotion to *Whig* principles forbids it. My devotion to the Union forbids it. The admonitions of "the father of his country" forbid it. My own heart and conscience forbid it—and come what may, I WILL NOT DO IT.

We are told by the Editor of the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, that he would "rather a thousand times vote for *Garrison* and *Tappan*, as President and Vice President, than tamely submit for an hour" to the repeal of the Missouri compromise,—and this man's opinions are held up to the Whigs of this county, to influence us in doing likewise. What! a man who ever called himself a Whig, vote for *Garrison* for President!—when he but the other day, declared—"*this Union is a lie; the American Union is a sham; an imposter, a covenant with death, an agreement with hell, and it is our business to call for a dissolution.*" A Whig vote for *Garrison* for President! when he avows that he "*will stand against and try by the help of God to overthrow*" this government. A Whig vote for *Garrison* for President! when he announces to the world the sentiment—"*let the slaveholding Union go, and slavery will go down with the Union into the dust.*" A Whig vote for *Garrison* for President! when he unblushingly avows, that he marches under no other flag but "*the flag of disunion.*" O, upon what times have we fallen, when these things can be? Are you, who sit around me here, the old, long tried, never flinching Whigs of Vigo, and yet can sit unmoved at propositions like these? Where is the old fire that used to burn in your hearts? It is all quenched? Has it all gone out? No, no, it cannot be. I will not believe it. I know you too well to believe it. I know that, rather than vote for *Garrison* for President, you would prefer to see the brand of *traitor* seared, as with a hot iron, into his forehead, so that, like Cain with the mark of God upon him, he might pass about through the world to be shunned and despised of all men. For my part, I would avoid

him as I would a putrid and infectious corpse. He would sow treason broadcast over the land, that patriotism and honor might be consumed beneath its blighting touch. I have neither the will nor the taste for such political affiliations. Let those who have, enjoy them:—but let them recollect that when they hug the traitor they must be infected with the treason.

But I come back again to the repeal of the Missouri compromise; and I repeat the question,—was it wonderful that the South should have felt itself released from its obligation, when the North refused to abide by its principles? But then the South had another cause of complaint against the North. I have shown you, how that provision of the Constitution was adopted, which provides for the recapture of fugitive Slaves;—that it was a part of the compromise about slavery, voted for, unanimously, by all the States of the Union, Early in the government, and under the administration of Washington, a law was passed to carry this provision into effect,—it being conceded, by every body, that it imposed the *duty* upon Congress to pass such a law. This law remained unchanged, till the present “Fugitive slave-law” was passed; and since then a new doctrine has sprung up, by means of which an effort is now making to repeal the law entirely and leave the free States under no obligation to deliver up fugitive slaves. This doctrine, that every man carries in his conscience, upon political questions, a “*higher law*” than the Constitution, is exclusively of modern origin and growth. It is the doctrine of anarchy and of the mob, under which all the horrors of the French Revolution might be re-enacted here, to justify the abolition of slavery, upon the same pretext precisely that we are asked to join the abolitionists:—that we shall tolerate an evil to day that good may come out of it tomorrow. The men who advocate this doctrine call themselves the *reform* party, and claim to be law abiding citizens. But the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that Congress is bound to pass such a law,—and is not this decision obligatory upon us all? Can you or I avoid it because we may happen not to agree with it? If we can, why may not the opponents of our “prohibitory liquor law” avoid that also, upon the ground that it is against *their consciences* to restrict a man in the enjoyment of his natural right to get drunk, or to sell whatever any body will buy? Or why may not any other law be avoided in the same way? The man who has no horse and steals one of mine, has as much right to justify himself upon the ground that it is unconscionable for me to have several horses while he has none, as the abolitionist has to entice away a slave from his master, or to conceal or harbor him so as to prevent his arrest, upon the ground that the law which forbids it is against his conscience? A citizen of a slave State was passing through Pennsylvania the other day with some slaves, and one of these *conscientious* “higher law” men enticed them away from him, and in order to prevent the discovery of their place of concealment committed the crime of *perjury*! How conscientious he must have been!—for the mere sake of helping a

negro to his freedom and violating the laws of his country, he was willing to blast the prospects of his own soul by the crime of false-swearing! Can you join a political party which teaches this kind of *morality*, and which makes a martyr of such a man while it consigns to the penitentiary the man who, to feed a starving wife and children, would rob their hen-roosts? That's what they ask you to do, but I do'n't believe you'll do it

In 1852, Mr. Sumner of Massachusetts, make a speech in the Senate, in which he, for the first time, broached the doctrine that the Fugitive slave-law was *unconstitutional*,—against the whole practice of the government and the opinion of every body. And he based the doctrine upon the ground;—that the clause in the Constitution providing for the recapture of slaves, was nothing but a mere compact or agreement *between the States*, and confers no legislative power upon Congress;—as if the very fact of its being in the Constitution of the United States, and not in that of any State, as the Supreme Court have said, did not prove that it had nothing to do with the States, but that it imposed an obligation upon Congress. And thus reasoning with himself, contrary to the whole practice of the government under every administration, and to the surprise of the whole Senate, he said of the fugitive slave law, as it stands on the statute book, that it violated the Constitution, dishonored the country, degraded humanity, offended christianity, and that all the attributes of God united against it. Then, boasting that it could not be executed in the North, but that Northern *mobs* would resist it, he avowed what he, himself, would do as an American citizen, in these words:

“By the Supreme Law which commands me to do no injustice; by the comprehensive christian law of brotherhood, by the Constitution which I am sworn to support, I AM BOUND TO DISOBEY THE ACT.”

It was the Senate of the United States where this was said, and it was a Senator from the good old commonwealth of Massachusetts who said it. But he forgot Massachusetts and all her history when he uttered these sentiments. He forgot what her Webster and her other illustrious men had said for her and done for her, and what she had done for herself upon a kindred question. He forgot how she had applauded Gen. Jackson, when he put his foot upon South Carolina nullification and crushed the very life out of it.—But, by shutting his eyes upon all this, he has inaugurated a new era in Massachusetts policy, and she has herself passed a law directly *nullifying* this fugitive slave law:—avowedly for that purpose and no other. How have the mighty fallen! The “old Bay State,”—one of the first in our Revolutionary history;—where Lexington, and Concord and Bunker-Hill still stand;—that old State that we have all loved and venerated so much, led on by her prejudices and passions, is, at last, in open rebellion against an existing law—is, at last, commanding her own citizens, by the voice of her legislature, to disobey a law of Congress! In one of Mr. Webster's great speeches, made in 1833, in reply to Mr. Calhoun, on the subject of

South Carolina nullification, he declared that, in his opinion, *nullification was revolution*. Said he:—"what is revolution? Why, Sir, that is revolution, which overturns or controls, or successfully resists the existing public authority; that which arrests the exercise of the supreme power; that which produces a new paramount authority into the rule of the State. Now, Sir, this is the precise object of nullification. It attempts to supercede the supreme legislative authority. It arrests the arm of the Executive Magistrate. It interrupts the exercise of the accustomed judicial power. Under the name of an ordinance, [Massachusetts calls her's a *law* ;] it declares null and void, within the State, all the revenue laws of the United States. Is not this *revolutionary*? Sir, so soon as this ordinance shall be carried into effect, a *REVOLUTION will have commenced in South Carolina* [in Massachusetts too.] She will have thrown off the authority to which her citizens have heretofore been subject. She will have declared her own opinions and her own will to be above the law, and above the power of those who are entrusted with their administration. If she makes good these declarations *she is revolutionized*. As to her, it is as distinctly a *change of the Supreme power*, as the American revolution of 1776."

When these words were uttered twenty-two years ago, by the great statesman of Massachusetts, they met a response in every heart within her borders. If one could then have been found who did not approve them, he would have been pronounced unworthy to be called her son. But then, it was the thunder of Mr. Webster's mighty eloquence, hurled at *South Carolina*, because she was resisting a law of Congress. Has Massachusetts a right to do, what *South Carolina* could not do? Has it come to this, that what was *revolution* when done by *South Carolina*, can now be done by *Massachusetts* upon the plea of *conscience*? Is revolution confined to particular parallels of latitude? Is it exclusively of *Southern* growth? Can it exist only south of Mason's and Dixon's line? But I will not do the *people* of Massachusetts the injustice to suppose for an instant, that they will permit this infamous act of a legislature which is disgraceful to her history, to remain upon her statute book. They have been folding their arms in confident security, not supposing that, by their kindness, they were warming a swarm of political vipers into being, who would turn upon and assail the honor of their good old State. But they will now awake to consciousness, and *Massachusetts will be herself again*.

One of the very men who brought Massachusetts into this condition, having accomplished his work at home, came out here the other day to tell *us* in Indiana what we must do,—what policy we must pursue to acquire equal honor and renown. And how does he propose to do it? Why, by a fusion of all other parties, not *with* but *into* the "free soil" and "anti-slavery" party. For speaking of the prospect of defeating the present administration he says:

"The *anti-slavery* party alone is too weak. They are few in numbers, though

their policy I believe, will yet be impressed upon the country. But the time is not yet.;

You will observe what is to be done;—it is to impress the *anti-slavery* policy that I have been talking of, “upon the country.” Not to do it *all*, just now, out here in Indiana, for “*the time is not yet.*” We are not ready for it. We must take it in homœopathic doses now. See what he says again :

“I go further in this slavery matter than you may do. I say it frankly.*****
The great principles laid down in the platform of the Free Soil conventions contain my views, but the country is not ripe enough for the constitutional interpretations there declared. Our duty is now to meet upon a common and moderate platform.”

There it is, all flatly and plainly told. As we out here are “*not ripe enough*” for the doctrines that prevail in Massachusetts;—as we have been accustomed to conservatism so long;—as we are weak and silly enough to have an old-fashioned reverence for the memory of the men who made the Union, and a love for the Union itself, and as it is necessary that we shall get rid of all these antiquated notions before we can understand the “Constitutional interpretations” that prevail in Massachusetts; therefore, we must *now* be trained upon a “*moderate platform,*” so that we may get “*ripe*” by degrees. The pill, for the present, will be sugar-coated, but after awhile, when we can stand larger and more frequent doses, a little of the *revolutionary* tincture of the Massachusetts *nullifiers* will be mixed with it, and then, if all the North can be made “*ripe*” by the same process, the doctrines of the “*anti-slavery*” or abolition party will be “*impressed upon the country!*” Are you ready for this kind of *ripening*? Are the people of Indiana, ready for it? I will not believe it.

Now, when this sort of thing has been going on in the North,—when these men have contrived, for years, every possible mode of preventing the arrest and return of a fugitive slave;—added to the refusal of the North to extend the Missouri compromise, is it wonderful, I ask again, that the South should have voted for the repeal? There is not the slightest evidence that the South desired the repeal, or would have asked it. However this may be, I am confident that a very small portion of the *southern people* had any thing to do with it, and that thousands of them only justify the repeal now, on the grounds I have named, that the North refused to extend the line and refuses to execute the fugitive slave-law. The proposition to repeal came from a Northern Senator, who is now the subject of much and severe vituperation. I am under no party obligation to defend him, though I esteem him highly as a friend and a gentleman;—one who is surpassed in talents and ability, by very few men now in this country. He is fully able to defend himself, and if those who strike at him so frequently from a distance, will permit me to advise them, I would recommend that they avoid placing themselves in such relation to him, as that “blows can be given as well as taken.” I say, he was a Northern Senator, representing a people who are our neighbors, and kindred to us in feeling and sympathy.—

Whatever may have been his motives for introducing the proposition, his State has sustained him and endorsed the act. She has made it *her act*, and we are bound to suppose that, in the introduction of the measure, he spoke her voice. By the true theory of our government, then, the proposition came from Illinois. And having been thus presented to the Southern States, by a leading Northern State, upon the ground that the South was released from further obligation to the principles of the compromise,—what was the South to do? Was she to hold on to a measure the principles of which the North had repudiated? Let the positions of the two sections be reversed,—and what would the North have done? I present this, merely that you may consider the question in all its aspects. It is well in politics, as in private life, to keep in remembrance the old story of the bull that gored the lawyer's ox. I do not attempt to *justify* the repeal by either the North or South, but simply to show that the South may find some *excuse* for her act, and that the whole blame, whatever it may be, does not belong to her. She had no power, of herself, to do the act, and never would have attempted it, had she not been invited by the North. And that invitation was followed up by Northern votes, which accomplished the repeal.

But then there was another influence that favored this result, that operated equally, both in the North and the South:—I mean the patronage of the administration. When the question of repeal was first agitated, it was doubtful whether or no it could be made an administration measure. But it became so, in the end,—how and why, we can only surmise, but none of us know. The administration, therefore, headed by a Northern President, also invited the repeal. Now, I have personal knowledge of the fact, that, notwithstanding all I have named, there were a number of Southern gentlemen in Congress who were indifferent to it, and whose votes were considered, for a long time, as uncertain. They voted for it, at last, more because they did not desire to separate from their party friends or their friends from the South, than from any other cause. And the repeal having been accomplished in this way, was universally regarded as a *party* rather than a *sectional* triumph. I do not think, then, that it just towards the *people of the South* to hold them responsible for an act, with which they have had no farther participation than I have named, and to visit them with the vengeance of the North because of it; merely because the North has the power to do so. And the North would be unjust to herself to do so from such a motive:—for whatever the difference of institutions and feelings which exist amongst the people of the two sections of the Union, they are all members of the same great National family, whose fortunes have been one, and whose destiny, throughout all time, should be the same.

But for this supposed aggression upon the North, we are now asked to *punish* the South by the adoption of certain measures of retaliation. The spirit of this request is wrong, for such a spirit should never prompt the conduct of brethren towards each other.

The party who indulges it is generally at fault, and is often injured more by success than submission. I would beseech you, therefore, to dismiss all such considerations before we enter upon an examination of the several measures proposed—that we may discuss them without prejudice or passion.

This party, whose avowed object is retaliation upon the South, has not yet united in all the States of the North upon the same platform. In some States they insist upon more, and in some less,—according to the circumstances. The people in some States are more “ripe” than in others:—for example, in Massachusetts, as I have shown, they openly avow nullification, while here they do not, because they know the people would spurn them and their doctrine with indignation. And so with different doctrines of the party, in the different States, all pointing to the same result,—which the Massachusetts Senator who was here the other day, said, was to have the teachings of the “*Free-soil Conventions*” ultimately “*impressed upon the country.*” But while this party has rallied under separate banners in the several Northern States, each with such a motto upon it as may suit the place and occasion, it has already common points of attraction and union where all its purposes and energies are united. And this union is growing more and more compact every day, and will continue to grow until the *people* shall rise up in their power and teach the *politicians* that they will not submit to such tampering with the public welfare and honor. If they do not do this, as surely as we all live, we shall be forced, by these trading politicians into a sectional contest for the Presidency, which would be a virtual dissolution of the Union:—for when all mutuality of sentiment and feeling, between the North and South, is destroyed, the Union cannot last.

Now, the general propositions upon which this party is united in the North, with, of course, various shade of individual opinion to maintain them, are the following:

First. The unconditional restoration of the Missouri compromise.

Second. If that is not done, then to refuse Kansas admission into the Union, if she shall establish slavery.

Third. The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

Fourth. The abolition of the slave-trade between the States.

Fifth. The refusal to admit any more slave States into the Union.

Sixth. The repeal of that representative feature of the Constitution, which relates to negroes.

Seventh. The repeal of the fugitive slave law.

Eighth. The constant agitation of the slavery question, until,

Ninth; Slavery is abolished in the States.

I do not say that in all the Northern States this party has put *all* these planks into its platform. That would not be expedient just now. But what I mean is, that what is now called the principle of political “*fusion*” embraces all of them;—that is, it brings into the

same party those who advocate *all of them*. In one State they propose, directly and openly, to *repeal* the fugitive slave law, in another to *amend* it. In one, merely to restore the Missouri compromise, in another to exclude Kansas from the Union, if it shall not be done. In one, merely to exclude Kansas, because the territory was part of Louisiana, to which the Missouri compromise was applied, in another to exclude *all* slave States. So, those who advocate all these shades of opinion, entertain some one notion and some another,—some admitting that they are *abolitionists* and others denying it,—but all converging to the same point—a *sectional canvass for the Presidency*. And if the country shall remain quiet and submit to the domination of this party until it shall select its candidate for the Presidency, they will see it present a man whose opinions shall embrace *all* these various shades—because they can all be united in no other way. That is what is now called “*fusion*.” This word is progressive like the party. Last year it meant a union of all parties to beat the Democrats,—and many who liked that idea, *fused*. But this year it means something else,—a union to accomplish the objects I have named;—and that’s another question altogether.

I do not propose to discuss all these propositions I have enumerated; but only those which are, more immediately, pressed upon our attention now. And, first, the proposition to restore the Missouri compromise.

If things could be placed back again just where they were, before the compromise was repealed, I would insist upon its restoration—for I am in favor of the principles it contains. But they cannot be, and, therefore, I see no necessity for agitating the question. The law organizing Kansas and Nebraska, as I have stated, gives to the people there the right to say whether they will have slaves or not.—That is the law however passed;—whether rightfully or wrongfully. As a law I consider it binding upon me and every other citizen of the United States. Opposition to it before its passage does not release me from this obligation of obedience to it. It has therefore, invited settlers into Kansas from both sections of the Union. It says to all who emigrate there, you must do it with the express understanding that the question of slavery there, is to be settled by the popular vote. Northern and Southern men have gone there under this law, each to run the risk of defeat, by the vote of the people. And after Southern men have broken up their business at home and gone there with this understanding, embodied in the law, good faith towards them, forbids that the law under which they emigrated, should now be disturbed, but that, having been passed, it should be left to take its course. The Government of the United States should never do an act of injustice to a single citizen whatever his condition. If the compromise could have been restored before this emigration, then this objection would have been removed.

But without attempting to point out all the intrinsic difficulties in the theory itself, there is one objection to the agitation of this question which, to my mind, is sufficient of itself. *It cannot be done*

before Kansas shall apply for admission into the Union. That is my opinion, based upon the facts which I shall state. The territorial government of Kansas is scarcely yet organized, yet there is a population of some 12,000 or 15,000 there already, and we are told that, during this fall, the number will be greatly increased. By the meeting of Congress it will be, probably, from 15,000 to 20,000. By the meeting of the next session, in Dec. 1856, the number will reach 50,000, and by the meeting of another Congress, in Dec. 1857, the population will be large enough to entitle them to admission as a State. Now it is conceded, on all hands, that it cannot be restored by the *present* Congress. Although the contrary has been supposed, yet it is, by no means certain, that either party will have a majority in the next House. The *Whigs and Know-Nothings* combined will make a majority—but then it must be remembered that the former cannot unite with the latter if they, in order to do so, have to *fuse* with *abolitionists*. They cannot do *that*. But if the House by combination, *should* pass a bill to that effect, it would fail in the Senate—for the Senate is known to have a majority opposed to the restoration. And if both Houses should pass a bill, of which there is not the slightest probability, it would be positively certain to encounter the *Executive Veto*. But a bill cannot pass both Houses so as to go to the President. Then, if the House, after the Senate rejects it, should attach the proposition to restore the compromise, as an amendment to the civil and diplomatic appropriation bill, the Senate would strike that off and pass the bill without it,—and they would have the aid of Mr. Seward of New York, in doing this, who is committed against attaching all incongruous matter to an appropriation bill. This would throw upon the House the responsibility of insisting upon this incongruous amendment, and if they should do so, the effect would be to defeat the bill and stop the wheels of the government, for the want of supplies. This is a most dangerous mode of legislation:—it is not legislation at all, but a mere trial of brute force.

Then it is entirely certain that the restoration cannot take place during the Congress now elected. That being the case, another Congress would have to be elected before it could be accomplished. This Congress could not meet till December 1857. By that time a new President will be elected;—who, no mortal man can have the slightest idea. Suppose him to be in favor of the restoration, and that a majority of the new Congress shall be also, no proposition to that effect will be likely, under the rules of legislation, that prevail in the House, to pass before the summer of 1858. By this time, Kansas will, most assuredly, ask for admission into the Union, and you will have both questions pending before Congress, *at the same time*. What, then, will Congress do? That is the practical question—for we must look practically at this matter. With both these questions pending there at the same time, the difficulties would be greatly complicated if Kansas should apply

as a slave State. If she should come as a free State, the North would, at once, consent to her admission and that would settle the question. But if as a *slave* State, and the North should insist upon a restoration of the compromise, it would amount to her rejection *merely because she was a slave State*. This, of course, would have to be done by an exclusively *sectional* vote. It would array the united North against the united South;—it would destroy all brotherly feeling and confidence between the two sections, and it is my deliberate opinion that *the Union could not survive such an act*.—Whenever the time shall arrive when, by such a sectional vote, the doctrine shall be settled, that a *State* shall be kept out of the Union, upon the single ground that the citizens of it have established slavery, the *Union will be practically dissolved*. The South cannot stay in the Union upon terms of inequality. The North would not. Neither will consent to be degraded in the eyes of the other. You will see therefore, that the agitation of this question now, will precipitate us, as certainly as can be, upon the question, whether or no a *slave* State shall come into the Union. And when it thus comes,—if we shall insist upon the restoration, we shall be also precipitated upon the decision that it *shall not*. Are you ready for that? If so, of course you will unite with the *abolitionists*:—if not, you will, with me, pause and reflect:

— nor blindly rush,
Where angels fear to tread.”

But then there is another objection to pressing this question of restoration now, not to be overlooked. Although the South was far from being united upon the question of the repeal of the compromise, yet, as the question is now presented by the North, it is quite certain that it would be united against the restoration. That would, of course, present a *sectional* controversy at once, and that kind of controversy should be avoided by all means. It is dangerous. We *must*, if we stay together, as one people, treat each other as brethren;—as having equal rights in the Union. This eternal clamor of the North against the South and the South against the North, is all wrong, and good men should do all they can to put a stop to it. Why should we persist in pressing the question, merely because we are in the majority in the Union, when we know that it is offensive to the South? What is the use of offending the South? Has she not, as I have shown, given *more territory to freedom than the north has*? Did she not give it of her own accord? Did she not give you Iowa, Minnesota and all of Louisiana north of 36 deg. 30 min. *against the vote of the North*, because she thought it was just and right, as the North had helped to pay for it? Has she ever yet sought to make slave territory of that which was originally free, until you attempted to force the “Wilmot Proviso” upon her? Did she not adhere to the Missouri compromise, until you refused to adopt its principles? Then, why insult her, by continually denouncing her institutions, which you helped her to cre-

ate? Why charge her with wrong, when you were equally guilty with her in the establishment of it!

We, of the free States, talk about our *right* to have *our institutions only* go into the Territories. What greater right have we in the Territories than the South? Do they not belong to the *Union*? Then why has not the South as much right in them under the Constitution, as the North? My own opinion about it is, that there is but *one* way to settle all these difficulties—and that is the plain, practical and common sense plan suggested by Gen. Taylor. **LET THEM ALONE.** Stop agitation. Let the North quit abusing the South, and the South quit abusing the North. Let “brotherly love” take the place of hatred and discord. Let the practices of good neighborhood prevail between the two sections. Let the spirit which prevailed amongst our fathers, pervade every part of the Union. Let us cultivate attachment to the Union, and teach it to our children. Let us defend it when it is assailed as we would defend our own honor. And then, when these feelings shall fill all our minds,—when the one great national idea that we are still one people, shall prevail, all difficulties will cease. Each State will be left to settle its own domestic institutions according to the will of its own people. New States, enjoying and exercising this right, will come into the Union. We shall gather strength, every day, as a nation. Our flag shall wave triumphantly, from sea to sea. The world, looking on with amazement, will see a happy, prosperous and united people, whose institutions will shed their light upon it, as the sun lights up the heavens. And the same God who guided our fathers through the dark period of the revolution, will make the pathway of our destiny bright and plain to the millions who shall come after us.

I do not believe that Congress has the right, under the Constitution, to reject a State when it shall apply for admission into the Union, with a Republican Constitution, fairly formed. I know that the contrary doctrine is now generally adopted, but I do not think it consistent with the true spirit of the Constitution. In the first place, whenever any portion of our people settle in a Territory, become numerous enough to ask for admission into the Union, and form a Constitution for that purpose, it is against the spirit of our institutions to reject them or to cut them off from an equal share with ourselves in the benefits of the national government. We have no provision in the Constitution which requires us to form a Territorial government for any particular number of people—or to permit the Territory, when formed, to have a delegate in Congress. Yet, I apprehend, there would be few who would not say that the refusal to do either would be wrong. I recollect when I was last in Congress, I had, as Chairman of the Committee on Elections, quite a controversy with some very distinguished gentlemen, in reference to admitting a Delegate, from Minnesota, and I succeeded in inducing the House to admit him, although there were few peo-

ple in the Territory and it was even doubtful whether, in point of fact, there was any Territorial government at the time of his election. The ground of decision was, that Congress ought not to deprive any portion of the people of the benefits of representation. The principle is analagous, in the case of States asking admission:—the people are entitled to it, and it is wrong for Congress to refuse it.

The language of the Constitution is—"New States *may* be admitted by the Congress into this Union." The interpretation of this sentence depends upon the meaning to be given to the word *may*. I know it has been argued by very distinguished gentlemen, that it gives a discretionary power to Congress,—that the admission of a State is in the nature of the contract between the general government and the State, and that if the parties cannot agree upon the conditions of the contract they are under no obligations to make it. But this doctrine originated with the *commercial* party I have named, and was used for the purpose of *excluding all Western States*. That party did not want the territory of the West, to be formed into States, and therefore they originated this idea to keep out Western States. And they now, very complacently, ask us to adopt the same doctrine in order that *we* may help them stop the further growth of the *West!* They ask us to aid them now in stabbing Kansas, with the same weapon they aimed at us. But for my own part, I never have adopted that doctrine, and during my service in Congress, as your representative, did all I could to advance the Western Territories, with a view that they might *demand* admission into the Union, and thus give us of the *West*, as soon as possible, the balance of political power. I thought I was doing then, what you approved. I thought there was not a man in my Congressional District, of whatever party, who did not say I was right:—even the Democrats and I agreed on *that* point. All of us were in favor of extending the power of the West, and thus we adopted a doctrine in reference to the admission of new States altogether different from that I have named. We were for bringing the new States in as fast as possible. The commercial doctrine was for keeping them out. We are now asked to give up *ours* and take *theirs*. As a *Western* man I cannot do it:—for although I love all parts of the Union, yet I have always thought that its true security lay in the fact that the great *conservative* power of the country was in the West. The extreme North and the extreme South are apt to go to excess in political controversy, and excess generates bad feeling and hatred between them, utterly inconsistent with that brotherhood necessary to preserve the Union. But we, here in the West, have been standing, midway, between them, cool and unexcited, and, by our own pacific course, have heretofore checked the progress of the storm upon either side. We have been standing, like some great break-water out at sea, sheltering the old

vessel of State, and dividing the billows before they reached her in her moorings.

Here, in the valley of the Mississippi, the men of the North and the men of the South, with almost every shade of prejudice and opinion, mingle together in the various pursuits of life, and each yielding somewhat to the other, from association and habit, they constitute the great conservative body of our population. As the little rivulet which trickles noiselessly down the mountain side, rests, at last, upon the bosom of the ocean, and helps to swell its tides, so almost every neighborhood throughout the Union, contributes the silent and unseen influence of its opinions, towards the creation of the true *national* sentiment of our Western people. Whatever have been with them the early influences of education; new associations, new habits, new alliances, new pursuits in new fields of enterprise, wear them off, until the reigning and ruling sentiment is deep devotion to the Union. Here, then in the West, and in this idea of admitting new States, lies the true security of the Union. Having always entertained this opinion, I have adopted the interpretation of the Constitution I have named, and shall be slow to adopt any other. If other Western men choose to desert this Western policy, simply because they get excited about slavery, of course, it is their right to do it. And, if by that means, they put a stop to the growth of the West, and make her great *agricultural interests* dependent upon and subsidiary to the *commercial* interests of the East, no man in this country shall rise up and accuse *me* of participating in such an act. I clear my skirts of the whole thing, now and at once, before the armies that are to fight this great battle, are brought fairly into the field. I am for the *Union first*;—the *West next*. I am for the Union, because it protects the North, South, East and West;—and I am for *the West*, because *it protects the Union*.

Therefore, as a Western man, I will not agree that it is discretionary with Congress to admit or not admit a State as it pleases. I hold this doctrine:—that the power given to Congress to admit new States, imposes a *duty* to admit them. Every lawyer knows that the word *may*, whenever it imposes a *duty*, has the imperative meaning of *must* or *shall*. And this is more particularly so, where the thing to be done or the duty to be performed is calculated or designed to advance the public welfare. When that is the case, the word *may* is always imperative, because the idea of discretion is never associated with a power to do a thing, which the public interest requires to be done:—it *must* be done. So, in the case of new States,—the welfare of the Nation, according to my view, requires that the Union shall be enlarged and new States be created;—therefore, whenever these new States are formed and ask to come into the Union, they *may* come in, that is, they *must* or *shall* come in. I do not believe that it was ever designed by the framers of the Constitution to give Congress the power to check the growth of

the country, and I am not willing to concede that power. I would not put it in the power of a mere majority, or of a mere combination of political parties, to stop the Union at any given point. I would have it go on and expand, until the whole country, from sea to sea, was blessed by its influence.

But there is a single limitation to this power:—it cannot be exercised so as to injure or retard the public welfare. The State, when she applies for admission, must have a Constitution republican in form. If it contain provisions against public policy, then it is not republican, and, therefore may be rejected. As for example: if Utah should present a Constitution giving sanction to polygamy, that would be, like a contract for the same object, against public policy on the ground of immorality. She might, in that case, be rejected. The power to admit new States is given to promote the public interest, and must be exercised for that purpose and no other. The question of polygamy in a *Territory* is a different question. Congress should not permit it. Having the power to legislate for the Territories it should, in the case of Utah, prohibit it at once. The last session of Congress repealed an act of the Legislature of Minnesota, in the exercise of this power. But after Utah is admitted I know of no more power that Congress has over the question than it has over the usury or any other laws of this or any other State:

The doctrine I have advanced here is not new. It was announced in the Senate, in 1820, by one of the most distinguished men and profound lawyers we ever had in this country;—Mr. Pinkney of Maryland;—in his great speech upon the admission of Missouri. He foresaw that there was danger that the exciting question of *slavery* would be made the means of building up in this country, an *irresponsible* power that would lead to oppression;—the mere power of the stronger part of the Union to violate the rights of the weaker. And he saw how this party was to be built up:—by “*enthusiasm, moral, religious or political, or a compound of all three.*” It would rise like “a petty rivulet,” but would soon swell into a “fierce torrent”:—and then, said he:

“Woe to the unlucky territory that should be struggling to make its way into the Union, at the moment when the opposing inundation was at its height, and at the same instant this *wide Mediterranean of discretionary powers*, which it seems is ours, should open all its sluices &c.”

This great man possessed almost prophetic vision, which enabled him to look forward to *this* time, and see the “fierce torrent” of “enthusiasm, moral, religious or political, or a compound of all three” with which you are now asked to swallow up the “unlucky territory” of Kansas, beneath “this *wide Mediterranean of discretionary powers.*” As this mighty “inundation” is not yet “at its height”—let us do something, I implore you, to cause its waters to subside; that they may rest, calmly and quietly, in their own proper beds again. This we can do by letting slavery alone, by let-

ting the South alone, and cultivating in all our minds the strongest possible attachment to the Union.

This newly organized party is opposed to letting these things alone. They will talk about them. They will get up public meetings and make speeches about them. Their policy is to keep you all excited and aroused, that you may not, by any sort of possibility, be able to see things coolly and dispassionately, as you once saw them,—but only while under the influence of passion. They know that you abhor slavery, therefore they put that into the top, middle, bottom and sides of their platform. They have nothing else there:—it is *all* slavery. And then, to prevent the possibility of there being found in the North any body who is hardy enough to question them or their policy, they denounce every man as a “*dough-face*” who refuses to stultify himself about slavery as much as they do. See how the thing works:—Mr. Wilson of Massachusetts, the great drill sargeant of the Massachusetts *nullifiers*, who came out here lately as a political *Missionary* to us, in his speech at Indianapolis, and by virtue of the authority deputed to him from the head quarters of *Eastern abolitionism*, commanded his dutiful followers in this State that “*the breed of dough-faces*” should be “*exterminated.*” And forthwith, the whole artillery of abolitionism was opened upon every man who dared to utter *national* sentiments, or to claim that the *South* had any share in the government of the Union. Extermite them! How! By not letting them have any *offices*, of course:—that is what they mean. They have no ideas above *slavery* and *office*. If they can only exterminate slavery and all the national men of the North, then they’ll have *all the offices*. That is the summit of their ambition—the highest point of their hopes. Office!—that’s it. I tell you, that the *thirst for office* in this country is the greatest curse with which it has yet been afflicted. When this passion once seizes upon a certain class of men, they’ll move heaven and earth, to gratify it. There is nothing they will not do. They will fawn and cringe at the feet of power like spaniel dogs, and lick the very foot that kicks them. They will say any thing or do any thing they are commanded to do—and will take up political opinions and throw them by again, with as little concern, as if they were old clothes. This is the class of men—these office seekers, who are engaged in *exterminating* national men in the North. As they think that no man can have a higher motive than to *get an office*, so they threaten that nobody shall have the offices but themselves. Now, I profess to be a national man,—neither afraid nor ashamed to stand up here or anywhere else, and speak, what I believe to be the truth of history—or to defend the South when I believe she is wronged, and to rebuke the North for designing to wrong her. I dare to do all this, and more, if it shall be necessary; and I have the power, in the very face of their threats and their denunciations. I care not what they call me, so long as I have the approval of my own conscience, and

feel that I am right. As for their offices, I despise them. I would not exchange the quiet of my own home, here amongst you my neighbors and friends, for all the offices they can give or take away. Then as I am not to be one of the victims of this *extermination*, I shall continue to denounce this unnatural conspiracy against the peace of the Union, in such terms as I may employ, consistently with my own self-respect and the respect I have for those to whom I address myself. However severe a punishment they may suppose the deprivation of office to be, I beg to assure them that it is no deprivation to me at all.

If I supposed that these men were prompted by sentiments of genuine philanthropy, I should, perhaps, give a more charitable interpretation to their motives. But there is no philanthropy about it, except that mock kind which a few of them put on for purposes of deception. They care nothing about the negro, and have no sympathy for his condition. Any man who has been both in the North and South, knows perfectly well, that the master in the South, has a sympathy for his slaves, a thousand times stronger than the abolitionists in the North have. I never owned a slave, but I have felt the strength of this attachment myself. The fact that there are some cruel masters here and there, is no argument to disprove the existence of this sympathy. Nor does it prove that cruelty is incident to the system of slavery. We might as well argue that because there are fathers and mothers in the North who punish their children immoderately, therefore cruelty is an incident to matrimony and the whole system is wrong. No man who knows what the fact is, will dispute, that there are feelings of mutual kindness, as a general thing, between the master and slave—and that the cases where there is not are exceptions. Nor does the fact that a few negroes escape and flee to the free States and to Canada, prove the reverse of this. Many of them are induced to escape by false pretences. They are told that their condition will be greatly bettered in some free State, and that the whites will treat them, when they get there, as equals;—yet when they are carried, by an "*under-ground rail-road*" or some other mode, to a place of concealment, they are left to shift for themselves as they best can. While they are upon their journey, and while the master is pursuing, they can sit at the white man's table by the side of his wife and daughter—they can sleep in his bed and ride in his carriage,—but when he has reached his "*E'dorado*" he is turned adrift, with no body to care for him. He has then to provide his own support, for which he is utterly unfit. We have a plenty of instances amongst us, here, in our own town, of the worthlessness of this class of our population. And so sensible were the people of our State of their utter unfitness for any of the duties of citizenship, that we inserted a provision in our new Constitution, by a majority of nearly 100,000 votes, that they should never hereafter come into the State. I say they are deceived, many of them, and

enticed away, and, in a great many cases, when they are left to themselves, the first and strongest impulse is to get back to their masters again. But these humane abolitionists had rather see a negro starve to death as a *freeman*, than to "fare sumptuously" as a slave. Certainly! say they;—is there not a *principle*—the great principle of human freedom—involved, and shall the life of a single negro or a thousand negroes, stand in the way of the establishment of that great principle? This is the way they reason, precisely—and, therefore, their *consciences*, they say, teach them to take a negro from his master, in the way the *law* calls stealing, or to conceal him if any body else will steal him;—because there is a great *principle* in the thing. And they sometimes go so far, for fear they will let an opportunity escape, for establishing this principle, that they run off *free* negroes also. An old friend of mine, from my native town, was transporting some *free* negroes from Virginia to Ohio, a few months ago, with means to make provision for their comfortable location, yet when he got to a western city the abolitionists coaxed the negroes off and hid them, when they had an undisputed right to go where they pleased. They saw the man was from *Virginia*, and they thought they would merely rob him of his property, to keep the principle of philanthropy alive in their consciences. And there are many cases of the same sort. Not long ago, a man from the North,—a *preacher* of the Gospel, was travelling through a portion of Virginia, and called to stay all night at the house of a widow lady, who had a large number of slaves. She received him kindly and furnished him with the best fare of the country. Yet, while enjoying her hospitality and under cover of the night, he escaped from the window of her house, found his way to the quarters of her negroes and persuaded them *to run away!* This was all for *conscience* sake;—for he never expected to see the negroes again. These men, therefore, are disturbers of the public peace. I had occasion to allude to them in a speech made by me in Congress, in 1849, and I used this precise language towards them then. I know no reason why I should not repeat it, when every day furnishes more and more proof of its truth.

There are a great many people in the slave States, who would be willing to abolish slavery tomorrow, if they knew what to do with the negroes. They care more for them than the abolitionists do—because, if the abolitionists can only get them free, they do'n't care where they go or what becomes of them. But these people to whom I refer, in the slave States, are unwilling to turn them loose upon society to steal, starve or to be exterminated,—for, if slavery were abolished at once, that would be their inevitable destiny. There are thousands of negroes now in the South, ready to be sent, by their masters, to Liberia, if the National Colonization Society, had only the money and means to carry them. But the abolitionists are opposed to that, because that mode of getting the negroes free, do'n't exercise their *consciences* in the practice of the "higher

law." I am for that plan, and always have been, and I have no doubt of the constitutional power of Congress to appropriate money to carry it out. A large portion of the South is for it. It is not three years since I addressed the State Colonization Society of Virginia, at Richmond, where I had an opportunity of witnessing an exhibition of enthusiasm there, on this subject. That State appropriates \$20,000 a year, to the removal of free negroes to Africa. Now if all the States will do as well as ours and Virginia have done, in this cause, and if we shall induce the National government to lend its assistance, this colonization scheme may yet, as I believe it will, be the means of carrying, in the course of time, all the negroes of this country back again to the continent from whence they were torn by the white man's rapacity. And then, when this enterprise shall have worked out its results and have elevated a whole continent from barbarism, those who shall then be living, will see the accomplishment of the great design of Providence in permitting the slave to be brought in contact with our institutions.

But the abolitionists are opposed to this colonization scheme, because it creates no excitement, and offers no opportunities for office. They want to keep you all the time at fever-heat. They must have the political cauldron always boiling and bubbling over:—hoping, doubtless, that while the more substantial and weighty portions of society will not appear, the light and trashy part will float upon the surface. Therefore, they agitate the country with the discussion of the evils of slavery, their various propositions to check its progress, and finally to abolish it *in the States*. I desire you to observe this, for I mean what I say, and repeat, that they intend to *abolish slavery in the States!* I do not say that that is the object of all who are acting with this party, or that you who are willing to unite with this party desire or now intend to go that far. But five years ago, you would no more have thought of going as far as you now do, than you would have advocated a monarchy. At that time you would have felt offended with any man who should have told you that you would ever advocate doctrines which you this day profess. Therefore, you have no security against tomorrow. You do not know what new doctrine you may then have to swallow,—for they are gradually getting you "*ripe*" for any that may be necessary.—If you go into their party, it will be hard to get out, and you must take all its platforms, however they may choose to put them up, whatever political carpenter they may select to build them. You know how difficult it is to get away from a party. To bind you fast, to hold you so tight that there is no possibility of escape, they already tell you that there are but two parties in the country,—their's and the *old-line Democrats*—and you must take one or the other. They know your long and hard fought battles with the Democrats,—they know the great gulph that has separated you, as Whigs, from them, and they take advantage of all this to decoy you into their meshes. And then when they have got you fairly in, when the net is fully

over you and the strings are drawn tightly by the hand of a master manager,—why, you'll be but play-things in their hands. As the angler, when the fish has seized upon his bait, permits him to play about at the end of his line, so they will let you go or draw you in as their interest may require.

They coax and cozen you now, merely to act with them for awhile, and some of you think that it is well to do so, to accomplish a good, and then you can throw them off. You cannot do that—for when once in, you cannot get out again. But then if you go with them now, so as to make but two parties—the abolitionists and Democrats—when your *Whigs* have accomplished the good you speak of—where will you go? Why, if you then leave them—and you say you will,—you must go to the Democrats, for there will be no where else to go. You, with your own hands, will have exterminated every principle of the old Whig party. But it will be impossible for you to leave them, and before you know where you are hastening, you will find yourselves fully committed to the most ultra doctrines of the cunning leaders of this party. See, what they have already avowed to be their purpose and how steadily they have pursued it.

I wish I could read you the whole of a speech made, in 1848, at Cleveland, by Mr. Seward of New York—a man of consummate ability who can sit down and calculate upon the cast of political dice, as coolly and calmly as any man in the nation. But I can read only a few extracts, and these will be sufficient to show you what object *he* has been pursuing, steadily, for years. He says, “there are two antagonistical elements of society in America—*freedom and slavery*”—that they divide the country into, “two classes—the party of freedom and the party of slavery” and that “the party of freedom seeks *complete and universal emancipation*,”—that is, that it seeks to make all the slaves free. He then goes on to assert the “higher law” doctrine, that “it is written also, in *violation to Divine law* that we shall surrender the fugitive slave.” And with this foundation laid for his political faith, he proceeds to announce it by telling them what can be done. And I beseech you to mark well his words. He says:

“Slavery can be limited to its present bounds; it can be ameliorated. It can be, and it *must* be ABOLISHED, and you and I can and *must* do it. The task is as simple and easy as its consummation will be beneficent, and its rewards glorious. It requires to follow only this simple rule of action; *To do every where, and on every occasion what we can, and not to neglect or refuse to do what we can, at any time because at that precise time and on that particular occasion we cannot do more. Circumstances determine possibilities.*”

That is as plain as it need be expressed. Slavery “*must be abolished*”—but as it cannot be done at once, it must be done by degrees;—here a little and there a little,—gaining a little upon it in one neighborhood and a little more in another, accordingly as circumstances render it possible, until the consummation can be accomplished!

But then slavery in the States is protected by the Constitution.

and, seeing that difficulty in the way, he disposes of it in a most summary manner. He says:

"CONSTITUTIONS and laws can no more rise above the virtue of the people than the limpid stream can climb above its native spring. Inculcate the love of freedom and the equal rights of man under the paternal roof; see to it that they are taught in the schools and in the churches; reform your own code, extend a cordial welcome to the fugitive who lays his weary limbs at your door, and defend him as you would your paternal gods; correct your own error, that *slavery has any constitutional guarantee, which may not be released, and ought not to be relinquished.* Say to slavery when it shows its bond [that is, the compromise of the Constitution;] and demands its pound of flesh, that if it draws one drop of blood "*its life shall pay the forfeit*" &c. "Do all this, and inculcate all this, in the spirit of moderation and benevolence, and not of retaliation and fanaticism, and you will soon bring the parties of the country into an effective AGGRESSION UPON SLAVERY. Whenever the public mind shall will the abolition of slavery, the way will open for it."

"I know that you will tell me that this is all too slow. Well, then, go faster if you can, and I will go with you."

These are the words of the great leader of the abolition forces—who thus avowed his object and his mode of accomplishing it. This command was issued to his troops in 1848, and just look back from now till then, upon the course of this party, and see how literally the command has been obeyed. Every injunction has been observed—and nothing has been left undone. They have crept into the other parties, like spies from the camp of an enemy, and have concealed their real sentiments until now. They have wormed into your schools, into your churches, at your firesides—all over the North, every where,—till now, seizing upon the unfortunate repeal of the Missouri compromise, they boldly step out from their hiding places, and demand, in obedience to their great captain, that "*slavery must be abolished*" and that neither "*Constitution nor laws*" shall stand in the way! Look at these things, I pray you, and see where it is that these men will carry you.

Now, this party may undertake to deny the leadership of Garrison and Phillips, but they cannot deny that *Seward* is their commanding general, and that they obey him with implicit obedience. And they cannot escape the leadership of *Wilson* of Massachusetts:—especially out here, as he took formal possession, a few days ago, of the Indiana division of the army. During the last spring he delivered a lecture at Tremont Temple in Boston, where he said:

"Send it abroad on the wings of the wind that I am committed, fully committed, committed to the fullest extent, in favor of IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY wherever it exists under the authority of the Constitution of the United States."

He afterwards explained *where* the slavery was that he was for abolishing "*immediately and unconditionally.*"

A few days before he left home to come to Indiana, to issue his manifesto of principles and "bull of excommunication" against "dough-faces," he had an amiable correspondence with *Wendell Phillips*, merely for the purpose, I suppose, of being supplied, from head-quarters, with proper instructions, before he set out upon his mission. In his letter to Phillips, dated June 20, 1855, he says:

"I hope, my dear sir, that we shall all strive to unite and combine all the friends of

freedom, that we shall forget each other's faults and shortcomings in the past, and all labor to secure that co-operation by which alone THE SLAVE IS TO BE EMANCIPATED and the domination of his master broken. Let us remember that more than three millions of bondmen, groaning under nameless woes, demand that we shall cease to reproach each other, and that we labor for THEIR deliverance."

Do you need a purpose avowed in plainer language than that?—Is the English language capable of expressing it more plainly? The very slaves who are to be delivered are pointed out. They are the "three millions" now IN THE SOUTHERN STATES! Observe the language. It is clear, distinct and emphatic. There is no mistaking it. *Slavery as it exists in the Southern States is to be abolished by this party!* It is avowed—openly avowed—and let all the people know it, that they may understand what they are about. And to accomplish this great result,—this "deliverance" of the bondmen,—they must "*all* strive to unite and combine," and "forget each other's faults." It is no matter that Phillips and Garrison, curse the Union with almost every breath they take, and denounce it as a lie, and as a league with hell;—it is no matter that they harmonize in convention with those who declare that "*the christian's God is the most accursed of demons,*" and that "no man's rights can be ascertained by reference to a *Bible, a Law, or a Constitution;*"—it is no matter that they have declared that the "Constitution displayed the ingenuity of the very devil, and that the Union ought to be dissolved:"—all this is of no sort of moment, when the great object to be attained is looked at. All sorts of people—infidels and atheists who denounce God and scoff at his word,—open and avowed disunionists—are taken into this mixed and motley crowd, and all their "faults and shortcomings" are forgotten, because they must unite and combine, to *abolish slavery in the States!* And now, if there are any of you *here* who choose to follow off this Mr. Wilson, in his crusade against the Constitution and the Union, you must take the consequences of being found in the company he has picked for you. Is any man fool enough to suppose that you can emancipate the slaves of the South, without dissolving the Union? Every body knows you cannot—and no body knows it better than Wilson. Is he not, then, a *disunionist!* Unquestionably, *he is,* and if you follow his lead, you must take the consequences. I hope you will not. There is not a man here whom I would like to see in such association. I beseech you to reject them, with the indignation which you cannot help but feel for such open avowals of *treason* against the Constitution and Union.

But, as a *Whig*, I need not go this far, to satisfy me that these men ask me to stand with them upon an *abolition* platform. I claim to be a *Whig*. I started a *Whig*. I have always been a *Whig*, without wavering or shadow of turning, to the right or to the left. I have served that party when I had the strength to serve it, and now that my strength is giving way—though as a party it may not exist—I cherish its principles with all the ardor of my nature. I shall continue to cherish them, and to teach them to my children, with a firm conviction that some time or other, if the Union shall stand,—

it may be, in the far off future—when men's passions shall be hushed and public attention is once again called back to the true honor and glory of the nation, its peace, happiness and prosperity will be found in a re-establishment of those principles. Who, more than Henry Clay, understood those principles? Who, with a more eloquent voice than he proclaimed them? Who, with more unerring aim than he, reached the great Whig heart of this country? Hear *his* definition of not merely abolitionism, but *ultra-abolitionism*. In 1839, he said:

"And the third class are the *real ultra-abolitionists*, who are resolved to persevere in their object *at all hazards*, and *without regard to any consequences*, however calamitous they may be. With them the *rights of property are nothing*; the *deficiency of the powers of the general government is nothing*; the *acknowledged and incontestible powers of the States are nothing*; CIVIL WAR, A DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION, and the *overthrow of a government in which are concentrated the fondest hopes of the civilized world, are nothing*. A single idea has taken possession of their minds, and onward they pursue it, *overlooking all barriers, reckless and regardless of all consequences*. With this class, the *immediate abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and in the Territory of Florida*, [Florida was not then in the Union;] *the prohibition of the removal of slaves from State to State, and the REFUSAL TO ADMIT ANY NEW STATE, comprising within its limits the institution of domestic slavery, are but so many means* conducing to the accomplishment of the ultimate but *perilous* end at which they avowedly and boldly aim; are but so many short stages in the *long and bloody* road to the distant goal at which they would finally arrive. Their purpose is *abolition, universal abolition, peaceably if it can, forcibly if it must.*"

But we are told that Mr. Clay afterwards declared that no earthly power should induce him to give a vote to extend slavery over a foot of Territory now free. This, it is said, proves that he would be, were he alive, opposed to creating slavery in Kansas; and therefore is an argument for the interference of the general government to prevent slavery from going there; or, if it does go, for refusing Kansas admission into the Union. Mr. Clay was speaking of the power of *Congress* to establish slavery, as I well recollect, for I heard the speech, and remember his expression of countenance when he made the remark. He did not believe that Congress had power to *create* slavery in a Territory, and therefore he would not vote for it. He was opposed to *creating* slavery any where, and for that reason also would not do it. Nor would I. But then Mr. Clay insisted that if *others* in a State, who had the right to do so, independent of Congress, chose to establish it, it was *their* business not *his*, and furnished no reason for keeping them out of the Union. If Mr. Clay were alive and lived in Kansas he would vote against slavery, and so would I, if I were there. But Mr. Clay, as a citizen of Kentucky, or member of Congress, bore a different relation to the slavery of a Territory;—it was *political* alone. He therefore, always denied the right of Congress to exclude a State because the people of it chose to hold slaves. It was always his view, frequently and strongly expressed, that the Union would not survive such an exclusion.

Now, these remarks of Mr. Clay show what the Whigs called abolitionism in 1839. Is it any thing different now? Then, the policy was merely foreshadowed dimly, and Mr. Clay's sagacity

enabled him to see and point it out. Now, it is openly acknowledged and avowed. Can I forget his definition of it? Can I forget my own faith, formed and moulded more by him than any other man? Can you, who have been so long distinguished as the "old Whig guard of Vigo"—forget these things? If your ears are no longer open to the words of Mr. Clay, let me ask you to recollect what you have, yourselves, done and declared. In 1840, you told the country what you understood by ABOLITIONISM.

I hold in my hand a document which may seem rather curious to some here, but there are others who will recognize it. It is addressed "to the voters of Vigo" and was published in 1840, by the leading and most efficient and influential Whigs of this county. They accused Mr. Van Buren of being an *abolitionist*, and define, what they understood *abolitionism* to be. They then arrayed, in parallel columns, the sentiments and votes of Mr. Van Buren and those of Gen. Harrison, that the people might see how the former was an abolitionist and how the latter was not, but was just such a "State rights" man as they ought to vote for, for the Presidency. I call your special attention to this paper. Here is an extract or two from it:

“CONTRAST FOR STATE RIGHTS MEN.”

VAN BUREN.

“In 1820, when the *Missouri restrictionists* were threatening the Union with dissolution, the following preamble and resolution were adopted by the Legislature of New York. Mr. VAN BUREN was a member at the time and voted for them.

Preamble and Resolutions.

Whereas, the *inhibiting the further extension of slavery* in the United States is a subject of deep concern to the people of this State; and, whereas we consider *slavery as an evil* much to be deplored, and that every constitutional barrier should be interposed to prevent its further extension, and that the Constitution of the United States, clearly giving Congress the right to require of new States, not comprehended within the original boundaries of the United States, the prohibiting of slavery as a condition of their admission into the Union. Therefore:

Resolved, That our Senators be instructed and our Representatives in Congress be requested to oppose the admission as a State into the Union, of any Territory not compr-

HARRISON.

In 1819, GEN. HARRISON, then a member of Congress, voted AGAINST restricting Missouri in her Constitutional rights. He was one of those members from non-slave-holding States who voted in favor of Missouris coming into the Union upon the same terms as other States, and opposed all efforts of the ABOLITIONISTS to deprive her of the right to recognize slavery in her Constitution. For this excited self-devotion he was turned out of office, thus sacrificing himself upon the altar of Southern rights.

In 1833,

GEN. HARRISON, in a speech delivered at Cheviot, Ohio, said,—

The discussion of the subject of emancipation in the non slaveholding States, is equally injurious to the slaves and their masters, and HAS NO SANCTION IN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION.

In 1835,

GEN. HARRISON, in an address at Vincennes, inveighed in the strongest terms against emancipationists, denouncing their claims as “weak presumptuous and unconstitutional” and

sed as aforesaid. *making the prohibition of slavery therein an indispensable condition of admission.*

In 1821,

Mr. VAN BUREN, as a member of the New York Convention voted to give *free negroes* the right of suffrage.

In 1822,

Mr. VAN BUREN voted to *prohibit the introduction of slaves into the Territory of Florida.*

In 1836,

Mr. VAN BUREN said, "I would not from the lights before me, feel myself safe in promising that Congress does *not* possess the power of *interfering with or abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia.*"

implored the citizens of Indiana to frown upon measures which would "eradicate those feelings of attachment and affection between the citizens of all the states, which was produced by a community of interests and dangers in the war of the revolution, which was the foundation of our happy Union, and by a continuance of which, *it can alone be preserved.*" In this address he contended that *the people of the non-slaveholding States were NOT WARRANTED BY THE CONSTITUTION IN HOLDING MEETINGS AND PUBLISHING SPEECHES AGAINST THE DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE SOUTH.*

In 1836,

GEN. HARRISON, in a letter to Mr. Tho's. Sloo Jr. of New Orleans said,

"I do not believe that Congress can abolish slavery in the States, *or in any manner interfere with the property of the citizens in their slaves*, but on the application of the States, in which case, and in no other, they might appropriate money to aid the States so applying to get rid of their slaves." The opinions given above are precisely those which were entertained by JEFFERSON and MADISON.

"I do not believe that Congress can abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, without the consent of Virginia and Maryland and the people of the district."

I read this, that you, the Whigs of Vigo, may be reminded, if any of you, perchance, have forgotten, what *you* did in the celebrated canvass of 1840, to define *abolitionism*. I call your attention to it especially, because I know that you are not the men to take any "step backwards" whenever the honor and glory of the country shall forbid it. You said that those who, in 1820, voted to restrict Missouri in her right to hold slaves, were *abolitionists*. "threatening the Union with dissolution" and you condemned and denounced *Van Buren* because he was one of them. You condemned and denounced him because he voted to "give *free negroes* the right of suffrage." You condemned and denounced him because he voted to "*prohibit* the introduction of slaves into the Territory of Florida." You condemned and denounced him for admitting that *Congress had the right to "interfere with or to abolish slavery in the District of Colum-*

bia." You condemned and denounced him for voting, in the New York Legislature for a preamble and resolution which asserted that the *extension of slavery should be inhibited*. You condemned and denounced him for asserting, in the same preamble and resolution that "*the Constitution gives Congress the right to require of NEW STATES, not comprehended within the original boundaries of the United States, the PROHIBITING OF SLAVERY AS A CONDITION OF THEIR ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.*" For all this and these you condemned and denounced him as an ABOLITIONIST, and condemned and denounced his doctrines as "*threatening the Union with dissolution.*" You arraigned him at the bar of public opinion, for these political heresies, and you held him up in your hands, as a thing to be hated of men and scorned by every patriot in the land.

You called upon the country to observe the *contrast* between him and the old "hero of Tippecanoe,"—whom you presented as a statesman and patriot, to be safely trusted, because of that contrast. You told them that *Harrison* had voted *against the Missouri restriction*. That he denounced even the "*discussion* of the subject of emancipation in the *non-slaveholding States*" as UNCONSTITUTIONAL. That he denounced the claims of the emancipators as "*weak presumptuous* and UNCONSTITUTIONAL." That he denounced the practice of "holding meetings and publishing speeches" in the free States, "*against the domestic institutions of the South*" as UNCONSTITUTIONAL. That he *denied* the constitutional right of Congress to abolish slavery in the States, or to interfere with the *property* of the citizens in their slaves. That he denied to Congress the right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. You presented Gen. Harrison to the country as a fit man for the Presidency, as a patriot in whose hands the fortunes of the Union might be confided, *because* he had entertained and expressed these "*State rights*" doctrines.

The first time I ever came to this city was in 1840, when I was a Whig candidate for Elector. I then found this publication, almost "fresh from the press," and in the first speech I ever made in this house, it furnished the text of what I said. I recollect the occasion well, and I recollect how I was applauded, for my earnest devotion to the Whig principles which are here proclaimed. Poor Van Buren, how we did pumnel him for his *abolitionism!* Not only here—but every where, all over the State—in every nook and corner of it—we denounced him as an *abolitionist*. And we brought down upon his head such a storm of rebuke, that even the endorsement of Jackson could not save him. And for *my* participation in this great contest,—for, I suppose, the industry with which I labored to fasten this charge of *abolitionism* upon Van Buren,—you, when I was comparatively a stranger to you, elected me to Congress in 1841. And you elected me, not because you knew much about *mé*, personally, but because I entertained and defended the opinions of Gen. Harrison. For example, upon the only question, connected with slavery, then likely to come before Congress, and in a printed circular which I sent all over the district, I said:

"I am opposed to *abolitionism*. Raised amid the institution of domestic slavery, I may have imbibed, in early life, prejudices upon this subject, of which it is difficult to rid one. However, that may be, I regard my opinions upon it, as in accordance with the principles of the Constitution. I believe that *Congress has no Constitutional right to abolish slavery in any State, or in the District of Columbia*. If they had the right to do so, in the District, the spirit of the deed of cession from Maryland and Virginia forbids it, without the consent of the slave owners."

I refer to this, not in self-justification, because I am not upon trial, and it is a matter of no sort of consequence what I may have thought or done. But I refer to it to show, what was the prevailing and ruling sentiment of the *Whigs of Indiana* in 1840, on the subject of *abolitionism*. But I refer to it for another reason also,—which is to show you, that whatever may be done in other Northern States, it is utterly impossible for *you* and *me*, and the *old Whigs of Indiana*, to mount upon this *Van Buren platform now*. We cannot do it. It is impossible, unless we stultify ourselves. What, the Whigs of Indiana turn *Van Buren men!* That's what they ask us to do. Have we not said and declared, before the whole country, that the *Van Buren platform*, from which the abolitionists now take theirs, was an abolition platform, and that those who stand upon it "*threaten the Union with dissolution?*" How can we take all this back! It is impossible. For my part, I don't want to take it back. I will stand by it:—"live or die, sink or swim, survive or perish," I will stand by it. No earthly power shall force me to *un-whig* myself. I'll cherish these principles of 1840, as the true principles of the government; and if I cannot battle for them now with all the strength and vigor that I did when the flag of Harrison waved over me, I'll do it with all the strength I have. I will not support the doctrines either of the "*Hartford Convention*" or of *Martin Van Buren*. I repudiate both, utterly and entirely. The one aimed a deadly blow at the *West*:—the other aims an equally deadly one at the *Union*.

I deprecate this mixing up of all our elections with this question of slavery. It is wrong. We have nothing to do with it, as it exists in the States, and it is our duty to *let it alone*. I hope we can, some time or other, have a political platform with no slavery about it. That's the kind of platform I would like to stand on. The first time, in our State politics, when it was introduced here, was in 1836; and it was then introduced by the Democrats,—at whose door I lay the responsibility of first disturbing our people with that question. While the Democrats of the South were supporting Mr. Van Buren, on the ground of his devotion to *State rights*, they were here urging his election on the ground of his devotion to freedom. They charged Gen. Harrison, in the address of the party published in 1836, and which I now have before me, with having attempted to introduce slavery into this State; with having, as they said, sought to soil our fair escutcheon with the "*foul blot of slavery*." They appealed to the passions of the people of the State, and asked them whether they would vote for such a man as Harrison, who had done an act of so much iniquity? I

regretted the introduction of the question then, and have regretted it ever since,—for it set an example which has led to all the consequences which we now see. True, the Democrats seem to have repented of it, but then they cannot escape the fact that *they* did the mischief. I hope that, like the boy smarting under the paternal rod, they will, at least, promise to do so no more. But I have my fears. They may get back to their *old tricks again*. They must be watched.

From this introduction of the question amongst us by the Democratic party, in 1836, we have gone on step by step, until we have reached a point of excitement which creates alarm in almost every mind. We cannot go much farther. My own opinion is that we *must stop* or the Union cannot endure the assault. As we now are, every day increases the excitement. Every fresh arrival of the mail from Kansas inflames us, and stories of every imaginable kind are manufactured and set afloat, to incense us against slavery and the people of the slave States. I saw it stated the other day that they were about to annex a part of Missouri to Kansas, in order to make it a slave State—and yet, although this stuff is published in the papers, every school boy ought to know that such a thing cannot be done *without the consent of Congress*. It was also stated that the sitting of the Kansas Legislature had been removed four or five miles this side the Territorial line and *into Missouri*—when the “Shawnee Mission” at which it sits is a mile beyond the line of Missouri;—as I personally know. The other day an Editor in Nebraska published an article in his paper, stating that some Missourians had taken their negroes into that Territory, and intended to make a slave State of it. Forthwith, the story went the rounds of the newspapers, and the Abolitionists were wonderfully excited at it. The Editor then said that there was not a word of it true, that he was just starting his paper and took that method of *bringing it into notice!* I mention these instances to show you what extraordinary pains some men are taking to magnify everything concerning Kansas. There is enough there that cannot be justified, without this,—it is bad enough at best. No body, I apprehend, except the parties themselves, will undertake to apologize for lawless acts which have been committed there, or for illegal voting. That is all wrong. But then there is wrong on both sides. It was in bad taste to form “Emigrant aid societies” in Boston, to import free voters there—and it was wrong for Missourians to vote without authority of law. It was wrong for the latter to arm themselves with revolvers and bowie knives, but it was no more wrong than for a gentleman in Boston to propose to give \$1,000 to buy “*arms*” for the *free settlers*. The whole of this was wrong, but then it does not affect the question of the *political rights of the people of Kansas*. That is the great matter to be considered. And I have a fixed conviction, that, if they are let alone—if there is no further attempt to prevent them

from doing as they please, they will decide against slavery, and *Kansas will be a free State*. Present excitement there upon the question, is natural enough. Excitement is always natural upon the frontier. A good many of us have lived in this State long enough to know the difference between the staid and steady character of our population now and what it was even twenty or twenty-five years ago. We have known such a question as the removal of a county seat, create the most intense feeling, and, in the end, lead to blows and bloodshed. People living in the old States were once in the habit of calling *us* rude, lawless and uncivilized, just as they now call the settlers in Kansas; and you will observe, that those who are the most industrious in this sort of abuse, know the least about real Western character. The very term "*Hoosier*," of which none of us are now ashamed, was, to them, some years ago, synonymous with *savage*. The fact is, that the people of Kansas are just like the people have been in all the Territories, and if they are let alone, *will do right*. We should cease our efforts to *force*, by unnatural means, any particular class of population there. Let those go there who desire to go, and it needs no prophet to "tell that a large majority—perhaps, four-fifths of them, will go from the free States. The "*emigrant aid*" societies have, doubtless, induced a great many to go, who, otherwise, would not have gone, but having turned out to be "*humbugs*" their only effect has been to involve the Territory in difficulty and to enable those who got them up, to speculate in lands and town lots. *That*, I doubt not, was one of the chief objects in getting them up. I noticed, the other day, a statement taken from the *free-soil* paper, published in Lawrence in Kansas, that "eight centers" or towns, had been laid off and "settled with the agents of the Emigrant Aid Company;" and the same paper, speaking of this Company, says, it "*is all a humbug*." It advises the citizens no longer to "*submit to their tantalizing, humbugging operations*;"—for it says—"it is suicidal for us to depend on the Aid Company doing any thing for Lawrence, or for any other point in Kansas Territory." You will see, therefore, that a few speculators in lands and town lots have been attempting to force people there to *make money for themselves*, and we have been ready almost to go to war to *help them to do it*. The people of Missouri, living in a few of the Western Counties, seeing this, were readily induced to enter into this race for speculation,—just, exactly, as any other people, under the same circumstances, would have done. Their first object, when they went there, was to get hold of the lands of the Delaware Indians, just north of the Kansas river, about which they had a long controversy with the government. They failed in this, but while they were prosecuting this design, an election for delegate to Congress came off. The "Emigrant Aid Society" being disposed to monopolize the speculations, at once charged them with being there without right, as they had homes in Missouri. This led to retaliation, and, finally, the

two parties got at open war, which continues yet, but which, by the accounts that come to us through the newspapers, is greatly magnified. In its prosecution a great many illegal votes have been given,—but, who ever heard of a contested election where illegal votes were not given? Look at the list of voters in our own City, at the last general election, and you will find several hundred names there, of men of whom you never heard before, and of whom, in all probability, you will never hear again. This occurs in all parts of the Union. But as the condition of things in the Territory becomes more settled, this state of affairs will gradually pass away. Missouri cannot spare much more of her population, and there is no emigration there, of any consequence, from any other slave State. I can see no earthly inducement for a heavy emigration from Western Missouri to Kansas. If the people who live in the Western counties could improve their condition by going there, they might do it. But they cannot. They live in a country, equal to any I ever saw,—highly improved and cultivated. No part of the Western country offers more inducements for settlement, and few parts of it, so many. It is greatly superior to any part of Kansas, except that which borders upon it, and that which is confined to the Kansas and Neosho valleys. When you leave those valleys in Kansas, and a few others of more limited extent, the remainder of the Territory is a vast prairie, without timber for hundreds of miles. The people of Western Missouri, therefore, have no idea of settling in Kansas, and those who have gone there, have gone principally because of the reasons I have stated. Then, let Kansas alone. Let slavery there alone. Let the people from the North go there, just as they have gone into the other Territories, and, I have no doubt, they will make it a *free State*. But whether they do or not, when they get there, they have as much right to make it what they please, when they come to be a State, as the people of any other State have. They will, in their own time and way, put down all Legislative usurpation if any exists, and do their business legitimately. And when they do so, and form a Constitution fairly, by the legal voters of the Territory, I shall not give my voice to exclude them from the Union.

Here are a few excellent and most sensible remarks by the Editor of the *Kansas "Herald of Freedom"* on the subject of Slavery there, and I commend them to your careful attention. He says:

"It is virtually an impossibility for slaveholders to get a foothold here. The actual residents have a majority of three to one against slavery, and this number they can maintain. A few weak-hearted persons may leave the Territory, but thousands who have the ring of true steel in their composition will come in to take their places.

Laws made by Missourians will have no binding force on the people of Kansas, and as for slave laws, the next Congress will throw restrictions around any enactments passed in violation of popular sovereignty which will make them inoperative. No intelligent body of men, whether Northern or Southern, can sustain the recent course pursued by those who robbed us of our legal rights a few weeks ago:

The recent election has not and will not encourage Southern emigration. We have information from points all along the border, and we are assured that there has

been no importation of slaves with the exception of a few at the Shawnee Mission, whilst others have been sold, leaving but a very slight actual increase.

The Legislature may attempt to legalize the institution, and will probably pass a law in its favor over the Executive veto. But what of that? It is like any other law not sustained by the popular will, and it will give no confidence to slaveholders. On the contrary, they will not feel like bringing their chattles where there is the remotest probability of their coming in contact with the friends of freedom.

But there is another fact which will tell powerfully against slavery in Kansas, and that is the impossibility of procuring a sufficient quantity of real estate. Until the lands shall come into market the most wealthy person in the world can only secure 160 acres. This is not sufficient for a plantation, as not less than a thousand will answer any purpose, and 1,500 acres would be preferred.

When the people of Kansas have so little concern about slavery going there, as is indicated by this extract, why should we concern ourselves so much about it? Those prosper the most, who attend to *their own business* best.

We are asked to make a martyr of Gov. Reeder—because the President has turned him out. I shall not help to do it. It is no business of mine how many *Democrats* this administration shall turn out of office. That is their own business, and no concern of mine. I would turn out a good many more of them if I could. Gov. Reeder has acknowledged that he went there to *speculate*, and if in doing it he has lost his office, he has nobody to blame but himself. I think he had a *legal* right to buy the Indian lands that he purchased, but then he should have bought them openly, in his own name, and not have endeavored to conceal his interest in them. He made a mistake, as a speculator, when he supposed that the President had any thing to do to make his title good, and, therefore, as he bought upon the condition that the President should confirm the title, he has got none. If he had paid the purchase money and taken an unconditional title, the President could not have interfered with it;—for he has no power to interfere with a purchase from a single Indian, unless it is given him by treaty. But while he had the *legal* right to buy the land, it was very well calculated to excite the people, to see the government officers taking up the best land, in advance of population; and it is quite well enough to put a stop to that sort of practice. Therefore, I think it was right enough to turn him out. I have a copy here, of articles of copartnership between him and others, to carry on a speculation in the town lots of the late seat of government. As the law gave him the power to locate the first seat of government, it was not unnatural that he should fix it at *his own town!* Now, his whole case may be summed up in a few words. It is this: that he took an office to make a speculation, got caught at it, and lost his office! Let that be his political epitaph. It was a *Democratic* affair, and let the *Democrats* make the most of it.

Now, fellow citizens, I have done. I did not when I began, design to speak so long. But the patience exhibited by the whole audience, and my own feelings, have induced me, almost unconsciously, to say as much as I have. You will pardon it, in view of the magnitude of the questions I have tried to discuss; and however tedious I may have been, I hope you will give me credit for sincerity

in what I have said. I have concealed no sentiment, and have not hesitated to express such as I really entertain. The times require candor on the part of all men, and I have counted well the cost of attempting to exhibit it myself, on these delicate and exciting questions. I know that I shall be assailed by some with whom I have been accustomed to act, and charged with favoring the cause of *old line Democracy*. But I have no care upon my own account. I have no party objects to accomplish;—no personal end to attain. I have spent my life, thus far, in resisting *abolitionism* and *old line Democracy*, and I expect to spend the remainder of it, so far as I shall interfere in politics at all, in the same way. I shall defend *Whig* principles against any party or all parties combined. But I shall not be such a *Whig here*, that when I go across the Ohio into Kentucky, I cannot be a *Whig there*, also. I must be a *national Whig*, and if I remain a true one, I can be no other. As I love all parts of the Union, I must, to be true to my own feelings, maintain a political faith that embraces the interests of all parts of the Union. In doing this, I regret that I shall be compelled to differ with friends whom I esteem. But I cannot help it. My conscience would not be quiet if I were to take a different course. That has been my guide in forming all my political opinions, and it must guide me to the end.

But before I sit down, permit me to urge upon you the necessity of looking at these questions coolly and dispassionately. Dismiss from your minds all excitement, if any exists there. There is more at stake than the temporary success of any party. We have such institutions as no other people under the sun possess. We have a form of government, the best the world has ever seen. We have a Union which has been our pride and our protection. Let us not, I beseech you, in the madness of party, sport them all away. They are worthy of all our labors, and of any sacrifices we can make. They are the best inheritance we can give our children. Our fathers sealed them with their best blood, and, if we shall assail them, their rebuke will rise up from the tomb against us. The eyes of the world are upon us. Millions, who would follow our example, are looking on at the result of our experiment. If we shall be true to ourselves;—if we shall cease our fraternal strife;—if we shall cherish the admonitions of our fathers;—if we shall stand by the *Union as it is*, then, when we have passed away and our children shall have taken our places, our light will continue to shine out upon the nation of the earth, with increased and increasing brightness. But if we shall not;—if sectional strife must continue;—if the Union must be stricken down;—if our national sun, now at its meridian height, must set forever; I will have no hand in the deed of desecration. I will stand by the Union to the last; and will give my life, if the sacrifice shall be demanded, to preserve it for my children. And if I shall leave them no other legacy, I will teach them borrowing the thought,—of a late distinguished jurist, that their obligation to defend the Union, is second only to their obligation to reverence and worship God.

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