

DISORGANIZATION AND DISUNION.

SPEECH

OF

HON. EDWARD McPHERSON,

OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 24, 1860.

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

Mr. McPHERSON said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: A parliamentary contest, the most extraordinary in our annals, has recently closed. During its existence, it attracted the attention, and finally awakened the anxiety, of the country. At its termination, every patriot heart felt glad. In its origin, progress, and issue, it challenges the study of those who wish to understand the real position and animating spirit of parties, the capabilities and dangers of our system, the tendencies of events, and the nature of the moulding influences which surround our institutions.

This contest, which has been already noticed in Europe to the disparagement of the republican form of government, was not an ordinary party movement, indicating nothing, and wisely forgotten as soon as made. It was not accidental, purposeless, unmeaning. It was not an isolated fact, coming one knows not whence, pointing one knows not whither. On the contrary, it was a concerted scheme, had a congenial origin, and pointed to a desired result. It was a political demonstration of the very highest significance. It came in a natural succession of events. It was one of a chain, the threats of disunion in the contingency of Fremont's election in 1856, made by Democratic leaders, and their subsequent endorsement of the lawlessness, crime, and bloodshed, which prevailed in Kansas, as a result of a like violent, arbitrary, reckless, and revolutionary policy on the part of the Democratic party, being the immediate antecedent links; all these developments being symptomatic of the loathsome and deep-seated disease which has stolen the beauty from the life of the Democratic party, and is now destroying the life. It was a genuine growth; a natural outcrop; a legitimate and

necessary result of the ideas and principles lately infused into the Democratic party—ideas and principles which have completely changed its character, and transformed it into a mere machine for factionists to handle in their war with the Government and the interests of the people. Neither was it the work of unknown or unimportant men. It was coined in the brains of prominent officials, approved by the leaders of an organized party, and carried out with the system, energy, and determination of men in earnest—its marked characteristics, distinctive features, peculiar nature, striking developments, and significant surroundings, constituting it one of the most remarkable and suggestive indications of the day.

IT STANDS ALONE.

In almost all respects, it was without parallel. In duration only, was it exceeded by that of 1855-'6, which can, in no other respect, be compared. *Then* there was no resort to parliamentary strategy, to prevent efforts to elect a Speaker, and more votes were taken in one week than, this session, were taken in six weeks. There was no persistent speech-making for the same purpose; there was no factious interposition, by a minority, to prevent the majority from performing the first duty imposed upon them by the Constitution and the laws; there was no defiant declaration of treasonable purpose to break up the Government the moment the administration of it passes from present hands; there was no organized movement directed towards a dissolution of the Congress, without a discharge of its functions. In one word, *then*, there was no incipient treason.

ITS NATURE AND EFFECT.

I have endeavored to view this subject calmly, fairly, and impartially. I have looked at it in the light of the various excuses by which it is

sought to justify or palliate the course of the Administration party, and my conviction is firm that, notwithstanding the approval given it by high officers of State, it was not only in violation of the Constitution and of parliamentary and statute law, but was factious and revolutionary in character. During it, there was resort by them to means unusual and unheard of; there were purposes announced incompatible with the safety of the people, the peaceful performance of duty by their Representatives, and the stability of the Government; and there were precedents set of the most alarming and fearful character, which, if followed, will place it in the power of fifty members wholly to prevent the organization of any future House; thus making its existence a matter of sufferance, and the Government as feeble as the old Confederation which it supplanted. Nothing can save us from this perpetual danger but the enactment of a law, of which I am glad to see notice has been already given, by which these revolutionary precedents will be nullified, a future turbulent and disorganizing minority will be disarmed, the majority principle preserved, and the rights of majorities secured against all possible combinations.

THE LAW AND ITS OBLIGATION.

Let the facts bear testimony! We met on the 5th day of December in pursuance of law, whereupon the names of the members elect were called by the Clerk of the last Congress. On motion, it was resolved, according to immemorial usage, that the members proceed to elect a Speaker. This was clearly the first duty; and the motion was unanimously agreed to. The Constitution confers upon the members of the House of Representatives the power to choose their Speaker and other officers; and the act of Congress of 1789, the first on the statute book, provides that he shall be chosen; that the oath of office shall be administered by one member of the House to the Speaker, and by him to all the members present, and to the Clerk, "previous to entering on any other business." Thus the organization of the House, by electing a Speaker and Clerk, is made a condition precedent to entering on any other business, and is the first and essential step. No member is at liberty to disregard this duty. No one can do so without infidelity. And all are bound to perform it *at once*; or, failing in that, to use all practicable means to effect it at the earliest possible moment. No one can be justified in interposing the least obstacle to the performance of this duty by the House. Tried by this test, how stand the parties?

THE MEANS USED TO KEEP UP DISCORD.

After one vote for Speaker had been taken without result, an Administration member introduced a resolution of an extraordinary character, in violation of parliamentary law and practice, and in contravention of the act of 1789—a resolution which, if adopted, would have been inoperative, which hence had no practical value, and could not in any manner have facilitated the organization; and which was so objectionable in its terms that at the conference of representatives of the three anti-Republican elements of the House—the Administration party, the South

Americans, and a portion of the Anti-Lecompton Democrats—held on Sunday, January 8, in pursuance of an arrangement publicly made in the House, with the avowed purpose of securing a union of their votes to defeat Mr. SHERMAN, it was unanimously resolved to recommend the withdrawal of the resolution, and the substitution of another, differing much in phraseology and spirit. Pending the consideration of this resolution, the Administration party forced the House to adjourn on the first day without a second vote for Speaker. On the next day, a substitute for it was offered, when, after debate, it was moved to lay the whole subject on the table, that the House might proceed to elect a Speaker. This was lost by a tie vote—all the Administration members voting in the negative. Thereupon, they claimed unlimited freedom of debate, and denied that there was any power in the body to stop it. Points of order and other complications of the question were made and withdrawn, as the exigencies of debate suggested. They spent whole weeks in making mischievous and incendiary speeches, which, intemperate in the highest degree, caricatured the principles held by this side of the House, and were intended to arouse sectional animosities, and intensify alarm, that miserable partisan purposes might be promoted. They objected to a resolution proposed by the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. MORRIS,] that no debate be allowed until after the election of Speaker. They refused to make an arrangement for having at least one vote for Speaker each day; again, they objected to a resolution providing for three votes daily; and for a time they even turned a deaf ear to the feeling appeal of the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. CLEMENS,] who, in feeble health and wearied with long sessions, desired a settled understanding on the subject, that he might know when his presence was necessary, and when he might retire from the floor.

When not ready to speak, being unwilling to vote, they made dilatory motions, and thus compelled an adjournment. They refused to permit the offering of a resolution to limit each debater to thirty minutes, and one speech on a pending question, until all desiring had spoken. They threatened to remain in session until March 4, 1861, rather than allow the adoption of the plurality rule, which was twice adopted under like circumstances, is recognised in the rules of the House and in all popular elections, and which for weeks appeared to be the only escape from the entanglement. At first, they appeared willing to permit a vote to be taken upon the rule, and submit to the result. Then they made that contingent upon the House voting on the resolution offered the first day. Then they declined to say that if the latter were voted on, they would agree to vote upon the former. And, finally, they declared that it never should be voted upon; and that, to prevent it, resort would be had to every parliamentary means at command. Not content with declaring this purpose, which, in the existing condition of things, seemed tantamount to absolute prevention of organization, form and substance were given to this threat by fifty-eight

of them signing a paper pledging themselves to each other to act together in resisting, by *all* parliamentary tactics, strategy, and means, known to the Constitution and the law, the adoption of the plurality rule.

The full force of this will be better understood when it is stated that fifty men, thus banded together, a unit for purposes of disorganization, can, by resorting to the endless chain of dilatory motions to adjourn, to adjourn over, to be excused from voting, &c., on all which, constantly repeated, they could call the yeas and nays, effectually and forever prevent the election of a Speaker, the passage of a bill, or the transaction of an item of legislative business. Such a combination was made on the Administration side, and its nature and terms, and their purpose to persist in it, openly proclaimed upon the floor. This conspiracy contemplated three things: to prevent a vote being taken on the plurality rule; to prevent its adoption; and to prevent the election of a Speaker under it. It was made by a minority in the House, who, by these anti-constitutional methods, proposed to prevent the majority from adopting such rules as would rescue the House from its condition of embarrassment. It was an attempt of a minority to coerce the House into their line of policy; to introduce force into our system—the last desperate resort of those bent on ruining if no longer permitted to rule.

Let me say that *all* the Administrationists did not enter into this conspiracy. Several, it was stated, refused to do it; and it was further stated, that no Northwestern Democrat had signed it. I have no doubt this is true. More might have been said—that no Northern Democrat had taken this bold step. But I do not recollect a single occasion, after it became known that this factious and revolutionary combination existed, on which any of the Northern Democracy refused to vote under the leadership of the very gentlemen who admitted the existence of the compact, and were in the act of fulfilling it.

It must not be understood that the Administration party refused to permit any votes for Speaker to be taken. They were too sagacious for that. When it was known to be safe, they were willing to amuse themselves, flatter each other with cheap compliments, and, above all, satisfy the country, as the phrase goes. During the first week, they allowed three votes to be taken; during the second, seven; during the third, when there were hopes of an Administration combination with other parties, eleven; during the fourth, when these hopes had disappeared, three; during the fifth, five; during the sixth, five; during the seventh, none; during the eighth, five; and during the ninth, five; in all, forty-four votes in forty days of actual session. In 1855, there were over one hundred and thirty votes taken in the same period.

Of course, only factious means could have produced such results. When the contest was in its earlier stages, and before the worse steps were taken, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. Cobb] admitted that the prevention of votes, raising frivolous points of order, making dilatory

motions, and discussing every proposition with unlimited freedom, both as to time, range of thought, and frequency, were factious; but there is scarcely a parliamentary word which can truthfully characterize the policy of the Administrationists, when it ripened into organized conspiracy. The early course was factious; the later, revolutionary. The non-organization of the House is of itself a revolutionary act, and so admitted to be by the gentleman from Maryland, [Mr. STEWART,] involving disturbance, clogging, stoppage of the whole machinery of Government. It is not revolution completed, but that is only because of the limited power of the parties conspiring. Yet we were repeatedly and most positively assured that, except the House were organized in the manner they preferred, it never should be organized, no matter what the consequences; and constant proofs of this purpose were spread upon the records, and sent forth to the people. By whom, and how, was this done?

WHO WERE THE CONSPIRATORS?

I have not been able to find, upon the records, that declarations such as have been adverted to were made by any gentlemen except those who are members of the Administration party, or, being outside of all political organizations, habitually vote with it. And, except one South American, the fifty-eight signers of the mutual pledge are exclusively members of the Democratic party, or gentlemen who co-operate with it, and certain of them are recognised leaders.

It is in no spirit of exultation that I state these unquestionable facts. On the other hand, it is with deep regret that I am compelled to believe that the great Democratic party—that party which has been, for more than a quarter of a century, the controlling interest in the Republic; which was founded by great men to accomplish good purposes; which has impressed itself most forcibly, and generally beneficently, upon the history of the country, and through it upon the world; which has linked its name with some grand achievements, and which has had upon its roll patriot statesmen, eloquent orators, accomplished scholars, and gallant soldiers—has degenerated into an organization, whose leading spirits, if sincere in their enunciations, are enemies of the Government, and, if insincere, are bad men, who add to the guilt of hypocrisy a recklessness which is well-nigh impious.

THEY ARE ALREADY REBUKED.

Sir, gentlemen on the other side of the House do not realize the position they have deliberately assumed, if they suppose that the American people do or can approve it. This nation is not prepared to commit self-destruction. Nor will it permit misguided, impulsive, rash men, who happen to be their Representatives, to destroy what they are chosen to uphold; to violate what they were elected to defend. The shocking sentiments uttered on the other side have already received the condemnation of the people—that great tribunal of America, to whose judgment all political questions are referred. All over the Southern country, the voice of reason is heard

above the din of madness; and flippant demagogues are warned of their impotency to perform their self-assumed task of preparing the public mind for disunion. The press, and the people through mass meetings and their local Legislatures, unite to reprobate the crime, and warn those drifting towards its commission. All over the North there is but one sentiment. It pervades all parties; penetrates all communities; fills all hearts. That sentiment is:

THE MAINTENANCE OF OUR NATIONAL UNION, against all foes, foreign and domestic. I have said this sentiment pervades all parties. For this reason it is, that, whilst Northern Democrats in Congress have been comparatively unconcerned about the general course of their Southern allies on this vital question, the leaders at home, who have had occasion to see the effect produced, have been exceedingly restive under the ceaseless preaching of disunion. They have made haste to disown it, to rid their skirts of all responsibility for it, and have gone to the extent of reading out of the Democratic party the leading gentlemen on the other side of this House.

PENNSYLVANIA DEMOCRATS.

A striking instance in point recently occurred in Pennsylvania. While the struggle for Speaker was at its height, the General Assembly of that State passed two resolutions on the subject. The latter is in the following terms:

“Resolved, That Pennsylvania remains, as ever, faithful and true to the Constitution and the Union, and determined that they shall be maintained; that the treasonable threats of disunion uttered by the adherents of the present National Administration on the floor of Congress will not deter her people from the expression of their political views and the proper protection of her interests, but will be treated with the utmost contempt and scorn; while any attempt to carry such threats into execution will be met by her determined resistance.”

A day or two after the passage of these resolutions, the Democratic members of the Senate placed upon the journal of that body a protest, embodying the reasons why they had voted against the resolutions of the majority, concerning which they say, among other things, that—

“They [the majority resolutions] are untrue in the intimation that the adherents of the present National Administration on the floor of Congress have uttered treasonable threats of disunion; for it is notorious that any such threats, by whomsoever uttered, were not made as adherents of an Administration distinguished for its steadfast devotion to the Union, and its unflinching support of the Confederacy and the Constitution on which it rests.”

The anxiety of these Pennsylvania Democratic Senators to escape the odium of being identified with utterers of treasonable disunion sentiments is most apparent. Before, however, proceeding to consider that point, let me remark that their protest raises another question of fact; that is, whether the present Administration has been distinguished for its steadfast devotion to the Union and its unflinching support of the Constitution. I will not waste time in discussing the question; but wish to say that, in my opinion, this Administration has been controlled by Southern nullifiers; has strengthened that interest which now, likewise, aims to despotize over the people; has introduced and intensified discord; has violated the foundation principles of

free government; and has given countenance and approval to arbitrary, despotic, and anti-constitutional doctrines, whose prevalence has, in turn, weakened the Confederacy, by disturbing the just relations of the States to each other—for proof of which, I confidently appeal to current history. Observe, also, the quibble in the denial of the protest. It is said that treasonable threats, &c., by whomsoever uttered, “were not made as adherents of an Administration,” &c. That is, they were not made by persons in the capacity of adherents! If this be the meaning of the Senators, their subterfuge is contemptible, and justly lays their motives open to suspicion. If this be not the meaning, and if the obscure phraseology be a mere error of expression, and if their allegation be that the Administration Congressmen have not been uttering disunion threats, I appeal to the record for the language used, and for the political *status* of the members using it. I think it can easily be proved that the Administration party in Congress is tainted in all its parts, and certainly in its head and heart, (the Southern portion,) with both secession and disunion heresies.

DEMOCRATIC DISUNIONISTS AND THEIR THREATS.

Why, if there be meaning in language and sincerity in men, the master spirits of the Democratic party in Congress are covered with the scrofulous taint of disunion. There yet ring in our ears the echoes of the most unexampled declamation, every note of which grates harshly upon our ears.

The gentleman from South Carolina, [Mr. KEITT,] in a recent speech, said:

“Should the Republican party succeed in the next Presidential election, my advice to the South is to snap the cords of the Union at once and forever.”

And the honorable member was one of the most active in efforts to effect the election of a Democratic Speaker, and supported every candidate named on that side, except that Northern Democrat in whose hands the flag went down in defeat.

The gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. LAMAR] said that when the spirit of the Constitution (of course, as he understood it) was no longer observed on this floor, he would be against the Government, would raise the banner of secession, and would fight under it as long as the blood flows and ebbs in his veins.

His colleague, former Governor of his State, [Mr. McRAE,] declared that, in case of the election of a Republican President, his counsel to the people of Mississippi “would be to take independence out of the Union in preference to the loss of constitutional rights, and consequent degradation and dishonor, in it.” He said, further, “that this is his position, and the position the Democratic party of Mississippi will maintain.” They propose to consider the mere election of a Republican President cause for disunion, without waiting for the loss of constitutional rights, &c., which they affect to believe might flow from it. The gentleman from Mississippi is a member of the Democratic party, and has for years been one of its distinguished leaders. This session, he was one of the famous

committee constituted to make the proposed Administration combination, and organize this House. He voted for all the Democratic candidates for Speaker.

Another gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. SINGLETON] gave notice that—

“When you elect a Black Republican—HALE, SEWARD, or Chase—President of the United States; whenever you undertake to place such a man to preside over the destinies of the South, you may expect to see us undivided and indivisible friends, and to see all parties of the South arrayed to resist his inauguration. * * * We can never quietly stand by and permit the control of the army and navy to go into the hands of a Black Republican President.”

He further expressed the opinion that, unless certain conditions were complied with, and, among others, the Territories of the Union thrown open to slavery, and slavery protected in them by Congress, the historian now lives who would write the sad epitaph of *Itium fuit* upon the monument of the nation.

The author of this language also voted for all the Democratic candidates for Speaker.

Another member from Mississippi [Mr. DAVIS] said:

“Gentlemen of the Republican party, I warn you. Present your sectional candidate for 1860; elect him as the representative of your system of labor; take possession of the Government, as the instrument of your power in this conflict of ‘irrepressible conflict,’ and we of the South will tear this Constitution in pieces, and look to our guns for justice and right against aggression and wrong.”

Thus it is announced, that the election of a President representing the free white-labor system of the country will be accepted as, of itself, justifiable cause of dissolution of the Union! Men may be elected and inaugurated as President who represent the negro slave-labor system, and will wield all the power of the Government for its expansion. But the Union must be dissolved, and the inauguration of an elected President be prevented, who represents, sympathizes with, or would build up, the interests of the free white laboring men of the United States! Such is the deliberate announcement made on this floor, by a gentleman most prominent in the councils of the Democratic party. I commend it to Northern working-men.

The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. MOORE] would not wait for any overt act, but would consider the election as President of any Republican candidate, entertaining sentiments like those of SEWARD or Chase, as a declaration of war against the rights of his people; and he believed that his gallant State will not hesitate, in such a contingency, let the consequences be what they may, to fall back on their reserved rights, and declare to the world, “As for this Union, we have no longer any lot or part in it.” He rebuked the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. NELSON] for “his laudation of this glorious Union.”

His colleague [Mr. CURRY] said:

“I am not ashamed or afraid publicly to avow that the election of WILLIAM H. SEWARD or SALMON P. CHASE, or any such representative of the Republican party, upon a sectional platform, ought to be resisted to the disruption of every tie that binds this Confederacy together.”

Which sentiment, the Congressional Globe informs us, was applauded “on the Democratic side of the House.”

His colleague [Mr. PUGH] said, if the Republicans get possession of the Government—

“Then the question is fully presented, whether the Southern States will remain in the Union, as subject and degraded colonies, or will they withdraw and establish a Southern Confederacy of coequal homogeneous sovereigns? In my judgment, the latter is the only course compatible with the honor, equality, and safety of the South; and the sooner it is known and acted upon the better for all parties to the compact.”

His colleague [Mr. CLOFTON] defended “the policy of secession in the event of the success and triumph of the Black Republican party, as a preventive remedy against injustice and oppression.”

All of these gentlemen acted with the Democratic party in the contest for Speaker, though they refused to vote, on the last ballot, for the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. McCLELLAND.]

The member from Georgia [Mr. CRAWFORD] said he spoke the sentiment of every Democrat on the floor from that State, when he declared “they will never submit to the inauguration of a Black Republican President;” which, the Congressional Globe informs us, was applauded from the Democratic benches. He repeated the remark, and he was again applauded in the same quarter. Further, he said for himself, that he had lost all hope of equality in the Union, and he was for independence now. He also said that slavery “demands expansion, and will have it.” His colleague [Mr. GARTRELL] expressed substantially the same sentiment. These gentlemen voted for all the Democratic candidates for Speaker.

The gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. BONHAM] said, that upon the election of SEWARD, or any such man, he “was in favor of an immediate dissolution of the Union.”

His colleague [Mr. MILES] said he was a sectional man; that he owed his chief and primary allegiance to South Carolina; and that he felt no sympathy with that general, indiscriminate laudation of this nation, which seems to swallow up in that one idea every notion of State rights and State sovereignty.

The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. MOORE] said that to his “gallant State he owed his first and highest allegiance.”

His colleague [Mr. CURRY] protested that to “Alabama he owed his first and undivided allegiance.”

The gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DE JARNETTE] said, that SEWARD might be elected President of the North, but of the South never; and that Virginia, in view of her ancient renown, in view of her illustrious dead, and in view of her *sic semper tyrannis*, will resist his authority.

His colleague [Mr. LEAKE] denies that Virginia will consent to fight *within* this Union for her rights—as lately proposed by Governor Wise, and approved by some of the delegation in Congress. He said the idea was ridiculous in the extreme; and he claimed that Virginia has the right, *when she pleases*, to withdraw from the Confederacy; which sentiment, the Globe’s report of proceedings states, was applauded upon the Democratic benches. Both these Virginia members voted for all the Democratic candidates for Speaker.

NO DISUNIONISM OUTSIDE OF THE SOUTHERN DEMOCRACY.

I might multiply extracts, selecting from other speeches in the House, and from those of most prominent Democrats in the Senate. Surely, these will satisfy the most incredulous that a very large proportion of the Democratic leaders of the South are secessionists and disunionists; that these opinions place them beyond the pale of sympathy or confidence from the Union-loving masses; and that they are, of necessity, most unsafe and unfit men to be intrusted with our great national interests. Yet it is most true, that the Democratic organization is in the hands of these gentlemen, and such as they; that the States they represent elect Democratic Presidents, and send the bulk of Democratic members of both branches of Congress; that they control the Congressional caucuses and National Conventions, and mould the policy of the party; and that a large portion of their power for evil grows out of their position as managers of the Democratic party. Outside of them, there is no disunion sentiment of the least consequence. The disunionist's home is in or near the Democratic party; and he selects that because his brethren are at its head, and because he has found it to be the most eligible workshop he can find, in which to prepare the weapons he intends to wield against the Union.

Sir, let me not be misunderstood. I speak not of the masses of that party, North or South. In both sections they are honest, sincere, and patriotic. They are lovers of the Union, and would shed their blood to maintain it, as their fathers did to confirm and preserve it. But they have been betrayed. Already the truth is breaking upon them, and they begin to realize, more or less clearly, that they are in truth the motive power of a machinery which is actually levelled at what is nearest and dearest to them. It is difficult to realize such perfidy; but when convinced of it, and of the policy of the masters of the Democratic organization, the people of both sections will rise in their might and majesty, and, plowing up all the prejudices of education and all the influences of habit, turning deaf ears to party rallying cries, and offering all their personal preferences a sacrifice upon the altar of their country, they will pull down and stamp with reprobation those who have gained confidence only to abuse it, sought power only to sap the foundations of the Republic. There is a fearfulness in a people wielding the sword of avenging justice. Here it will be done peacefully, quietly, but effectually, *as it has hitherto been*; and the splendid devotion of a whole nation to themselves—as will on that day be made manifest—will send fear to the hearts of the traitorous, joy to the hearts of the patriotic.

The Administration party in this House have not only pursued a reckless, factious, disorganizing, and revolutionary course; not only ranged themselves under the banner of avowed secessionists, and, at the least, given the approval of silence to the boldest declarations of treasonable purposes, thereby shocking at once the moral sense and the patriotic instincts of the people;

but they have shown, in the actual votes cast for Speaker, that there is wanting to them the compactness of men devoted to great ideas, and united for their establishment; that there is no bond of principle between them. The demoralization of the Administration party in this House, as proved in this contest, is everywhere accepted as a type of its demoralization throughout the country; which, in return, is the reward of its abandonment of principle.

Let us see the variety of their candidates for Speaker, with a view to aid in fixing the present position of parties.

THE CANDIDATE OF THE ADMINISTRATIONISTS.

Their caucus candidate for Speaker was the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BOCOCK,] who has been identified with the legislation of the last twelve years, and who, in 1850, after the passage of the compromise measures, in company with thirty-seven other members of the Democratic party, (Governor McDowell, of Virginia, not included,) issued an address to the people of the South, from which the following is an extract:

"We, whose names are hereto annexed, address you in discharge of what we believe to be a solemn duty, on the most important subject ever presented for your consideration. We allude to the *conflict* between the two great sections of the Union, growing out of a difference of feeling and opinion in reference to the relations existing between the two races, the European and the African, which inhabit the Southern section, and the acts of aggression and encroachment to which it has led. The conflict commenced not long after the acknowledgment of our independence, and has gradually increased until it has arrayed the great body of the North against the South on this most vital subject. In the progress of this conflict, aggression has followed aggression, and encroachment encroachment, until they have reached a point when a regard for peace and safety will not permit us to remain longer silent."—See *Benton's Thirty Years' View*, p. 734, vol. 2.

This manifesto was signed by the present Senators from Virginia, Senators FITZPATRICK of Alabama, YULEE of Florida, JOHNSON of Arkansas, and others not now in public life. Mr. SEWARD has been most severely criticised, and most vehemently denounced, for having said in his Rochester speech, in 1857, that there was in this country an "irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces," by means of which the United States will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation. The conflict he speaks of is one of ideas. That of which the Democratic manifesto speaks is, "the *conflict* between the two great sections of the Union," which is the interpretation placed by the Democrats on Mr. SEWARD'S remark, and at which they have expressed utmost horror. Thus, the doctrine of the irrepressible "conflict between the two great sections of the Union," held up as a fearful phantom by the Democracy, has a Democratic paternity; is at least ten years old; and, so long since, received the endorsement of the Democratic caucus candidate for Speaker, who, in turn, has been supported and endorsed by every member of the Democratic party on this floor.

Failing with the gentleman from Virginia, they rallied upon his colleague [Mr. MILLSON] with the same result.

Twenty of them then voted for the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BOTLEB,] who is widely known as a South American; was a member of

the Philadelphia Convention which nominated Mr. Fillmore in 1856, and is in favor of a Congressional slave code for the Territories.

Forty of them then voted for the gentleman from Tennessee, [Mr. MAYNARD,] who, though presented as an old-line Whig, and as never a member of the Know Nothing order, had political association in the last Congress, and has in this, with the South Americans.

They gave eighty-nine votes to the gentleman from Texas, [Mr. HAMILTON,] who is understood to be in favor of a Congressional slave code for the Territories.

They gave eighty-three votes to the gentleman from California, [Mr. SCOTT,] who had previously denied, on the floor of the House, the power of Territorial Legislatures to prevent the existence of slavery in a Territory, and who, thereby, placed himself on the south side of the Cincinnati platform.

They gave, once thirty-three and again thirty-seven votes; and later in the session, ninety-one, and again eighty-five votes, to the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. McCLEARNAND,] who claims for the Territorial Legislatures the power denied by the gentleman from California, [Mr. SCOTT,] but who considers the existence of the power a judicial question, to be affirmed or denied by the proper tribunals, to whose decision he is willing to defer. It is but just to state, that nine Southern members, who voted for one or more of the other Democratic candidates, declined to vote for the gentleman from Illinois.

The Democratic or Administration party also gave all their votes, save two, to the gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. SMITH,] who, calling himself a Whig, twice received the support of the Americans of his district, to an extent sympathizes with and approves of their principles and policy, and is now here by virtue of that support; *who acts with the South American party in this House*; who supported the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. BOTELER] when he was the South American candidate for Speaker, and subsequently the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. GILMER] when he occupied that position; who was placed before this House by the South American member from Kentucky [Mr. MALLORY] as the candidate of that party, nominated in a full caucus, at which the Northern member of the party [Mr. BRIGGS] says he was present; and who received the votes of that entire delegation on this floor. No one who witnessed can ever forget that scene, as one by one, first rapidly, then more and more slowly, the Democratic members fell out of their own line into another, until all but two, conveniently forgetting the bristling declarations of the Cincinnati platform on the subject of Americanism, and the unrepealed resolutions of the Democratic members of the Thirty-fourth Congress, placed their votes side by side with those of the South Americans of the House, whose position and doctrines they have recently assailed with intensest bitterness.

The county from which I come yet rings with Democratic protestations of undying hostility to Americanism in all its forms. On every hill-top,

in every school-house, from every stump, there has gone up this one all-absorbing rallying-cry. I have never doubted its insincerity. It was a transparent man-trap. It was too persistently made to be honestly meant. All over the land, there was, for a time, the same expression of opinion; and the various State and county platforms pledged a ceaseless warfare with Americanism. On the 27th of January, 1860, in the House of Representatives of the nation, there was furnished indubitable evidence that another issue absorbs Democratic devotion; that a new question has dwarfed the American into insignificance; and that Democratic profession of hostility to Americanism is as meaningless as Democratic profession of protection in 1844, and fidelity to free labor in 1856.

Now, let me recapitulate the variety of candidates whom the Democrats in Congress have more or less generally supported, and the variety of doctrines they have endorsed.

They voted for the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BOCKOCK,] who voted for the repeal of the Missouri compromise, sustained the Lecompton Constitution, and in 1850 proclaimed, in its broadest and most offensive form, an irrepressible "conflict between the two great sections of the country."

They voted for the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. MILLSON,] who voted against the repeal of the Missouri compromise.

They voted for the other gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BOTELER,] who, a South American, repudiates, like the two preceding, popular sovereignty, and is in favor of a Congressional slave code for the Territories.

They voted for the gentleman from Tennessee, [Mr. MAYNARD,] who, a Whig with American associations, supported the Lecompton Constitution, and scouts at popular sovereignty.

They voted for the gentleman from Texas, [Mr. HAMILTON,] who is now a Democrat, and in favor of a slave code, and who, in withdrawing his name, gravely expressed the opinion that the Union was then in process of dissolution—a great dissolving view in the act of disappearing from mortal vision!

They voted for the gentleman from California, [Mr. SCOTT,] who, a Free-State Democrat, discards popular sovereignty, upon which the Democratic party made their successful campaign in 1856.

They supported the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. McCLEARNAND,] who, a Free-State Democrat, defends popular sovereignty, and objects to a slave code.

And they supported the gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. SMITH,] who, a Whig with American associations, affinities, and sympathies, and the nominee of a South American caucus, reprobrates popular sovereignty.

Who can say, after such an exhibition, what Democratic doctrine is *in practice*? It cannot be hostility to popular sovereignty; for Democratic Congressmen have endorsed, as fit to be Speaker, a popular-sovereignty man. It cannot be advocacy of popular sovereignty; for Democratic Congressmen have endorsed, as fit to be Speaker,

several anti-popular-sovereignty men. It cannot be reprobation of the "irrepressible conflict;" for an endorser of it, of ten years' standing, is their chosen candidate. Nor can it be hostility to Americanism; for Americans, and Whigs sympathizing with them, received the support of Democratic Congressmen for the high position of Speaker—the third position in the Government. What a commentary is this last fact upon the high-sounding, comprehensive, and sweeping declarations of the Cincinnati platform, about "religious freedom" and "accidental birth-place!" Alas, that there should be added to the first using and then betraying protectionists in 1844, and the free white labor interest in 1856, this last and cruellest proof of political insincerity—the betrayal of the foreigners by birth and the Catholics in religion, who, for safety from apprehended evil, sought security in Democratic ranks, and in return gave victory to Democratic hosts. How sad the spectacle, yet how instructive!

Thus much for others—a few words for myself. I have uniformly acted so as to promote an organization of the House. I supported first for Speaker a prominent and experienced member from Pennsylvania. When he declined, I cast my vote for the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. SHERMAN,] who had received the largest number of votes on this side of the House, and who was commended to me by valuable public services, by the possession of peculiar qualifications, and by great purity of character. He was efficient in exposing the Kansas policy of President Pierce, with its complicated web of fraud and outrage, and the corruption and extravagance of certain departments of the present Administration; for all which the minions of power owed him revenge, but the people owed him thanks. Upon his withdrawal, I voted for the gentleman from New Jersey, [Mr. PENNINGTON,] now the Speaker of the House. In each case, I sustained gentlemen faithful to the right of self-government, (assailed in the last Congress,) to the interests of free white labor, and to that protective policy which, while vitally important to Pennsylvania, would, if adopted, promote the prosperity of all the States. I sustained them as patriotic, Union-loving, Constitution-respecting men, who would do nothing in violation of the letter or spirit of the great charter which constitutes us one people, and who would yield only with life their devotion to the Union. I did not understand the prominent candidates on the other side as occupying this position, and I could not, would not, give them my support.

The cardinal doctrine of my political faith is THE MAINTENANCE OF THE UNION OF THE STATES. I will not support any man who thinks or speaks lightly of it, or does not consider it the greatest good, its preservation a prime duty, and its destruction the greatest of calamities. Sir, I am not ready to imperil all which this Government now secures to us, and the thirty millions of our population. I expect never to be ready for it. And because I am not, and would not be, I did not vote for either of the gentlemen upon whom

the disunion sentiment of this House was concentrated, and whose election would have been acceptable and strengthening to that interest. Sir, such a course requires no explanation or apology. Every man with a patriotic sentiment in his heart instinctively greets, approves, and endorses it.

The three million Pennsylvanians whom this delegation represent are a unit upon this subject. No man can have political life among them who is not in harmony with this sentiment. A secessionist has never been born upon her soil, which is the natal-spot of our Constitution. A disunionist has never been reared within the settlement of Penn, whose eastern boundary is associated with a thrilling exploit of Washington; whose southern line is a memorial of early fraternity; whose valleys sparkle with glories of the war of independence; and whose broad bosom is the home of a people treasuring the just precepts of their immortal founder, and as abounding in all the elements of greatness as any the sun smiles upon and makes glad. Sir, I seek not to pronounce their eulogy. They need none. Their history is their highest praise. Let doubters but look around. On every hand is the proof of her power, peeled forth in the music of the ringing anvil, the restless shuttle, the humming spindle, the roaring stack, the shrill whistle, the measured tread of mighty machinery, and the flow of cheerful industry through the thousand channels opened by the ingenuity of man. Her progress in both moral and physical development has all the marks of healthful growth, and her proportions, already colossal, do not fill the measure of her vast capacity. In her hands are the implements of multiform industry; in her heart a love of justice; in her step the elasticity of freedom; in her mien the dignity of true greatness. She is a noble embodiment of the great thought underlying our whole system—the excellence, accretiveness, and humanizing influence, of intelligent, well-applied Free labor.

The peacefulness, protection, and security, which have afforded the opportunity of achieving so great results, have been the gifts of the Constitution, with whose history her own is closely intertwined, and the Union which is the result of its beneficent provisions. Pennsylvania can never forget her honorable past, or be insensible to the inestimable blessings of the present. Until faithless to both, she will never do or sanction any act in conflict with the Constitution, but will rigidly give to others what she will as rigidly demand for herself—all the rights which each can justly claim. She will never do or sanction any act tending to or effecting a disruption of this Union, and will frown upon, disown, and if necessary put down and trample under foot every man, every faction, every party, whose animating thought is not the integrity of the Constitution, the purity of the Government, and the perpetuity of the Union. With her, I am devoted to this grand and inspiring sentiment, ready to follow whithersoever it may lead.