

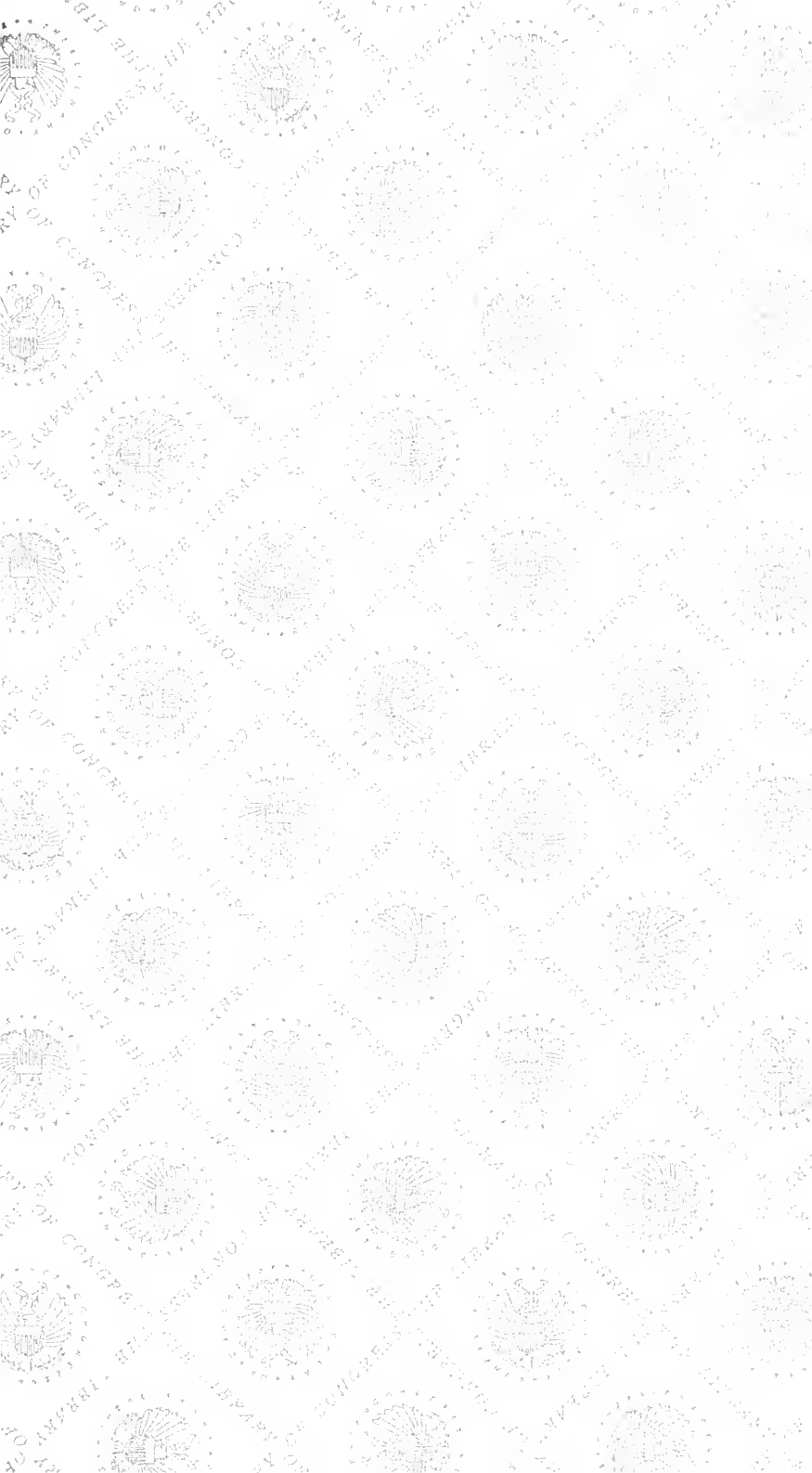
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The Nebraska Bill.

SPEECH

OF

JOHN W. ANDREWS, ESQ.,

AT A

MEETING OF CITIZENS

OF

COLUMBUS, OHIO, HELD FEBRUARY 14th, A.D. 1854.

COLUMBUS, OHIO:]
PRINTED AT THE STATE JOURNAL OFFICE.

1854.

NEBRASKA MEETING.

A NUMEROUSLY attended public meeting of those citizens of Columbus, O., opposed to the "Nebraska Bill, now pending in the Senate of the United States," was held in the First Presbyterian Church, on Tuesday evening, February 14, 1854.

On motion of Hon. JOSEPH RIDGWAY, Judge J. R. SWAN was appointed President, and WM. BLYNN, Secretary.

On motion of JOHN W. ANDREWS, Esq., a committee of nine, consisting of the following gentlemen, were appointed to present resolutions to the meeting:

JOHN W. ANDREWS,	L. GOODALE,
PETER HAYDEN,	F. C. KELTON,
JOSEPH RIDGWAY,	A. P. STONE,
J. P. BRUCK,	ELI W. GWYNNE,
C. P. L. BUTLER.	

After a brief retirement of the committee, J. W. ANDREWS, Esq., Chairman, reported the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, The act of March 6th, 1820, commonly called the Missouri Compromise, embraces in its limits about four hundred and eighty-five thousand square miles of free territory, which is not included in any existing State or Territorial organization, being an area of more than twelve times the extent of the State of Ohio—as great as that of all the free States of this Union, excepting California—and capable, as we believe, of sustaining a population of at least fifty millions of people, which said act is as follows :

“SEC. 5. *Be it further enacted*, That in all that territory, ceded by France to the United States under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes of north latitude, not included within the limits of the State contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than as the punishment of crimes, shall be and is hereby FOREVER PROHIBITED.”

Therefore

1. *Resolved*, That the act of March 6, 1820, commonly called the Missouri Compromise, is a solemn compact between the North and the South ; that the North has faithfully lived up to its spirit and letter, and that we deem it dishonest for any American statesman, and above all for a Northern or Western statesman, to lend himself directly or indirectly, to its violation.

2. *Resolved*, That this meeting is disposed, in good faith, to stand by the Compromises of 1850 ; and that we intend, as far as in us lies, to see to it, that others, in like good faith, stand by the Compromise of 1820.

3. *Resolved*, That it is our deliberate judgment, that the people of the North and West have not been treated with proper respect, in the shallow and false pretence, officially made to them in 1854, that the Missouri Compromise of 1820 was superseded by, or is inconsistent with the Compromises of 1850. We deny that such is the fact. Not one citizen of Ohio, or so far as we know or believe, of the United States, ever before suspected that such was the fact. We deem it a gross insult to the intelligence of the country, to say so. If, however, at the time of the passage of the acts of 1850, referred to, such was supposed by Senators and Representatives to be the fact, we demand of them, as statesmen, asking the confidence of the country, and as upright men, not too high for public sentiment to reach them, WHY IT WAS THAT IN 1850 THEY DARED TO WITHHOLD THIS INFORMATION FROM THEIR CONSTITUENTS ? The people of the West demand AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION from their public men.

4. *Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this meeting, the character of Northern and Western men is not understood by the framers of the bill for organizing the territory of Nebraska, now before the Senate of the United States—that the forbearance manifested by them, under the acts of 1850, sprung solely from the fact that, under the Constitution of the United States, they believed such forbearance to be a duty—that it is a mistake to suppose that they are not jealous of their rights and honor—that they regard the bill referred to as an **OUTRAGE UPON BOTH**—that upon the subject of the Missouri Compromise, they will know no compromise, but they will **MAINTAIN** it, in all its integrity and fullness, to the extent of their powers, at all hazards, and to the last extremity, whatever those hazards and that extremity may be.

5. *Resolved*, That we deplore all further agitation upon the subject of Slavery, knowing it to be full of evil; but that it is forced upon us, and we do not hesitate to meet it. That if this deep and intolerable wrong toward the North and West—toward every free laborer in the U. States and his children's children—is to be persisted in by those who have it in charge, we recommend to our fellow citizens throughout the State, to meet in their respective counties, and express their views and determination upon this subject; and further, that a **CONVENTION OF THE PEOPLE OF OHIO**, be held, to utter the voice of the State for or against the extension under the sanction of the Government of the United States, of slavery over territory now free.

6. *Resolved*, That this subject rises above all party politics and politicians; that it involves questions touching good faith—the solemnity of contracts—the integrity of public men; that the people both North and South are satisfied with the Missouri Compromise—not a voice has been raised against it, during the existence of more than one whole generation of men—that the attack now made upon it has not come from the people, but has been sprung upon the people. We make our first solemn appeal to the statesmen of the country to defeat this unjust bill; and if they prove faithless, we recommend that an **APPEAL** be at once made to the people, not only upon this bill, but to **RECONSIDER THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF COMPROMISES**.

7. *Resolved*, That copies of these resolutions be sent to our Senators and Representatives in Congress from the State of Ohio; and as a proof of our confidence in his wisdom and patriotism, and in his willingness and ability to meet this crisis, to the Hon. **THOMAS H. BENTON**,

of Missouri, and that these resolutions be published in the several newspapers of this city.

J. W. ANDREWS, Esq., and Hon. SAMUEL GALLOWAY addressed the meeting.

On motion, the thanks of the meeting were returned to the Trustees of the church, for the use of their house.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

J. R. SWAN, *President.*

WM. BLYNN, *Secretary.*

On presenting the foregoing resolutions, MR. ANDREWS said, substantially, as follows:

I regret, Mr. Chairman, that the duty has been laid upon me to address this meeting. I have been requested, however, to do so; and I shall not shrink from it. We are all, in some measure, acquainted with the history of the Missouri Compromise. In 1818, the inhabitants of the Missouri Territory applied to Congress for authority to form a State Constitution, and for admission into the Union. A bill passed the House of Representatives, by a decided vote, authorizing the formation of a State government, but requiring that the Constitution of the new State should contain an article providing for the abolition of existing slavery, and prohibiting the further introduction of slaves. In the Senate, this provision was rejected; and, in conse-

quence of the disagreement between the two Houses, the bill was lost. The country was at once agitated to its centre. We had not then, as now, our telegraphs, and railroads, and mighty inland commerce to bind us together. In the judgment of the statesmen of that day, and the opinion of later times has confirmed that judgment, the Union was in imminent danger of destruction. At the next session, the controversy was renewed, and again the House of Representatives inserted the same provision, prohibiting slavery. The Senate again rejected this provision. The crisis had come. It seemed inevitable that there must be a compromise or a dissolution of the Union. Mr. Clay interposed with all his tact and statesmanship, and at last a compromise was proposed by the Senate, and agreed upon, to the effect that Missouri should come into the union with slavery; and the following section was added to the bill:

“SEC. 8. *Be it further enacted*, That in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of 36° and 30' of north latitude, not included within the limits of the State contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than as the punishment of crime, shall be and is hereby forever prohibited.

Such is, substantially, the history of the famous Missouri Compromise.

There are some facts in reference to this act, which give it a deep interest in the eyes of northern men. In

the first place, this Compromise was the result of a great struggle, in which it met with the almost unbroken hostility of the North. In the course of thirty years, however, its fruits and advantages have begun to show themselves; and, at last, the public sentiment of the North, and West, has ripened into reverence for an enactment that cost so much, and that seems so full of blessing for the future. Besides, many great and good men at the North, who, from high motives of patriotism alone were induced to sustain the Missouri Compromise, were sacrificed upon it, in the first fury of popular indignation, and went down to their graves loaded with reproach and obloquy. The Missouri Compromise has, at last, come to take its place in the affections of the North, by the side of the Constitution.

Of the Compromises of 1850, I need not say much. They consisted of the act for the admission of California into the Union, the acts for organizing the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, the act for regulating the boundaries of Texas, the act for prohibiting the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and the act in relation to fugitive slaves.

Now, what effect had these acts upon the Missouri Compromise? I will refer you, on this point, to Senators who took part in them.

In his great speech of March 7th, 1850, upon the

fugitive slave bill, which I was so fortunate as to hear, Mr. Webster used the following language:

“And I now say, Sir, as the proposition upon which I stand this day, and upon the truth and firmness of which I intend to act until it is overthrown, that there is not at this moment within the United States a single foot of land, the character of which, in regard to its being free-soil territory, or slave territory, is not fixed by some law, and some ir-repealable law, beyond the power of the action of the Government.”

Now you will notice two facts in reference to this language. First, it impliedly asserts the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise, and says that it is ir-repealable; next, it takes for granted that it was still in existence. If it had been repealed or superseded by the acts of 1850, I think Mr. Webster would have known it.

I will next refer you to an extract from a speech delivered by Mr. Atchison, a Senator from Missouri, at the last session of Congress, upon this subject. His language is as follows:

“I have always been of opinion, that the first great error committed in the political history of this country, was the ordinance of 1787, rendering the North Western Territory free territory. The next great error, was the Missouri Compromise. But they are both irremediable. There is no remedy for them—we must submit to them. I am prepared to do it. It is evident that the Missouri Compromise cannot be repealed. So far as that question is concerned, we might as well agree to the admission of this territory now, as next year, or five or ten years hence.”

Mr. Atchison, I take it, is a high-toned southern gentleman, who, like other southern gentlemen, as stated by the Union, in an extract to which I will call

your attention hereafter, was willing faithfully to abide by the terms of this "solemn covenant." He was not aware, that there was then in the Senate a Western gentleman who felt differently, and who at the proper time would be able and willing to give him the gratifying information, that the "second great error," the Missouri Compromise, had been corrected by repealing it, while he (Mr. Atchison) was in the Senate, but without his knowing of the fact.

But let me go one step further, and quote from the Union, the administration paper at Washington, a part of an editorial, published as late as January 20, 1854:

"We have never yielded to the Missouri Compromise any other obligatory force than that which attaches to a solemn covenant entered into by two opposing parties for the preservation of amicable relations. To such considerations we have felt bound to yield as ready an acquiescence as if the Compromise was the law of the land, not only in form, but in substance and reality. Viewed as a legal question, we should be constrained to pronounce it unsustainable by constitutional authority; viewed as the evidence of a compromise of conflicting interests and opinions, we have been ready to waive the legal question, and to abide faithfully by its terms. If WE HAVE STUDIED THE SOUTHERN SENTIMENT CORRECTLY, this has been the view taken of the Missouri Compromise in that division of the Union.

The editor did not know that a Western Senator was ready, with his own hands, to tear up and annul this "solemn covenant." (See note.)

A bill for organizing the Territory of Nebraska was introduced into Congress last year, and passed the House of Representatives, but was lost for want of

time, as I understand it, in the Senate. It was not then supposed by its framers, that the Missouri Compromise had been superseded, and, of course, no allusion is made to it in the bill. Another bill for the same purpose was introduced at the present session ; but for the same reason, I presume, the important fact that the Missouri Compromise had been virtually repealed, does not appear in the bill.

On the 23d day of January, however, this fact was disclosed, by way of amendment, to the bill then pending ; the Chairman (Mr. Douglas) stating that this amendment had been omitted by a clerical error. The amendment thus introduced has been since amended, and the last amendment was introduced on the 7th day of February, as follows :

“Mr. D. said he proposed to amend the bill so as to obviate all objections entertained by the friends of the measure. He had conferred with several Senators on the subject, and he thought the amendment would meet with the general acquiescence. He then moved to amend the bill by striking out from the 14th section the words, ‘which was superseded by the principles of the legislation of 1850, commonly called the compromise measures, and is hereby declared inoperative,’ and to insert, ‘which being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States and Territories as recognized by the legislation of 1850, commonly called the compromise measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void ; it being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States.’ ”

Now, in order that there may be no misunderstand-

ing in this matter, I will read you an extract from Mr. Douglas' speech on this subject, delivered on the 30th of January last. He says :

“ I do not believe there is a man in Congress who thinks it could be permanently a slaveholding country. I have no idea that it could. All I have to say on that subject is, that, when you create them into a Territory, you thereby acknowledge that they ought to be considered a distinct political organization ; and when you give them in addition a Legislature, you thereby confess that they are competent to exercise the powers of legislation. If they wish slavery they have a right to it ; if they do not want it, they will not have it, and you should not force it upon them.”

Now, Sir, this brings us right to the subject matter of our present meeting. Under the Missouri Compromise, slavery, north of $36^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude, is forever prohibited by law. Under Mr. Douglas' bill, if it becomes a law, to use his own language, if the people of Nebraska “ wish slavery, they have a right to it ; ” that is, if this bill becomes a law, slavery, by a positive enactment of the Congress of the United States, will thereby be authorized to exist forever, in territory from which, by the Missouri Compromise, now in force, it is excluded forever.

It is said, however, that, by the bill for organizing the territory of Utah, the Missouri Compromise was superseded, because a portion of territory covered by it was included in the territory of Utah, and thus made subject to a new law in reference to slavery. I beg leave to answer this argument, by quoting from Mr.

Everett's speech, just delivered in the Senate. He says:

“Now, in reference to Utah, it is true, certainly, there is a small spot, a very small spot, in the Sierra Madre that was taken from the old Louisiana purchase and thrown into Utah; but I venture to say that probably not a member of the Senate, except the worthy chairman of the Committee on Territories, was aware of that fact. I do not mean that he made any secret of it, but it was not made a point at all. The Senate were not apprised that if they did this thing, if they took this little piece of land, which Col. Fremont calls the Middle Park, out of the old Louisiana purchase, and put it into Utah, they would repeal the Missouri compromise of 1820, which covers half a million of square miles. I say, sir, most assuredly the Senate were told no such thing; nor do I think it was within the knowledge or the imagination of an individual member of the body.”

I would like, Mr. Chairman, to know when the people of this country ever asked for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise? Why, then, is this attempt made? Do the people rule, or do the politicians rule in these United States? The people did not ask this repeal. No southern man could be found bold enough to propose it in the Senate. I should like to know why a Western man proposed it. I should like to know what reason induced him to do so. Was it to avoid agitation?

There is yet another explanation that would gratify me very much. This amendment in reference to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, was introduced into the Senate on the 23d day of January last. I find from the report of the proceedings on the 7th instant, that Mr. Douglas said he “did not wish

to prevent discussion on the bill," and "expressed the hope that they might be able to obtain a vote by Saturday, the 11th inst." I would like to know, whether it is usual to hasten a bill of this character, and involving such momentous consequences, through the Senate of the United States in so short a time? I may be mistaken in reference to this matter, and hope I am, but my understanding of it is, that the bill is to be passed, if possible, before the people can be heard upon it; and after it has become a law, we are to be told that we had better not try to repeal it, that it will be dangerous to agitate the country, and that the South will never consent to its repeal. I am inclined to think, Mr. Chairman, that if this bill becomes a law, the South WILL consent to its repeal.

It is said, however, that this is not a practical question, and that slaves can never go further north than 36° 30' north latitude. Well, if this is so, how comes it that so much slavery has already gone north of 36° 30' north latitude, in Missouri? I see no reason why it would not go as far north as it has heretofore gone, and that is far enough to make several new slave States. But it is to be remembered, that Indiana, as late as 1807, requested Congress to authorize slavery in that Territory. We cannot tell how far slavery will go. That it will fill up a considerable part of the southern half of the territory referred to, if permitted to go there,

I have no doubt. But if slavery will never go there, why is the country to be agitated for the sake of repealing the Missouri Compromise, which prohibits it from going there? Besides, this would seem to be an exclusively northern question. If I buy an article and pay for it, it is strange logic that the seller, after pocketing the money, may in good faith refuse to give me the article, because, in his opinion, it is good for nothing. This is not chivalry. It is iniquity.

Fellow citizens, I have detained you too long. There are one or two other points, on which I will touch for a moment, and bring my remarks to a close.

This Territory, protected by the Missouri Compromise, is a vast region, and of incalculable worth in the future growth of the country. I wish to see it the home of free labor. I wish labor to be reputable in this Territory, and idleness a reproach. Manual labor is not reputable in slave States, and, from the nature of things, cannot be so.

I do not wish young men of Ohio to be shut out from this Territory because they are working men, and cannot, for that reason, hold a respectable social position in contact with slavery. I believe that the towns and cities, the churches and school houses that, within fifty years, will cover this whole country, if free territory, are to be built up, with all its untold wealth, by this class of men.

We have also yearly arriving upon our shores, some three or four hundred thousand emigrants, who come from the oppression and degradation of the old world, to seek homes in the new. Now these men will not go, and they ought not to go, where slavery exists. Leave this great territory free, and there is room enough for them to pour in upon it for many generations.

I do not, Mr. Chairman, refer to these men, from any political feeling, for any party objects. I do not allude to them because they are, or are to be, voters. I want not their votes. I seek only to promote their best interests and happiness. I am here simply as an independent American citizen, proud of the character and name, to unite with my fellow citizens in denouncing what I believe to be an atrocious wrong that threatens the country.

My views in regard to the course that we should pursue, are embodied in the resolutions, which, by the instruction of the committee, I have now submitted. I stand by these resolutions to-night, and I intend with whatever strength I have, to stand by them hereafter, as long as there shall remain one star above the horizon, to give hope of the defeat of this bill, or if it becomes a law, of the possibility of its repeal.

If this bill becomes a law, and shall be found to be irrepealable, and slavery steps in upon this free territory, the time I think will have arrived for the North and West, to CALCULATE THE VALUE OF THE UNION.

NOTE.

The New York Evening Post of the 10th inst., as quoted by Hon. S. Galloway, in his speech on the evening of the 14th inst., states, that after the passage of the Compromise acts of 1850, Mr. Douglas found it necessary to defend his votes upon them, and in the course of his address, said :

“ I am prepared to stand or fall by the American Union, clinging with the tenacity of life, to all its glorious memories of the past, and the precious hopes of the future, and among those glorious memories of the past, I pronounce the Compromise of 1820 to be one.”

At the meeting held in Chicago in 1850, to sustain his course in the Senate, the following resolution was drawn up by Judge Douglas, and adopted :

“ *Resolved*, That we will stand or fall by the American Union, and the Constitution with all its Compromises, with its precious memories of the past, and glorious hopes of the future.”

The following is a joint resolution of the State of Missouri, passed in 1847, showing the estimate which a Slaveholding State puts upon the Missouri Compromise :

Resolved, By the General Assembly of the State of Missouri as follows :

SEC. 1. That the peace, permanency, and welfare of our National Union depend upon a strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the eight section of the act of Congress of the United States, entitled “ An act to authorize the people of Missouri Territory to form a Constitution and State Government, and for admission of such State into the Union, on an equal footing with the original States, and to prohibit Slavery in certain territories,” approved March the sixth, eighteen hundred and twenty.

SEC. 2. That our Senators in the Congress of the United States are hereby instructed, and our Representatives requested to vote in accordance with the provisions and the spirit of the said eighth section of the said act, in all questions which may come before them, in relation to the organization of new territories or States, out of the territories now belonging to the United States, or which may hereafter be acquired either by purchase, by treaty, or conquest.

SEC. 3. *Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions shall be forwarded by the Secretary of State, to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress of the United States.

Approved February 15th, 1847.

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