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Position of Massachusetts on the Slavery Question.

SPEECH OF HON. JAMES BUFFINTON, OF MASSACHUSETTS, IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

APRIL 30, 1856.

Mr. BUFFINTON. Mr. Chairman, so long as the debate on the great question of the day turned upon the right of a gentleman of the day turned upon the right of a gentleman to occupy a seat to which he had not been fairly elected, I listened in silence to the protests so energetically made against violations of constitutional rights on the one hand, and to the evasive apologies offered in reply.

My votes, sir, as recorded upon the Journal of this House, will show how I have regarded the attempts of the Administration now in power to inflict upon the inhabitants of Kansas the curse of domestic Slavery: and that in defiance of the very act establishing the Territory, which professed to leave those who might settle there perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. Now, sir, we find those to whom this pledge has been so falsified, those who have been deprived of their constitutional and of their organic rights, asking at the door of this House for admission as a sovereign State. And I feel, sir, that I should act in opposition to the dictates of my own conscience, that I should betray the interests of my constituents, and that I should be recreant to the principles of that State which I am proud to represent in part on this floor, did I not demand for the citizens of Kansas what they ask—not as a boon, but as a right. Never, sir, has this great question of the extension of Slavery come up before Congress, that gentlemen here, from the district which I have the honor to represent, have not taken the same stand against it which it is now my pride to take. The records, sir, show that the Hon. N. B. Borden, and the Hon. Artemas Hale, and the Hon. S. L. Crocker, from the beginning to the termination of their connection with this body, gave a sincere, earnest, and emphatic nay—a Massachusetts opposition to every measure which recognised Slavery as national; which extended its territory, or which increased its powers.

Last, though not least, I am guided by the example left by another of my predecessors, the lamented Fowler, whose grave is near my home, whose memory is enshrined in my heart. It was my good fortune to enjoy his friendship and his

confidence; to profit by his discriminating judgment and his correct impulses; to feel as his constituent that he would defend my rights, and the rights of every other voter in his district, with manly boldness. And, sir, with this record of fidelity to Freedom by all of my predecessors, through so many years of political excitement, of partisan triumphs, and of local animosities, it would ill become me to falter, or to prove recreant in this trying hour. Were it possible, sir, that I should be led astray from the path so clearly marked out by those who have preceded me, I should be an unworthy representative, too, of that hallowed portion of my district where repose the mortal remains of Daniel Webster. I cannot forget, sir, that not ten years have elapsed since he, at the other end of the Capitol, expressed his deliberate opinion that it is certain, if anything is certain, that the sentiment of the whole North is opposed to the admission of new slave States.

I am aware, sir, that Mr. Webster is now an object of adulation to those who, at the last moment, disappointed his hopes, and snatched from him the reward for the patriotic sentiments which they now so often quote. Let those gentlemen, before they talk about the position of Massachusetts in the days of Daniel Webster, read his glorious speech at New York in 1837 against the admission of Texas as a slave State—let them read his speech in the United States Senate on the 1st of March, 1847, upon presenting resolutions from the State of Massachusetts. These resolutions, sir, I will read, to show what the opinion of Massachusetts was in those days to which gentlemen now refer; and in the *Congressional Globe* can be found the remarks of Mr. Webster on presenting them—clear, distinct, imperative, in their behalf:

“Resolved, *unanimously*, That the Legislature of Massachusetts views the existence of Human Slavery within the limits of the United States as a great calamity—an immense moral and political evil, which ought to be abolished as soon as that end can be properly and constitutionally attained; and that its extension should be uniformly and earnestly opposed by all good and patriotic men throughout the Union.

Resolved, unanimously, That the people of Massachusetts will strenuously resist the annexation of any new Territory to this Union, in which the institution of Slavery is to be tolerated or established; and the Legislature, in behalf of the people of this Commonwealth, do hereby solemnly protest against the acquisition of any additional Territory, without an express provision by Congress that there shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude in such Territory, otherwise than for the punishment of crime."

I am aware, sir, that many honorable gentlemen on this floor listen with sensitive ears to all discussion which involves the question of Slavery, and that some of them even go so far as to take offence at plain statements of facts or of grievances. It is neither my wish nor my intention to arouse this sectional agitation. Yet it would be useless for any Representative here to state his peculiar views on a subject under discussion, or to place the position of his constituents fairly before this House, if he did not speak frankly and fully, or if he did not boldly meet the erroneous arguments advanced by others, and plainly expose their falsity, with a steady regard for truth and for right. Yet, sir, it is not by recriminations that we can arrive at a fair settlement of this question, or of any other question in which sectional interests have been entwined. Menace, sir, is unwise, because it is universally ineffectual; and it is with deep regret that I have heard, since the commencement of the present session of this House, the State which I, in common with other gentlemen around me, have the honor to represent, denounced and defamed.

Think not for a moment, sir, that because we who represent Massachusetts on this floor have not thrown back the opprobrious epithets with which our constituents have been assailed, that we are to be drawn from our course by taunts, or sneers, or threats. These may ring in our ears, and make our blood tingle for the moment; but we will not stop to hurl them back upon those who have indulged in this style of declamation. We are conscious, sir, that the time is not far distant when they will regret having used this language. And I, for one, sir, do not intend to falter by the wayside to indulge in personal contentions, or to swerve from the direct line of political duty, to mingle in the turmoil of personal or partisan encounter. It is not my intention, sir, to reply to the injurious reproaches or to the unfounded assertions against the old Bay State, calculated to exasperate those citizens of other portions of the Republic who do not remember the injunctions of Washington, "to frown indignantly upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate one portion of our country from the other."

Massachusetts, sir, needs no apologists, and asks no favors, but relies with full confidence on her own consciousness of rectitude. She has often been assailed; yet it is a matter of record that few laurels have ever been gained by her enemies—whether savage or civilized, external or internal. The "land of the free, and the home of the brave," she has ever been willing to bear her full share of public burdens, and has

found her own resources equal for every emergency. Nor has it ever been the case, sir, that the people of Massachusetts have forgotten that they are the champions, by birthright, of civil and religious liberty. It was an indomitable determination to assert those sacred principles which led the Pilgrim Fathers across the stormy ocean, to the rock-bound coast of a dreary wilderness. There, sir, in the inhospitable season of storms, surrounded by wild beasts, and by more ferocious savages, they resolved "to live free, or cease to live." Sacredly, sir, has that pledge been kept! It was in defence of civil and religious liberty that the men of Massachusetts fought the wily Penobscots, excited by their Jesuit missionaries to deeds of rapine and cruelty. It was in defence of civil and religious liberty that they conquered the fortress of Louisbourg, the stronghold of a Power that had sought to impose a religious despotism upon this entire continent; and it was in defence of civil and religious liberty that the soil of Lexington and of Bunker Hill was moistened with Massachusetts blood, as her sons commenced that armed resistance to tyrants which they regarded as obedience to God. "An appeal to Heaven," was the motto inscribed upon their pine-tree flag; and nobly did soldiers and civilians, men of strong arms and mighty minds, enter into the conflict, pledging "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honors."

Nor was it at home, alone, sir, that the men of Massachusetts fought during the revolutionary struggle. No other State furnished as many troops, or as many munitions of war. And she may be traced on every battle-field along the Atlantic coast, by the bones of her heroic sons. Nay, sir, when the invading foe had made their proud boast that Carolina was subdued, it was a New England mechanic—the gallant Greene—who led Massachusetts men to the succor of Sumter and Marion. Shoulder to shoulder they fought—they conquered. And when, at last, the Britons were forced to lay down their arms at Yorktown, the haughty Cornwallis surrendered his sword to the brave Lincoln, a Massachusetts officer, who had gallantly, though unsuccessfully, defended Charleston during a protracted siege. And they fought, be it remembered, for certain "inalienable rights," among which were enumerated "liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

As it was in the Revolution, so has it been in subsequent conflicts. Though a peaceful Commonwealth, Massachusetts yields to none in liberal and generous sacrifices of blood and of treasure. Her troops are ever ready for the field, and her hardy mariners go into the conflict like their own "Constitution," built of Massachusetts oak, launched in Massachusetts waters, and manned by Massachusetts mariners, pouring forth victorious broadsides.

But these are not the achievements, sir, in which Massachusetts takes the most pride. Her citizens consider that peace has its victories as well as war, and we point with pride to our churches, and school-houses, and manufactories, and commerce—those evidences of industry and of education. With us, labor is not reluctant drudgery; it is cheerful, contented, spirited, because it

is respectable, and because it is certain of its reward.

An eloquent Senator from South Carolina [Mr. Preston] once remarked, that, although Massachusetts was the most prosperous State in the Union, she exported no natural products but *granite* and *ice*. This is true, sir; but though Nature frowns upon us, nowhere else is the hand of manufacturing industry more visibly busy. We are told, sir, that in 1845 the aggregate productive industry of the Commonwealth was \$114,000,000. Now, as appears by statistics recently published from the office of the Secretary of State, it will go up to \$300,000,000—making a growth of one hundred per cent. in the productive wealth of the State for ten years. In the cotton manufacture the growth has been from \$12,000,000 to \$26,000,000; in calico, from \$4,000,000 to \$5,000,000; in woollens, from \$8,000,000 to \$12,000,000; in linen, from \$145,000 to \$1,500,000; in shoes, from \$11,000,000 to \$38,000,000; in steam engines, from \$200,000 to \$3,250,000; in copper and brass manufactures, from \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000; in glass, from \$750,000 to \$2,750,000; and in chemicals, from \$300,000 to \$1,124,000.

Surely, sir, this does not look as if the industrial reputation of Massachusetts was degenerating, although certain gentlemen have been pleased to draw disparaging comparisons between her present and her "ancient character." Let gentlemen remember, when they speak of the Massachusetts of 1856, that a goodly share of the national revenue is paid at her custom-houses, and that two-thirds of all the cotton consumed in the United States, and two-thirds of all the cotton manufactures produced, are consumed and produced in the part of the country of which Boston is the commercial metropolis and chief business centre. The value of domestic cotton manufactures disposed of in Boston in the year 1855, by first hands, was \$46,700,000. The value of domestic manufactured woollens disposed of in Boston in the year 1855, by first hands, was \$22,000,000; making the total of domestic cottons and woollens \$68,700,000.

In commerce, Massachusetts is second only to New York; but in proportion to population, the first in the Union. Her unrivalled clippers bear the stars and stripes in every sea, and her hardy mariners visit every shore, ploughing the Arctic ices, opening new ports under the sun of the equator, and ever ready to create new commerce wherever fresh channels are opened. Her fisheries are the nurseries whence our navy is to be manned in case of war; and an idea of the value of her commercial fleet may be formed from the fact that the amount invested in ships belonging to the Boston district alone is estimated at \$25,000,000. Out of 175 ships which arrived in the United States from beyond the Cape of Good Hope in the year 1854, 105 arrived in Boston; and out of 154 which arrived in 1855, 86 came into Boston, 7 to Salem, 1 to Providence, 54 to New York, 5 to Philadelphia, and 1 to Baltimore. Of the 54 which arrived in New York, 14 from China were owned in Boston.

With such resources, sir, it is not strange that

Massachusetts maintains, and ever has maintained, her obligations, both in letter and spirit. Her State bonds, sir, are never seen quoted among the "fancy stocks" on which the "bulls" and the "bears" of exchanges revel in speculation. And yet, sir, this people, so enterprising and so industrious—so diligent in extending the name and the fame of this Republic, by honorable commercial transactions—is stigmatized as degraded. Ah, sir, could the gentlemen who have denounced her ride over thirteen hundred miles of railroad which cover her with a network of prosperity—could they visit her six colleges, her four hundred academies, and her thirty-six hundred well-kept schools, sustained at an annual expense of one million six hundred thousand dollars—they might think the old Bay State worthy to "enjoy" their friendship and share their confidence.

But we have been told, sir, by the gentleman from South Carolina, that all this is a "magnificent diorama," and that we "do not show the machinery with which it is worked." He "sends an arrow," and it goes poisoned with sneers at a "large array of starving operatives," which, so far as my own district is concerned, I challenge him to find. There are "operatives" there in abundance—almost every man is an "operative;" and it has been shown on this floor, sir, during this session of Congress, that Massachusetts "operatives" are not to be despised. Sir, I am a representative of "operatives." The farmers of my district are all "operatives;" and mingled among them, sharing their society, in every town are other "operatives," engaged in manufactures of every kind. In my own immediate home, the beautiful city of Fall River, I am surrounded by "operatives," whom I meet wherever I go, in the street, in the lecture-room, and in the worship of God, while the busy hum of their machinery is never out of my ears. I know "operatives" well. We turn with exultation, sir, to those who are trained to mechanical trades in our work-shops—who have no resources but their own exertions—but who can enjoy the benefits of education, and are not debarred from official positions at home by not being possessed of estates worth so many pounds. These "operatives" are the men—prompted, stimulated, and urged forward, with the hope of excelling in whatever they undertake—that rise to eminence, and are the pride of Massachusetts.

Perhaps the gentleman would like to know the secret by which Massachusetts, which has no natural productions for export but granite and ice, surpasses the rich Palmetto State. It is the absence of that competition with slave labor, which, in his section, depresses the operative class, or able judges have left false testimony. Their evidence, sir, has a direct bearing upon the Kansas question. We are all interested, as owners of the national domain, in the lands there, and should listen to good advice as to what domestic relations should give them a market value.

First, sir, let us listen to George Washington—to him who was "first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen." What

did he say? I quote from 12th volume Sparks's Writings of Washington, page 326. Writing from Philadelphia, he says:

"From what I have said, you will perceive that the present prices of lands in Pennsylvania are higher than they are in Maryland and Virginia, although they are not of superior quality."

And, after enumerating several other auxiliary causes for this, he adds:

"And because there are laws here for the gradual abolition of Slavery, which neither of the two States above mentioned have at present, but which nothing is more certain than that they must have, and at a period not remote."

Again, in writing to John F. Mercer, September 9, 1786, (Writings of Washington, vol. 9, page 159,) the Father of his Country says:

"I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase—it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which Slavery in this country may be abolished by law."

And what said Thomas Jefferson, the "apostle of American Democracy," whose place is now so *strangely* (I will not use a stronger word) filled! I read from his "Notes on Virginia," pages 221, 222. He says:

"There must doubtless be an unhappy influence upon the manners of our people, produced by the existence of Slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. * * * The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to the worst of passions, and, thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriæ* of the other. For if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labor for another; in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute, as far as depends on his individual endeavors, to the enervation of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him. With the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed; for in a warm climate no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true, that of the proprietors of slaves a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a

conviction in the minds of the people that their liberties are the gift of God?—that they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever; that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest."

Is this satisfactory? There is no lack of such testimony, sir, coming, too, from the most eminent sons of Virginia, that "maternal home of Presidents." In a debate in her House of Delegates in 1832, Gov. McDowell said:

"Who, sir, that looks at this property as a legislator, and marks its effect upon our national advance, but weeps over it as the worst of patrimonies? Who that looks at this unhappy bondage of an unhappy people in the midst of our society, and thinks of its incidents and its issues, but weeps over it as a curse upon him who inflicts, as upon him who suffers it? * * * Slavery has come down to us from our fathers, and the question now is, Shall we, in turn, hand it over to our children?—hand it over to them aggravated in every attribute of evil? Shall we perpetuate the calamity we deplore, and become to posterity the objects, not of kindness, but of cursing? * * * If gentlemen do not see nor feel the evil of Slavery whilst this Federal Union lasts, they will see and feel it when it is gone; they will see and suffer it, then, in a magnitude of desolating power to which the 'pestilence that walketh at noonday' would be a blessing—to which the malaria that is now threatening extinction to the 'Eternal City,' as the proud one of the Pontiffs and the Caesars is called, would be as refreshing and as balmy as the first breath of spring to the chamber of disease. * * * It has been frankly and unequivocally declared, from the very commencement of this debate, by the most decided enemies of abolition themselves, as well as others, that this property is an 'evil'—that it is a dangerous property. Yes, sir, so dangerous has it been represented to be, even by those who desire to retain it, that we have been reproached for speaking of it otherwise than in fireside whispers; reproached for entertaining debate upon it in this Hall; and the discussion of it with open doors and to the general ear has been charged upon us as a climax of rashness and folly, which threatens issues of calamity to our country."

Thomas Marshall, of Fauquier county, said:

"Wherefore, then, object to Slavery? Because it is ruinous to the whites, retards improvement, roots out an industrious population, banishes the yeomanry of the country, deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter, of employment and support. The evil admits of no remedy. It is increasing, and will continue to increase, until the whole country will become inundated with one black wave, covering its whole extent, with a few white faces here and there floating on the surface. There is no

‘diversity of occupations, no incentive to enter-
 ‘prise. Labor of every species is disreputable,
 ‘because performed mostly by slaves. Our towns
 ‘are stationary, our villages almost everywhere
 ‘declining, and the general aspect of the country
 ‘marks the curse of a wasteful, idle, reckless
 ‘population, who have no interest in the soil, and
 ‘care not how much it is impoverished. Public
 ‘improvements are neglected, and the entire con-
 ‘tinent does not present a region for which Nature
 ‘has done so much and art so little.’

Henry Berry, of Jefferson county, said :

‘Sir, I believe that no cancer in the physical
 ‘body was ever more certain, steady, and fatal,
 ‘in its progress, than is this cancer on the politi-
 ‘cal body of the State of Virginia. It is eating
 ‘into her very vitals.’

Phillip A. Bolling, of Buckingham county, said :

‘High-minded men should disdain to hold their
 ‘fellow-creatures as articles of traffic—disregard-
 ‘ing all the ties of blood and affection, tearing
 ‘asunder all those sympathies dear to men, divid-
 ‘ing husbands and wives, parents and children,
 ‘as they would cut asunder a piece of cotton
 ‘cloth.’

I might go on, sir, and fill a large volume with
 quotations, but I forbear. It was my object, after
 denying the truth of the gentleman’s sneers at the
 ‘operatives’ of Massachusetts, to prove that, by
 the force of circumstances, they were superior to
 those of the South. I have examined my wit-
 nesses, and now I will close the argument, quoting
 the very words used in the House of Delegates
 of Virginia (in the debate previously alluded to)
 by Mr. Summers, a Delegate from the western
 portion of the Old Dominion :

‘We claim but the right to attempt the defence
 ‘of our people from what they themselves [eastern
 ‘Virginians] have acknowledged in this debate to
 ‘be the sorest curse which offended Deity ever
 ‘visited upon a sinning people.

‘Labor becomes dishonorable, because it is the
 ‘business of a slave; and when industry is made
 ‘dishonorable or unfashionable, virtue is attacked
 ‘in her strongest citadel.

‘But, sir, the evils of this system cannot be
 ‘enumerated. It were unnecessary to attempt
 ‘it. They glare upon us at every step. When
 ‘the owner looks to his wasted estate, he knows
 ‘and feels them. When a statesman examines
 ‘the condition of his country, and finds her moral
 ‘influence gone, her physical strength diminished,
 ‘her political power waning, he sees and must
 ‘confess them.’

But while the people of Massachusetts, sir,
 have sought to elevate her to a high place on the
 scale of States, they have not been unmindful
 of their national responsibility. Never unmindful
 of the rights of other States, which it is their
 pride to respect, they have fearlessly sought the
 extension of civil and religious liberty over every
 portion of this continent where it can be intro-
 duced. Foremost among communities in remov-
 ing the yoke of bondage from all within their
 limits, they have ever endeavored to make Sla-
 very a sectional—not a national—stigma, by op-
 posing its introduction into new Territories and
 States. Turn over the records of our national

councils, sir, and you will find that the Repre-
 sentatives from Massachusetts have ever been
 found occupying the same ground where we now
 stand. It was Nathan Dane, of Massachusetts,
 sir, who procured the passage of the celebrated
 Ordinance of 1787, for the government of the
 Northwest Territory, to which Virginia so mag-
 nanimously assented. How glorious have been
 the results! State after State has risen into ex-
 istence, each a living evidence of Massachusetts
 enterprise and Massachusetts energy; for it was
 a little colony sent out from one of her small
 hamlets, with its minister and its schoolmaster,
 that was the germ of Ohio and of her sister
 Commonwealths—those stalwart pioneers in the
 march of progress.

On the admission of Missouri into the Union
 in 1820, and on every other occasion when at-
 tempts have been made to extend the blighting
 influence of the Slave Power, the Senators and
 Representatives of Massachusetts have ever en-
 deavored to assert the principles of civil and reli-
 gious liberty. Rightfully, manfully, nobly, have
 most of them stood forward to express the opin-
 ion of their constituents, even though they have
 been menaced, derided, and censured, for their
 inextinguishable love of Freedom. Nor has any
 one of these gentlemen (able and eloquent as
 many of them have been in maintaining the rights
 of those whom they represented) equalled the
 talented ex-Representative of the Essex north
 district, now Attorney General of the United
 States. His ‘opinions’ should surely pass cur-
 rent with the supporters of the present Adminis-
 tration, and to their attention would I respectfully
 commend the speech made by the Hon. Caleb
 Cushing, on the floor of this House, in February,
 1837. It can be found in the second part of the
 thirteenth volume of Congressional Debates, and
 is a glowing, brilliant defence of his native State,
 which I would like to see circulated throughout
 the Union at this very time. I shall content
 myself with quoting two paragraphs, which have
 a direct bearing upon the momentous questions
 of the day.

‘Gentlemen’ (said the honorable Attorney
 General) ‘denounce, in no measured terms, the
 ‘distinguishing opinions of Massachusetts on the
 ‘subject of this great question of public liberty,
 ‘incidental to the resolution before us. They
 ‘err most egregiously, if they believe that such
 ‘opinions are exclusively peculiar to Massachu-
 ‘setts or to New England. Those opinions pre-
 ‘vail quite as extensively in the great States of
 ‘New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, for example,
 ‘as they do in New England. They are, indeed,
 ‘opinions of elemental right, lying at the very
 ‘bottom of all the political institutions of the
 ‘country. It may be that such opinions are
 ‘more strongly held, and more universally under-
 ‘stood, in New England, than elsewhere in the
 ‘United States. I may not deny it. Deny it? I
 ‘glory in the fact. It is the proof and the result
 ‘of our old and persevering dedication to Lib-
 ‘erty.’

‘Gentlemen talk to us of these our great fun-
 ‘damental rights—as the freedom of speech, of
 ‘opinion, of petition—as if they were derived

' from the Constitution of the United States. I
 ' scout such a doctrine. If there were a drop in
 ' my veins that did not rebel against the senti-
 ' ment, it would be bastard blood. Sir, I claim
 ' to be descended from the king-killing Round-
 ' heads of the reign of Charles I; through a
 ' race of men not unremembered in peace or war;
 ' never backward in the struggles of Liberty; a
 ' family, upon the head of a member of which
 ' the first price of blood was set by Great Britain.
 ' in revenge for his early devotion to the cause of
 ' Independence. I venerate their character and
 ' their principles. I am ready to do as they did—
 ' to abandon all the advantages of country, home,
 ' fortune, station—to fly to some Western wilder-
 ' ness, and to live upon a handful of parched corn
 ' and a cup of cold water, with God's blessing
 ' on honest independence—sooner than I will
 ' surrender one jot or tittle of those great prin-
 ' ciples of Liberty which I have sucked in with
 ' my mother's milk. I disclaim to hold these rights
 ' by any parchment title. The people of the Com-
 ' monwealth of Massachusetts, the people of every
 ' State of this Union, came into it in the full pos-
 ' session and fruition of all these rights. We did
 ' not constitute this Government as the means of
 ' acquiring new rights, but for the protection of
 ' old ones, which nature had conferred upon us;
 ' which the Constitution rightly regards as pre-
 ' existing rights; and as to which all the Con-
 ' stitution does is to provide that these rights
 ' neither you, nor any power on earth, shall
 ' alter, abrogate, or abridge. They are rights of
 ' Heaven's own giving. We hold them by the
 ' supreme tenure of revolution. We hold them
 ' by the dread arbitrament of battle. We hold
 ' them by the concession of a mightier and broader
 ' charter than all the Constitutions in the land—
 ' the free donation of the eternal God, when he
 ' made us to be men. These, the cardinal prin-
 ' ciples of Human Freedom, he has implanted in
 ' us, and placed them before, and behind, and
 ' around us, for our guard and guidance, like the
 ' cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night,
 ' which led the Israelites through the desert.
 ' It is a Liberty, native, inborn, original, unde-
 ' rived, imprescriptible, and acknowledged in the
 ' Constitution itself, as pre-eminently before and
 ' above the Constitution."

In these significant paragraphs, Mr. Chairman,
 we have the predominant impulse—the main-
 spring, if I may so term it—of the Massachusetts
 emigration to Kansas. Civil and religious Lib-
 erty, like the cloud by day and the pillar of fire
 by night, has directed the course of those who
 have gone to settle in these fertile valleys. The
 whole vocabulary of opprobrious terms appears
 to have been exhausted in denouncing them, and
 in calumniating those who have afforded them
 "aid." But I feel conscious, sir, that they will
 submit their Territorial life to any ordeal of in-
 vestigation; and I am equally confident, sir, that
 they are nowise behind their neighbors of Mis-
 souri in honesty, intelligence, industry, or bra-
 very. They are men of strong hands and stout
 hearts, accompanied and encouraged by women
 of pure and elevated character. And they are
 equal, sir, in my humble opinion, to the most

chivalrous and refined members of any "first
 family" in the Old Dominion.

The Massachusetts men in Kansas were not
 driven from their pleasant homes by the impov-
 erishing agriculture of their fathers, or by un-
 kind treatment; but they go forth, loving sons
 from a kind mother, bearing her benediction and
 her principles. And in taking possession, as citi-
 zens of these United States, of that virgin soil
 which is our common heritage, they are anima-
 ted by that same Massachusetts spirit which led
 Adams and Hancock not only to declare their
 rights, but to maintain and defend them. They
 look onward, in the broad path of public duty;
 and if impediments or conflicts are placed in
 their way, depend upon it they will not flinch!
 Neither empty threats nor flashing knives will
 affect their nerves. Either can be met by them
 without shrinking, and without exciting any
 other emotion than contempt for their calumni-
 ators, and pity for the weakness of those who
 threaten, yet have not either the courage or the
 power to execute their impotent edicts.

But a bugbear, sir, is ever held up, when the
 New England emigrants are mentioned. We are
 told, sir, by way of proving their total depravity,
 that they go armed with *Sharpe's rifles*! Is this
 a Yankee notion? or has it been the case from
 the first settlement of the Mississippi valley, that
 every emigrant who went forth has taken a rifle
 with him, and taken the very best rifle that he
 could get? When Missouri was settled, sir,
 would it have been fair to have made a to-do
 because some enterprising emigrants went there
 with percussion-lock rifles, then just beginning
 to supersede the old flint and steel? Or would
 you have expected Daniel Boone, when he first
 explored the fertile slopes of Kentucky, to have
 carried an antiquated match-lock, because "flint
 and steel" was a "Yankee notion?" I fear, sir,
 that gentlemen who are so fond of using this ex-
 pression do not understand the definition of this
 word "Yankee;" and for their benefit I will quote
 from the speech of an honorable member of Con-
 gress, made when a new State was asking for
 admittance. He told his fellow-members, sir,
 upon the authority of time-honored tradition,
 that

"During the revolutionary war, two citizens of
 Connecticut were sent to New York to negotiate
 an exchange of prisoners. At the table of the
 commander of the British army, where these
 gentlemen were invited to dine, (not, however,
 for any *votes they had given*), the term '*Yankee*'
 was overheard in an under tone. Lord Howe,
 in a pleasant manner, asked these gentlemen
 the meaning of the term '*Yankee*,' which he had
 heard at his table, (casting a look of reproof
 and censure upon some young officers from
 whom it came.) The reply was, '*It is derived*
 '*from two Indian words, signifying Wasp and Hornet,*
 '*and is full of meaning—the Wasp never aban-*
 '*don the citadel; the Hornet drives the enemy from*
 '*his borders.'*"

Since the time when Captain Miles Standish
 was appointed to teach the Puritans "the use of
 arms," the citizens of Massachusetts have ever
 held it as an axiom, that "It is the first duty of

a freeman to be a good citizen; the second, to be a good soldier;" not that they desire the blood-stained laurels of the conqueror, or booty won by the sword; but, depend upon it, sir, they will ever maintain that Freedom for which their fathers fought, and which they will ever defend. They consider that the dedication of any large portion of the community to the exclusive business of bearing arms, is as adverse to the rights and interests of the Republic as it is hostile to our common institutions and our common safety. And what better proof of this could we have, sir, than in the fact that a thousand able-bodied men have been idling away the past six months at Forts Leavenworth and Kearney, waiting for a chance to "crush out" Freedom in Kansas "by authority?" I, sir, protest against this military interference which is becoming so supreme, though I do not believe that the American people will ever so crouch to martial law as to make a provost-marshal's guard superior to a sheriff's posse, or to desecrate the parchment on which the Declaration of Independence is written, by permitting it to be taken for a drum head.

But, sir, the emigrants who went from Massachusetts and other New England States to Kansas were not to be frightened by a few dragoons or by an unauthorized militia force. The exigencies of the times called upon them to stand up in vindication of the great principles of Freedom—to grapple with Executive arrogance—to contend for the right! They felt proudly conscious that they had toiled to the mountain top, where the land of promise was in full sight—and that the sun of the next Administration would rise in glory over Kansas as Freedom's home, or that it would sink into the dark night of Slavery. Nor is it strange, sir, that every American, not blinded by sectional prejudice, should wish them well, and feel his heart throb with warm wishes for their success. Such was the case during the Greek, and the Polish, and the French, and the Hungarian revolutions—when our feelings were enlisted with those distant people, and their war-cry of "Liberty," echoing in our breasts, went booming back with "material aid," to cheer and to animate the struggling sons of Freedom. Nay, sir, what was the feeling when our fellow-citizens who had emigrated to Texas, and there sought to establish a State, were threatened by an edict requiring an unqualified submission to military despotism? An honorable Senator from Mississippi has answered this question, sir; and truly applicable are his remarks:

"They resisted the enforcement of this order, and never would I have uttered a word in favor of their recognition if they had not. Had they tamely submitted to such an act of oppression, they would have been unworthy of the name of Americans. Had they bowed their necks to the yoke, and submissively yielded up their limbs to the chain, I would never have voted to welcome them among the nations of the free. Suppose the President of these United States

should enter the Halls of Congress, seize our persons, and drive us from our seats, and occupy them with his creatures; suppose he should then send out a band of mercenaries into Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, should disarm our citizens, and demand of them, with threats, an unqualified submission to his absolute will: I ask whether there lives a man so abject as not to resist? No. I know, all men know, that the people of those States would maintain their Freedom, or perish in the struggle. The citizens of Texas have done just what would have been done, in the like case, by citizens of the United States. We did so in circumstances far less intolerable. The colonial oppression of the Government of Great Britain was mild, was paternal, in comparison with the despotism that was sought to be fixed on the necks of the citizens of Texas. Their resistance of it was justified by all laws, human and divine."

I will not occupy the time of this House by drawing a parallel between the people of Kansas and the people of Texas. The wrongs of each have been chronicled by others; and it is to be hoped that one will be as successful as the other in obtaining a full share in the blessings of the Union. Others have stated the wrongs committed upon Kansas, and the attempts made to hinder her actual citizens in erecting their temple of State sovereignty. They are matters of record; and now we see the edifice in all its fair proportions. The winds of partisan eloquence may blow against it, the rains of political wrath may descend, and the floods of Executive power may compass it about, but it will not fall, for its foundation is sure!

Let us welcome the State of Kansas, which will come into this Union free and independent. We need, sir, a fresh infusion of that sovereignty to check the encroachments of the Executive, and to infuse a new republican spirit into our Government. We ask not an extension of what all must admit to be a cloud upon our national shield, but we greet with joy a Commonwealth which will acknowledge no obedience but to God, and to the laws—a State where Liberty and Justice, hand in hand, will uphold the escutcheon of Freedom, surmounted by the glorious stripes and stars.

Hail, then, to free Kansas, with her free schools, her free press, her freedom of thought, her freedom of the priceless soul! Let the railroad and the telegraph cross her slopes, instead of the buffalo and the prairie wolf! Let the clang of the printing-press and the hum of the grist-mill be heard where but lately only the Indian's war-whoop awoke the forest solitudes! Let those who have gone there, in good faith, erect an altar to Freedom, upon which they can swear—by the distant homes of their fathers, and by the hopes of their children—by the soil beneath their feet, and by that Jehovah in whom Ethan Allen put his trust—that she will ever be true to the principles of civil and religious liberty!

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