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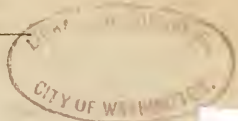
Wade, Benjamin Franklin  
Traitors and their  
sympathizers. 1862  
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SPEECH  
OF  
HON. B. F. WADE, OF OHIO,  
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

APRIL 21, 1862.



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Mr. WADE said: Mr. President, it was not my purpose to have said one word on this occasion. It is very rarely that any question can come forward here that will provoke any reply from me. I have listened to the two hours' string of platitudes which the gentleman has uttered here, to which I have not one single word of reply. They are precisely such as every lawyer makes when his client is on trial on an indictment in a bad case. He always appeals to those great guarantees of liberty that are so well provided for in the English law. Every lawyer of very little practice seems to understand how and when to invoke them. To that part of the speech I have not one word to say. I agree with him entirely; I would be the last man to raise my hand to break down one single scintilla of those great barriers of right and liberty to which he has so often alluded, and which are household words to us all. He need not have read his books, he need not have quoted his authorities in an American Senate on those points, because every man stands ready to subscribe an amen to all the doctrines to which he has alluded.

But, sir, he stepped a little beyond that course of remark, and violently assailed the committee of which I happen to be the chairman.

Mr. McDOUGALL. Will the Senator allow me to ask one thing?

The PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. Does the Senator from Ohio yield the floor?

Mr. WADE. Yes, sir.

Mr. McDOUGALL. I shall probably leave the Senate, but I wish to ask the Senator a question. I do not know that I have a right to inquire whether this arrest was made at the instance of the committee on the conduct of the war or not. It has been stated so and rumored so. I understand the responsibility is shifted from shoulder to shoulder. I did not mean to say they had done so, or to assail them. I know it was necessarily done, according to my information, by a person acting by the authority of the Secretary of War; but I should like to be informed if it was not at the instance of the committee on the conduct of the war, for I should like to be able to think so well of every member of the Senate as to relieve myself of the suspicion that is on my mind. I did not charge it on the committee. I do not know of my own knowledge that they have ever done an unworthy or improper thing.

Mr. WADE. You ought to know.

Mr. McDOUGALL. Do not understand me as doing anything more than trying to make a form of inquiry by which I might be advised, in some form, why this great wrong has been done.

Mr. WADE. I did not yield the floor to be catechised, but for an explanation, if the gentleman had any to make. It turns out that instead of an explanation and apology for what he has said, I am to be catechised further on the subject. Now, the Senator says he does not know what he has been talking about. I did not suppose he did. He says he made the remark as a kind of fishing argument to see if he could not draw out something from somebody that would give him some light on this subject.

Mr. McDOUGALL. That is my very object. I have sought light on the subject with great labor and industry.

Mr. WADE. The Senator in the course of his remarks alluded to the committee of which I am chairman. I cannot repeat exactly the words, but it was to the effect that we had been made use of, or that we practised stabbing men in the dark; that we profess to have some kind of testimony against men, and then throw it out to their prejudice and the prejudice of their characters. I demand of that Senator now specifically to tell me what he meant by it. Where has it been done and by whom?

Mr. McDOUGALL. If I were aware that the committee on the conduct of the war had been responsible for this act, I should have spoken of that committee as I spoke of the person now at the head of the War Department. I know by information that witnesses have testified before your committee, because a gentleman told me he was going before the committee in relation to this very matter.

Mr. WADE. I want to know specifically—

Mr. McDOUGALL. Do you want to know the man?

Mr. WADE. I want to know personally and specifically from that Senator when and where it was that that committee threw out dark insinuations to wound the character of any man? When, where, and how have they done it?

Mr. McDOUGALL. I did not state that the committee on the conduct of the war had done any such thing, and you will find I am not so reported.

Mr. WADE. Then I entirely misunderstood

the Senator, for I understood a charge of that kind to have been made. I am glad to hear that the gentleman says now that he has made no such charge, for I know that no such charge can be sustained.

Mr. McDUGALL. I am glad to hear that also.

Mr. WADE. Why glad to hear it, sir? You never heard the contrary; never, never. While you throw out dark insinuations against the committee, I ask of you to be specific, or to exculpate them from the charge you have made. State wherein they have stabbed any man in the dark. I can tell the Senator the course of that committee towards General Stone—not that I mean to be provoked under any considerations into a discussion of the merits or demerits of that gentleman here. This is not the tribunal before whom he can be arraigned and tried. However, as many allusions have been thrown out in the Senate against the committee of which I, without any seeking of my own, was made the chairman, (for I had nothing to do with the raising of the committee,) I perhaps owe it to the committee and to myself to state the course of proceeding we have adopted. We have assailed no man. We have gone forth in the spirit of the resolution that created us a committee to inquire into the manner in which this war has been conducted; to ascertain by the best evidence and the best lights we could wherein there was anything in which we could aid the Administration in the prosecution of this war, and wherever there was a delinquency, that we might ferret it out, apprise the Administration of it, and demand a remedy. I suppose it was for that purpose that the committee was created with the immense powers that were devolved upon it. I do not say whether it was wise or unwise to create such a committee. The Senator from New York [Mr. HAMMS] yesterday said he thought it exceedingly unwise, because the committee, as he supposed, were conducting the war; that is, placing the armies in the field, and dictating the policy of the war. We did not construe our powers in that way. We knew that in the vast business that pertained to the executive branch of the Government, it was impossible for them to look into everything connected with the conduct of the war which they would like to know and which it was most essential to the country that they should know. Therefore, having leisure to inquire into many alleged abuses that they had no power or no time to investigate, we took it upon ourselves to investigate them, and, I say here, with a discretion and with a solicitude to injure no man that has never been exceeded in any investigation of any committee on God's earth.

Sir, we have not published what we have ascertained to any mortal man except to those who were armed with the power of administering the remedy. No idle curiosity has prompted any member of that committee to proclaim to the world as idle gossip the testimony that was before it. I challenge the Senate, and every man of it, to tell me which member of the committee or where have we made known to the public what was going on before us. I admit that as we ascertained facts, the existence of malprac-

tices, short-comings, and things inconsistent with the proper and beneficial conduct of the war, we have sought interviews with the President of the United States, we have sought them with the Secretary of War, and on some occasions with the whole Cabinet, and there in secret have disclosed the testimony that has come to us, and we have endeavored to work out a redress, and in innumerable instances I know we have done it, where, had it not been for that so-much maligned committee, the Administration would have been entirely ignorant of what was going on. Patriotic as they are, vigilant as they are, anxious as they are to ascertain the truth on all subjects, they are not invested with omniscience, and with six hundred thousand men in the field and innumerable officers, it may sometimes happen that there may be an unworthy one in that number without their being aware of it. We have endeavored on all occasions to enlighten them, but not to stab any man in the dark, as I understood the gentleman to insinuate, but which he backs out of now, and says he did not intend any such thing or did not say any such thing.

Now, with regard to General Stone, we are not the tribunal that ought to try him. I do not believe we should be put in possession of that kind of testimony that tends to implicate him. I do not believe that it would be my duty either to the public or to General Stone here in the Senate to proclaim to the world all the testimony that came before the committee on the conduct of the war. But this much in exculpation of the Executive I will say in general terms, in order to repel the insinuations of the Senator from California: I will say here in my place that there was, and is, probable cause for the arrest of General Stone. I am not going to detail the evidence. I regret that it becomes necessary that I should say anything in public on the subject. I had rather trust it with those whom the Constitution and the law charge with the execution of this matter; but his indiscreet friend will drag it out here; and I say, then, in behalf of that abused Executive, that there is probable cause for his arrest.

We are tyrannical—the nation is tyrannical, says the gentleman; and he quotes authorities from nations at war with each other where there is no suspicion of treason; where all is loyalty on both sides; where nations have national feelings sufficient to repress everything favoring the adversary, and to bring forward everything favoring their own nation. He cites these precedents to enlighten us in the midst of a civil revolution, where traitors are in our midst, where you cannot walk the streets without meeting men whose hearts are opposed to the prosecution of this war. No, sir; you cannot go through the Executive Departments but you meet with violent enemies of the Government you are endeavoring to maintain. He reads precedents from English history to show the forbearance of that nation in times of civil strife. I wonder that the reading of that did not carry him back to the time when England was involved in civil war. If it had, would he not be astonished at the mildness and forbearance of the Government in the course it has pursued towards these traitors in our midst? Sir, if you look at the old

records during those troublesome times, you will find that men on slighter evidence than would impeach the gentleman were hung up by the neck until they were dead, and yet he lauds the mildness of the British Government. It is a remarkable fact, and I fear not entirely to our credit either, that while we have been involved in this great rebellion, while this generation are taxed, and future generations will be taxed to the utmost of their capacity to defend themselves, while this ungodly war was waged against the best Government on God's earth, and it has cost the most precious blood of this nation to repel the insurrection, after one whole year has passed by, there has not yet been made a single example of treason, not one; no attempt to take the life, nay, even the property, of the hellish traitor that has caused the sacrifice of our dearest and most precious blood.

Sir, the man who invokes the Constitution in forbearance of the law to punish traitors is himself a sympathizer. There never was a man who stood up in this Senate from the time when Mr. Breckinridge preached daily in favor of constitutional guarantees until now, and set up constitutional barriers against punishment for treason, but what is in his innermost heart of hearts a traitor. I do not want to hear any more of a man than that he is invoking the forbearance of the Constitution and the great barriers in favor of American liberty to protect an infernal traitor in his course, to know that he is a sympathizer. Our Administration is assailed because, not having the technical evidence in their possession to bring a man to trial and judgment of death, they do not let him go at large to plot against the life of the Government.

Mr. President, I have said a great deal more than I intended; but the theme is a very fruitful one. A tyranny exists here, it is said. Sir, is it not most manifest to everybody that from the time when this treason broke out, when we had traitors in this Senate proclaiming their treason on this floor, when they conspired to take the life of your President on his way to the capital, when they beset your regiments coming here for no other purpose than to defend your capital, until now, every scintilla of information that your Executive has is communicated to traitors on the other side of the river as soon as it is to the people on this side. The Administration have attempted to put that down; they have not succeeded; and yet the Senator stands there and says you should not arrest a scoundrel when you know his heart is with the enemy, but who meanly skulks from overt acts in their favor; you should not imprison him, you should not restrain him; but you must let it all go, and permit the enemy to be perfectly cognizant of every expedition and of every move you make. I am sorry that the Senator does not remain on this floor and meet the consequences of his insinuations against the Administration and against the committee.

Sir, it is perfectly manifest that if persons are shut up in dungeons, and restrained of their liberty, it is that the Constitution may live. I know it is not in accordance with the principles of our Constitution. In ordinary times it could not for a moment be tolerated; but when, with all your

caution, and with all this pretended tyranny, you have not been able, as yet, to conceal a knowledge of the most important expeditions of your armies and your intended movements from the enemy as soon as your own people possess it, the man who stands up for a rigid execution of the *habeas corpus* and the law, as in time of peace, is but a sympathizer with them. While I am up, let me say that in times of revolution and rebellion like this, when whole States have come out and proclaimed their intention to destroy the life of our glorious Government, when they have their martial hosts in the field, bent on its destruction, I understand them to be entirely absolved from the protecting ægis of the Constitution. They have renounced it utterly. They have struck at your life. They would take your heart's blood. They proclaim themselves ready to do it. And yet, sir, you are to treat them with lenity! Your Constitution prescribes that no man shall be deprived of his life, or despoiled of his goods, without due process of law. It guaranties to every man the right of life, liberty, and property; but are you not compelled to advance into his country with your armies, to plant your cannon, and destroy him by whole armies together? Is that constitutional? My secession friend, if there is any such here, why do you not invoke the Constitution in opposition to our cannon and our musketry against these rebels? The Constitution protects their rights. You do not invoke it on the field of battle. You do not summon a jury. You do not try him there by jury, as the Constitution says you shall. Why do you not carry your doctrines to their legitimate end? Why stop short? Does the Senator from California pretend that when our hosts march in battle array, and meet those of the enemy, and it is life against life, we should summon a jury before we begin to shoot, and see whether they had committed actual rebellion? Your Constitution says their lives shall not be taken without due process of law. I ask you, cavalier about the Constitution, where is the law for it?

Sir, no jurist yet has had the folly to attempt to limit the powers that a man may use in defence of his own life when assailed; and so no statesman will attempt to limit the power that a nation may use when the life of the nation is assailed. There is no limit to it. You have a right to go forward in an individual case in your night, and if your life is sought, any force, any power, anything that you may do honestly in defence of your own life, the law pronounces a justifiable act. So, when the life of the nation is assailed by vile traitors embodied in military array for its destruction, they are beyond all law, they have repudiated all law, and the nation, in defence of its Constitution, its Union, and its flag, may resort to any means that God Almighty has put into their hands honestly to maintain their constitutional rights. I know very well that small lawyers may get up on these great questions of statesmanship and pettifog as a man would to screen a felon before a justice of the peace, and place his arguments on those narrow principles of constitutional law. He may require all the presumptions of innocence that are so often resorted to to shield a culprit from

the punishment of his crime. It is done here. But, sir, the man whose life is assailed does not summon a jury, and the nation whose life is assailed by traitors need not summon a jury. All you want is the power, honestly exercised, to put it down.

Let me say, in passing, that every word and every syllable that the Senator invoked in favor of General Stone might have been just as well, and with more propriety and more strength, urged in favor of Jeff. Davis to-day. He had played a very important part in Mexico; he had held high offices under your Constitution; and all the arguments that the gentleman resorted to to shield General Stone would be infinitely stronger in the case of Jeff. Davis to-day. Lucifer was once a bright angel in heaven; but he fell, and he has not been much honored in that quarter since. [Laughter.]

Sir, I am tired of hearing these arguments in favor of traitors. The Constitution takes their lives, their property, their all. Why shall we stop short? Are they not in quest of ours? If there is any stain on the present Administration, it is that they have been weak enough to deal too leniently with these traitors. I know it sprung from goodness of heart; it sprung from the best of motives; but, sir, as a method of putting down this rebellion, mercy to traitors is cruelty to loyal men. Look into the seceded States, and see thousands of loyal men there coerced into their armies to run the hazard of their lives, and placed in the damnable position of perjured traitors by force of arms. If there is a man there bold enough to maintain his integrity in the face of these infernal powers, do they scruple to take his life, his property, his all? Sir, by your merciful course you have paid a premium to treason, and made it almost impossible that a loyal man in the seceded States can maintain himself at all. Those States are overrun frequently by lawless bands of rebels, who do not scruple one moment to take their property and their lives, and treat them with every indignity and every cruelty that a perverse ingenuity can invent; but, on the other hand, when our armies come along there, they deal quite as leniently with the traitor as with the loyal man. What teaches human nature? A man, having solely a regard to his self-interest, living in one of those communities, will undoubtedly reason thus: "I must profess to be a traitor; I must co-operate with them, for if their lawless bands overrun the country I inhabit, if I show any Union sentiment, any love to the old Constitution and the old flag, I shall lose not only my life, but all I possess; while, on the other hand, if the Federal forces overrun the country, they are so lenient that, even professed traitor as I am, they will respect not only my life, but my property, and all I have." Sir, the rule is as impolitic as it is unjust. You should carry the avenging sword along with your armies, and smite traitors and smite treason, and put it down, and yield protection to honest, loyal men. Until you adopt that course, you will war in vain. Mr. President, for one, I say let us go forward against treason and traitors; let us put down this rebellion at all hazards. If, in doing so, your darling institution must go under, I shall

not regret it. If it must come to this, that the Union and slavery cannot live together, let slavery die the death, for the Constitution, the Union, and the time-honored old flag shall live forever.

Sir, I have been in the Senate for some considerable time, and I should have been an exceedingly dull man if I had not learned the course of defence that is constantly set up here for those who have assailed the institutions of our country. There is an unvarying course of remark that they indulge in, so that no man need be mistaken as to what they intend. Those who assail the Administration on account of what they call tyranny to men sympathizing with traitors, never to my knowledge, open their mouths on this floor in condemnation of the men who have risen in arms and are endeavoring to murder your Constitution and your Government. Towards them they are as mild as sucking doves. You will find one general ear-mark among them all; and that is to assail those who are opposed to traitors and endeavor to bring them to condign punishment; but you will never hear a hiss from one of their mouths in opposition to the men who are now with arms in their hands assailing our institutions and our Government. While the Senator, in his long and elaborate speech, has accused everybody else, have you heard a word from his mouth against the men who are now in arms endeavoring to overthrow your Government? Not one syllable. Sir, you may know all these men from this circumstance: they are the men who cry peace, peace, when they know there can be no honorable peace. Since the Senator—if the papers report him aright; and I see no contradiction of it—descended from his honorable position on this floor and went into secret conclave with those who sympathize with traitors for the avowed purpose of reconstructing the Democratic party, he and all those who co-operate with him throughout the land have violently assailed the administration of the Government, and especially are they opposed to the proceedings of the Secretary of War. There is a premeditated attack of the whole party upon the Administration. In the first place, they assail them as tyrants, as oppressors, as Constitution-breakers; and externally, out of this circle, they are arraigning those who have acted in the Administration before your judicial tribunals. Witness the late attack upon our late Secretary of War, General Cameron. It is but the commencement of proceedings well understood by that party in order to assail and to intimidate the agents of the Government through the judiciary, to overawe them, to prevent them doing their stern duty to traitors; believing, I suppose, that they who can make Dred Scott decisions will be willing to lend their official influence for the purpose of trampling under foot those who stand boldly forth to defend the Constitution and the laws.

The committee of which I happen to be a member is in the same category, and we are to be assailed on all occasions. Why? I am proud that we are assailed from that quarter. It shows that our shots sometimes tell. Who are they who rise up and assail the committee on the conduct of the war? Are they men who are eager to trample this rebellion under foot? Are

the men who have shown a disposition and a zeal to put down rebellion? No, sir. I am happy that we are assailed in such excellent company as that of the President and Secretary of War. I care not who they are, nor where they are; whoever shows a zeal for putting down this rebellion will find that he is in the category to be assailed by this new organization to reconstruct the Government.

Now, let me ask who are these gentlemen that are to reconstruct the Democratic party and the Government? What kind of an alliance is to be formed, and with whom, in this reconstruction? I am sorry I do not see the Senator from California here, because I know, from the position he holds towards those who make these assaults, he would be able to give us light on the subject. I accuse them of a deliberate purpose to assail, through the judicial tribunals, and through the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States, and everywhere else, and to overawe, intimidate, and trample under foot, if they can, the men who boldly stand forth in defence of their country, now imperilled by this gigantic rebellion. I have watched it long. I have seen it in secret. I have seen its movements ever since that party got together, with a colleague of mine in the other House as chairman of the committee on resolutions—a man who never had any sympathy with this Republic, but whose every breath is devoted to its destruction, just as far as his heart dare permit him to go.

What have the committee, who have been thus assailed, done, that should call down upon them the anathemas of the Senator from California, or should compare them, as well as the President and Secretary of War, to grand inquisitors, sitting behind the backs of men to get up accusations by which they are to be tortured and destroyed at the stake? Sir, I grant you we have a zeal, yea, a determination, so far as it lies in our power, that this Government shall be maintained, that treason shall be put down at all hazards, and by any means that God Almighty has put in our hands. [Manifestations of applause in the galleries.] No accusation of tyranny, no comparing us with inquisitorial tribunals, no mawkish sensibility in behalf of traitors, will have the effect to deter us from our resolute determination to put treason under our feet and bring back the Government to its old glorious bearings. Notwithstanding all the whining in this body or outside of it, in your courts or anywhere else, this will be done.

Sir, we have heard all these arguments before. We learned this tune a year ago from those who are now in the so-called Confederate States. They were always crying out about violations of the Constitution, and ever ready to invoke it in aid of treason. That was the course of remark from the lips of every one who deserted his post and went out an open enemy to your Constitution and your laws. Sir, I remember well when Mr. Breckinridge stood on the other side of the Chamber, day after day, making this same kind of speeches, accusing us of being violators of the Constitution of the United States; and inasmuch as we plainly had the right to coerce traitors, to put down treason by force of arms, he stood there to deprecate it, and to invoke the Con-

stitution as a barrier against loyal men. The argument we have heard to-day is but a repetition of those we heard a year ago. I could bring the arguments made then on this floor by traitors who are now in open rebellion; and they would make no discord with the speech we have just heard.

But, I ask again, what has this committee done to be complained of in the matter of General Stone, who lies at the bottom of this resolution and of all the Senator's remarks? Sir, early in this session it pleased both Houses of Congress to raise a committee empowered and directed to inquire into the conduct of this war. I sought no position upon that committee; I had nothing to do with getting it up; but when it was raised, being placed at its head, I cast about, as did the rest of the committee, to ascertain how we could make ourselves most useful to the Government in the exercise of the vast powers which it had been the pleasure of Congress to confer upon us. We instituted a pretty broad inquiry into public affairs, and especially into the manner in which this war had been conducted, and among other things we were specially directed by name to look into that great, terrible blunder and catastrophe, the affair of Ball's Bluff. If, in that investigation which you commanded us to make, it turned out that there was an appearance of disloyalty in the commander-in-chief, was it not legitimate for us to inquire into it? The Senator seems to think not. He considers that we were travelling greatly out of our way when we took evidence tending to criminate General Stone, at the head of a division of your army on the very frontiers next to the enemy; that we had no right to look into it. Your soldiers had been slaughtered by hundreds, like cattle taken to the shambles, apparently under circumstances deeply impeaching somebody that had the command. I do not rise with any purpose to argue that matter, as I told you before, not because I could not make out my case as I believe, but because you are not the triers, nor am I the Attorney General to prosecute the case before you; but it is my purpose to state enough of that proceeding, not to justify, but to make the action of that committee triumphant before this nation. I repeat again what I said the other day, that if there ever was a committee that proceeded with discretion, with moderation, with a care and forbearance that no man should be injured, it is the committee of whom I am chairman, and of whose action I am proud. We are an inquisition forsooth! The gentleman assailed the committee long before he knew anything of its action. He accused us of proceeding *ex parte*, getting a kind of illegitimate testimony, going forward with that and presenting it to the Administration to the detriment of innocent men. I will ask the Secretary to read this synopsis of our proceedings to justify the committee from all the imputations the Senator has made.

The Secretary read, as follows:

January 29, 1862, the committee informed the Secretary of War that they had been informed by General McClellan that General Stone was in this city, and that he (General McClellan) was of the opinion that General Stone should appear before the committee in regard to the matters laid to his charge, and the committee informed the Secretary of

War that they were willing to hear General Stone at any time.

On January 31, 1862, General Stone appeared before the committee the second time, was informed of the nature of the evidence bearing against him, and was allowed to proceed and make his own explanation in his own way.

The committee then appointed a sub-committee to wait upon the Secretary of War, and inform him that there was a conflict of testimony in relation to General Stone, and to communicate to him what that testimony was.

Mr. WADE. That, sir, is the inquisitorial course we have taken with General Stone. As he was likely to be implicated in the Ball's Bluff affair, he was one of the early witnesses that we called in. We were not inquiring into the conduct of any individual. That was not what we were placed there, as we believed, to do. It was not our construction of the powers that were granted to us. We were to inquire into the facts connected with the conduct of the war, and if there were short-comings or delinquencies that might light upon anybody's head, we were not to direct it; we sought no evidence to impeach any man, and if the evidence seemed to impinge on the credibility, the loyalty, or the character of any man, we sought that man, and laid before him the course of the evidence, and the matters wherein he was incriminated. We did the same to General Stone. We summoned him before us to give an account of that affair at Ball's Bluff, to give us all the information he could on the subject, and after that, as you see from our records, the much applauded chief of your Army, whom the Senator believes to be immaculate and above the suspicion of anybody, was the very man that knocked at our doors to inform us that, in his judgment, it was our duty to summon General Stone again before us, and we accommodated him. We did not want any more testimony than we had got, but if General Stone had any new light to throw on the subject, we, as an impartial committee, were not only willing, but anxious that he should appear before us. He did appear before us. I will not say that in his amended testimony he made the case infinitely worse than it was before. I will not go into that, for I do not want to inculpate him unless he is guilty. Sir, we have done General Stone no harm; none at all. If he is an innocent man, his own testimony stands forth as his justification. If we have informed the President, the Secretary of War, and the Cabinet of the testimony that seemed to impeach him, we also showed his own exculpation at the same time, and then, at the instance of this immaculate commander of ours, we received General Stone again, and went through the whole thing.

Where is the accuser of that committee? I hope he has not skadaddled after making his speech. We are an inquisition, are we? We are to be impeached by the Senator from California. Why? If in the course of our investigations we ascertained that there was a traitor in the camp, and were not to make it known, in God's name what business had we in the committee; what business had we in the Senate; what business had we in the United States, even, as private citizens? The gentleman said on Wednesday last that it was the deepest, the most disgraceful thing he ever had heard of. He seemed to regret that it had been his fortune to get into a place where he had to associate with men so de-

praved; for that is a fair construction of what he said. Sir, I imagine he worked hard to get here; and I do not think he is polluted by the contact at all. I consider it to be a part of my senatorial duty here, if I happen to know that a man holding a high office is disloyal, where his disloyalty might prejudice the public, to make it known without being on any committee especially detailed for that purpose. And yet the Senator thinks it is deeply disgraceful to do so! That is his idea of toleration towards traitors whom he never assails, or speaks a word in disparagement of.

Now, sir, as I said before, I have listened to this kind of defence of traitors long enough. What has the Administration done that this gentleman should rise here in the Senate and brand them as tyrants and despots and inquisitors, and tell us he is going to run a parallel between the President and Secretary of War and the old inquisition? Why, sir, only think of the perfect burlesque! The President of the United States, who neither by word or deed or thought would harm a hair of any man's head, who, of all men I know, is the most reluctant to offend anybody, but who, as a patriot, is anxious to vindicate the Constitution of the United States and the Government he has sworn to support—and he does it with a toleration and a mildness towards these traitors that has met with the censure of many good men, who think he does not go far enough—this mild, equitable, just man is to be branded here, by a Knight of the Golden Circle, with being a grand inquisitor, armed with tyranny, whose purpose it is to destroy the rights and property and the lives of men! Sir, the thing is absolutely ridiculous, and would not become any Senator on this floor, unless he was compelled to do so by joining this new-fangled organization, whose purpose it is, we are told, to reconstruct the Democratic party. I believe I asked the gentleman what kind of reconstruction it was to be. The old Breckinridge-Buchanan party south of Mason and Dixon's line are, to a man, traitors. There are no exceptions. I defy any Senator to rise in his place and tell me what Buchanan-Breckinridge Democrat south of Mason and Dixon's line is not an open and avowed traitor, committing overt acts, and, under the Constitution of the United States, condemned to death. Their Northern sympathizers are but little better; indeed they are worse—worse because they are not so bold. There is something in a bold, courageous man, even in a bad cause, that seems to give him a little right to toleration; but your miserable sneaking hypocrite that sympathizes with him, and yet has not the courage to commit the crime, can expect nothing but to be despised by honorable men. Now, these men are going to reconstruct a party. My God, what a party it will be! Just think of it: the Southern Buchanan traitors reconstructing with the Breckinridge traitors of the North! They will be harmonious just as far as their courage will permit them to go together. They will not differ on anything else but as to the length to which they can carry their proceedings.

But, sir, there was salt in the old Democratic party. They do not talk of reconstructing with

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