

PAGE
104
1861

THE CRITTENDEN COMPROMISE—A SURRENDER.

Speech of Henry Wilson, of Mass.,

Delivered in the Senate, February 21st, 1861,

ON THE RESOLUTIONS OF MR. CRITTENDEN PROPOSING AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. WILSON:

Mr. PRESIDENT: Bancroft, in the last volume of his History of the United States has drawn, with graphic pen, the character of George Mason, one of the noblest of that illustrious band of patriots that carried America through the fire and blood of revolution from colonial dependence to national independence. He tells us that this Christian patriot "had been truly loyal; on renouncing his king, he could stand justified to his own conscience only by the purest and most unselfish attachment to human freedom,"—that "his sincerity made him wise and bold, modest and unchanging;"—that "he had a scorn for everything mean and cowardly and low; and he always spoke out his convictions with frank directness." The great Commonwealth of Virginia sent this "wise and bold, modest and unchanging" patriot to represent her in that illustrious assembly of patriotic statesmen met to frame the Constitution of the United States. Actuated "by the purest and most unselfish attachment to human freedom," "scorning everything mean and cowardly and low," this noble son of Virginia speaking out his convictions with frank directness," admonished his illustrious compeers that "slavery brought the judgment of Heaven upon a country," that "by an inevitable chain of causes and effects Providence punished national sins by national calamities." These fearful words of admonition and of warning, uttered nearly three-quarters of a century ago in the ears of patriot statesmen, who were striving to frame a national government in harmony with the rights of human nature and the laws of the living God, resound in the ears of the nation "in the dark and troubled night now upon us." In this hour of peril, when the Republic is rent and torn by fraternal strifes, when conspiracies and treasons and rebellions threaten to plunge the nation into the unfathomed abyss of disunion and civil war, and to blot united America from the map of nations, who, that sees God in History, does not see and feel and realize, that slavery has brought the judgment of Heaven upon our country, that Providence is punishing this gigantic national sin by these appalling calamities now upon us and impending over us? Well would it be for our country if, in these days of disaster and gloom, those to whom are intrusted the precious interests of the Republic, should, like the great patriot of Virginia, reverently recognize the hand of God in the affairs of nations, and like him ever remember that "slavery brings the judgment of Heaven upon a country."

One year ago these chambers rang with passionate and vehement menaces of disunion. Statesmen to whom were committed the destinies of United America, with the oath of fidelity to the Constitution fresh upon their lips, insolently, scornfully, defiantly, threatened to shiver the noblest edifice, the fairest fabric of free government ever erected by the toil, or blessed by the hopes and prayers of humanity, if the people, the people of the free North, dared through the ballot-box assume the control of the affairs of the Republic. These disloyal avowals were flashed over the wires—scattered broadcast over the land. Timid conservatives, shrank appalled before these angry mutterings of meditated treason, and with "bated breath and whispering humbleness" counseled submission. But these treasonable menaces unnerved not the

souls of the ever loyal freemen of the North, but they fired the hearts and rekindled the patriotism of the unselfish masses,—of the farmers who till their own fee-simple acres, unpolluted by the foot of the bondman,—of the mechanics whose hands are skilled by art,—of the laborers, who recognize no master but Almighty God. Impelled by the fervid and unextinguishable impulse of freedom, by the purest and most unselfish patriotism, the unseduced, unpurchased, unawed freemen of the North, calmly thronged to the ballot-box, and struck from faithless, corrupt, and disloyal hands the reins of power.

The treasonable words of last year have now hardened into deeds. Madness and folly rule the hour. Treason holds its carnival here in the national Capitol. Men, high in the national council, plot conspiracies against the government they are sworn to defend, and clasp the hands of the assassins of the Union. Men, to whom have been intrusted official duties and responsibilities, talk of the dismemberment of the Republic, not in the sad accents of patriotism, but with the gleeful chuckle of an irrepressible joy. States vauntingly proclaim their withdrawal from the Union made by the fathers, recall their Representatives in these chambers, capture the fortresses of the nation, insult, dishonor, and fire upon the flag of the Republic, seize the public property, and even erase from their festive days the hallowed anniversary of national independence, with all its glorious associations and thrilling memories. Never, no never, since the morn of creation has the historic pen recorded a conspiracy against the rights of man and Democratic institutions so utterly causeless, so wicked in its purpose, so regardless of the judgment of the civilized world and the approval of Almighty God.

During the past year the world has watched with throbbing heart and beaming eye, the great struggle in the classic land of Italy for the freedom, unity, and nationality of the Italian people. Aspirations for the success of the liberal young Monarch of Sardinia and his great Minister, of Garibaldi and his brave comrades have mingled with the morning and evening prayers of the lovers of human freedom in the Old World and in the New. How anxiously and how hopefully have we of America turned our eyes towards the rising States and struggling people of Italy! How often have we hung with rapt admiration upon the thrilling story of the glorious contest for the unity of the Italian States and the nationality of the Italian people! And now, we, the people of united America, are striving,—madly, insanelly, striving to dismember this constellated confederation of sovereign Commonwealths, to disrupt this great Republic of the world, to topple down this splendid fabric of free government, erected by a glorious ancestry, and to bury beneath its broken, shivered, and falling columns the resplendent glories of the past, the achieved aggrandizement of the present, and the brilliant hopes and destinies of the future.

We are accustomed, Mr. President, to contemplate, with something of gratified and patriotic pride, the wondrous progress of our country and the strength and stability of our Government. We speak of its future with proud and conscious security. As we have watched the fraternal strifes, the bloody and desolating wars of factions which have followed each other in rapid succession in the Republics of Mexico, Central and South America—Republics, which we once hailed and welcomed into the family of nations,—as we have watched too the rising and falling dynasties of the Old World, we have come to believe with undoubting faith that our Government is immortal, that, sustained by the intelligent patriotism of the people, it is ever instinct with the freshness and bloom of perpetual youth, and the matured vigor of manhood. We have dreamed for our native land a glorious destiny,—a magnificent career, through the coming ages. But, our dreams are over. Our bright, confident faith is shaken. The Republic has lost its prestige.

What a saddening, humiliating, and appalling spectacle does America now present to the gaze of mankind! Conspiracies in the Cabinet and in the Halls of Legislation,—conspiracies in the Capital and in the States,—conspiracies in the Army and in the Navy,—conspiracies everywhere, to break the unity of the Republic, to destroy the grandest fabric of free Government the human understanding ever conceived or the hand of man ever reared. States are rushing madly from their spheres, in the constellation of the Union, raising the banners of revolt, defying Federal authority, arming men, planting frowning batteries, arming fortresses, dishonoring the national flag, clutching the public property, arms and moneys and inaugurating the reign of disloyal factions. "What?" in the words of Daniel Webster, uttered in the days of Nullification, "are the oppressions experienced under the Union, calling for measures which thus threaten to destroy it? What invasions of public liberty—what

ruin to private happiness—what long list of rights violated or wrongs unredressed, is to justify to the country, to posterity and to the world, this assault upon the free Constitution of the United States, this great and glorious work of our fathers?" There are no oppressions experienced; no invasion of public liberty; no ruin of private happiness; no long list of rights violated or wrongs unredressed—nothing, no nothing to justify to the country, to posterity, to the world, this assault upon the Constitution of the United States. This, all this work of folly and madness, upon which the startled nations are now gazing in mingled wonder and amazement, is all, all only to eternize the dominion of man over the souls and bodies of his fellow men. Yes, these appalling crimes against the unity and perpetuity of the Republic, which fill patriotic hearts with anxiety and gloom, are all for making slavery perpetual and its power dominant in republican America. No wonder then, sir, that the actors in this wicked drama look in vain beyond the boundaries of the Republic for one word of human sympathy, for one manifestation of human regard. These conspirators against the unity of America—these architects of the "Southern Confederacy" receive no words of cheer, no welcome greetings from any portion of the Christian and civilized world. *The Journal des Debats* uttered not only the voice of France, but of Europe, ay, of civilized man, when it "*pronounced that there is not a corner upon earth where it will find sympathy and assistance.*"

Nor can the men who sit in the councils of the Executive and in the halls of legislation, plotting for the dismemberment of their country, the subversion of its government, the betrayal of its fortresses, arsenals, arms, ships, mints and flag, hopefully appeal from the verdict of the present to future ages. They may appeal from the stern reproaches of their betrayed country, from the indignant rebukes of Christendom, but they will appeal in vain. The Floyds, the Cobbs, the Rhetts, the Yancys, and their disloyal confederates, often refer to the deeds and quote the examples—not of the Catilines of history—but of the heroes of humanity, whose acts and names are indissolubly associated with the ease of human nature. The founders of the North American Republic associated their names with the enduring interests of mankind, and while humanity has an altar, or freedom a champion, their memories will be cherished. The destroyers of the American Union may achieve an immortality as enduring as that of its founders, but it will be an immortality of ignominy, shame, and dishonor.

This conspiracy against the unity of the Republic, which, in its development, startles and amazes the world by its extent and power, is not the work of a day; it is the labor of a generation. Nearly thirty years ago the fell spirit of nullification reared its hand against the peace of the country, but it went down at the bidding of Andrew Jackson. Thomas H. Benton, in his "Thirty Years' View," tells us that "Mr. Calhoun," when he went home in the spring of 1833, told his friends "that the South would never be united against the North on the tariff question; that the sugar interests of Louisiana would keep her out, and that the basis of southern Union must be shifted to the slave question." His associates and disciples prepared to "force the issue upon the North," and that issue was unflinching fidelity to human slavery in America. Andrew Jackson saw with the clear vision of patriotism the designs of John C. Calhoun and his confederates, and he declared that "the tariff was only the pretext for disunion, and a Southern Confederacy the real object;" that "the next pretext would be the slavery question," and that "Haman's gallows ought to be the fate of all such ambitious men, who would involve their country in civil war, and all the evils in its train, that they might ride and reign on its whirlwinds and direct the storm." James Madison, too, saw through the treasonable designs of the great nullifier, and he wrote to Mr. Clay, in June, 1833, "it is painful to see the unceasing efforts to alarm the South by imputations against the North of unconstitutional designs on the subject of slavery." And that venerable statesman, in 1836, again wrote of "a susceptibility of the contagion of the heresy of nullification, secession, and disunion in the southern States," and of "the inculcated impression of a permanent incompatibility of interests between the North and the South." "He was," says Benton, "a southern man, but his southern home could not blind him to the origin, design, and consequences of the slavery agitation. He gives to that agitation a southern origin; to that design a disunion end; to that end disastrous consequences to the South and the North."

Thus the slavery agitation, originated and designed by the baffled nullifiers of 1833, to disrupt the Union and establish a southern confederacy, was inaugurated.

The Constitution was formed for a free people, by statesmen who believed slavery to be an evil which would pass away under the mild sway of Democratic institutions. The policy of the fathers must be abandoned, the hearts of the people must be changed. Mr. Calhoun proclaimed that "many in the South once believed that slavery was a moral and political evil; that folly and delusion are gone. We see it now in its true light, and regard it as the most safe and stable basis for free institutions in the world." His disciples pronounced "slavery to be the corner stone of the republican edifice." Inspired by such counsels, the rising young statesmen of the South contemptuously rejected the humane sentiments and republican theories of the founders of the Republic, of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Henry, Mason, Martin, and their illustrious associates, and assumed slavery to be a positive good; an institution to be nurtured, extended, nationalized. New theories of constitutional construction were promulgated, the policy of slavery extension and slavery domination inaugurated, and the wicked policy of slavery aggression, for nearly a generation, has been pursued with tireless energy, in defiant mockery of the sentiments of mankind and the laws of the living God. The nation, by a long series of aggressive acts, has been forced to accept the theories, acknowledge the rule, and bear the crushing burden of the crimes of the slave propagandists. The Democracy, which has borne the banner and kept step to the music of slave propagandism in America, hesitated, paused for a moment, and it was rent in twain. The American people, by peaceful, legal, and constitutional action, rejected its aggressive demands, and the Union is imperilled.

But, sir, this wicked plot for the dismemberment of the Confederacy, which has now assumed such fearful proportions, was known to some of our elder statesmen. Thomas H. Benton ever raised his warning voice against the conspirators. I can never forget the terrible energy of his denunciations of the policy and acts of the nullifiers and secessionists. During the great Leecompton struggle in the winter of 1855, his house was the place of resort of several members of Congress, who sought his counsels and delighted to listen to his opinions. In the last conversation I had with him, but a few days before he was prostrated by mortal disease, he declared that "the disunionists had prostituted the Democratic party"—that "they had complete control of the Administration"—that "these conspirators would have broken up the Union if Col. Fremont had been elected";—that "the reason he opposed Frémont's election was that he knew these men intended to destroy the Government, and he did not wish it to go to pieces in the hands of a member of his family." I expressed some doubt of the extent and power of such a conspiracy to dismember the Union or to seize the Government; to which he replied, that "he knew their purpose to be a Southern Confederacy, for efforts were early made to enlist him in the wicked scheme," that "so long as the people of the North should be content to attend to commerce and manufactures, and accept the policy and rule of the disunionists, they would condescend to remain in the Union; but should the northern people attempt to exercise their just influence in the nation, they would attempt to seize the Government or disrupt the Union;" but, said he, with terrible emphasis, "God and their own crimes will put them in the hands of the people!"

On the 6th of November, nearly two millions of intelligent, patriotic American freemen pronounced in favor of restoring the National Government, now perverted, to the simple, sublime, beneficent creed of Republican faith, as illustrated by the fathers of the Republic. "Their policy was," in the words of their chosen leader, "the policy of the founders of the Government—nothing more, nothing less." Their offense had that extent, no more. But at once there rose from defeated factions the wild, passionate, unreasoning cry of defiance and resistance. South Carolina, trained for thirty years in the school of nullification, secession, and disunion, hastened to rear aloft her Palmetto banner of revolt. Lured on by her fatal example, fired by her reckless audacity, six of her sisters have followed her lead into revolution, it may be into the fire and blood of civil war. Their "dreary catalogue" of grievances, as the Senator from Louisiana, [Mr. BENJAMIN.] designates their pitiful, impotent excuses and justifications for causeless rebellion, are but vituperative and accusatory phrases against sister States. Well may the *London Times* say of this "dreary catalogue" of South Carolina—"the hollowness of her cause is seen beneath all the pomp of her labor and denunciations, and surely to her, in any community of modern days, may be applied the words of the Hebrew prophet, 'a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophet's prophecy falsely, and my people love to have it so.'"

The prophets of secession and disunion have indeed prophesied falsely, and the people of the South seem to love to have it so. Year after year these prophets, whose element is mischief, have persistently accused the people of the North of entertaining the sentiment of bitter, unreasoning, malignant hate towards the South. They and their northern allies have stigmatized the ever loyal men of the North who cling to the faith of the fathers, as the unrelenting enemies of the southern people, and that too credulous people have come to believe the wicked accusation. Often have we in these Chambers been forced to listen with aching hearts and wounded spirits, to the cruel accusation that the Christian people we represent "hate" their countrymen of the South. During the present session this accusation has often been made in these Chambers. The impulsive Senator from Georgia, [Mr. IVERSON,] declared that we, the people of the free States, hated the people of the South, and he would have it so in spite of the genial smiles and soft words of the Senator from New Hampshire, [Mr. HALE.] The implacable Senator from Alabama, [Mr. CLAY,] pronounced us of the North, "the most bitter, relentless, and vindictive enemies on earth." The Senator from Virginia, [Mr. MASON,] who has received the greetings of the people of Massachusetts, regards the result of the late election as an evidence of our hostile feelings towards his section. I was pained to hear the Senator from Mississippi, [Mr. DAVIS,] who has received, during the past two years, so many evidences of respect and of kindness from the people of my own New England, say that the harshness of our figurative language was an evidence of the bitterness of our hatred.

In the halls of Congress, in the public journals, before the people, everywhere—the Christian people of the North are accused of hatred towards their countrymen of the South, and these oft-repeated accusations have penetrated the ears and fired the hearts of the men of the South to madness. The people of Massachusetts, of New England, of the North, hate not their countrymen of the South. I know Massachusetts; I know something of the sentiments and feelings of her people. During the past fifteen years I have traversed every portion of the State, from the sands of the Capes to the hills of Berkshire; spoken in nearly every town, sat at the tables and slept beneath the roofs of her people. Around those tables and beneath those roofs I have heard prayers to Almighty God for blessings on slave and on master. From thousands of Christian homes in Massachusetts, New England, the North, tens of thousands of men and women daily implore God's blessing upon the whole country—upon the poor slave and his proud master. Around the firesides of the liberty-loving, God-fearing families of Massachusetts, I have often heard the men, stigmatized as "malignant, unrelenting enemies of the people of the South," on their bended knees, with open Bible, implore the protection and blessing of Almighty God upon both master and slave, upon the people of the whole country. Gentlemen of the South visiting Massachusetts on pleasure or business, are ever treated by all her people with considerate kindness and fraternal regard. The public men of the South are ever welcomed to Massachusetts; treated with courtesy by all, and sometimes with "complimentary flattery" by the few. I assert positively, without hesitation or qualification, that the people of Massachusetts, ay, of New England, manifest more kindness and courtesy towards their fellow countrymen of the South, sojourning among them, than they do towards their fellow countrymen of the central States and of the West. Yancey, Henry, Williard, and other distinguished sons of the South were, during the late canvass, listened to in New England with attention and the utmost courtesy, and that, too, when quiet citizens of Massachusetts were, in portions of the South, subjected to the greatest indignities.

Sir, during the past seven years I have traversed more than eighty thousand miles of seventeen States, delivered more than four hundred addresses, looked into the faces of hundreds of thousands of the people, sat with them at their tables, slept beneath their roofs, listened to their words, and what I have said of the people of Massachusetts I can say of the people of New England and the North. During the late canvass I attended nearly one hundred public meetings in the North, saw hundreds of thousands of people, and heard many addresses by others. I have often disclaimed, for myself and for the people of the North, any feelings of hostility towards our brethren of the South, and I have heard other speakers do the same, and everywhere the people unanimously and enthusiastically applauded the sentiment. All over the free States, the Republican speakers, while firmly averring their determination to use all constitutional and legal means to arrest the extension of slavery, disclaimed for the Republican party all feelings of hostility towards the people of the South, and everywhere the whole people heartily applauded the sentiment. Not one—no, not

one in a thousand of the men who voted for Abraham Lincoln cherishes in his heart a feeling of hatred towards the South, or the wish to put the brand of inequality or degradation upon the brow of his countrymen of that section of the Union. They would as generously contribute of their treasure, they would as freely pour out their blood for the defense of the South as they would for the protection of their own Northern homes. Believers in that Christianity which unites all men as brethren, which makes man unutterably dear to his fellow man, which impels its disciples to raise the fallen, and to labor for the elevation of the poor and the lowly of the children of men, they oppose the wrong, yet hate not the wrong-doer.

Senators and Representatives, popular orators and public journals are swift to single out for reproach and rebuke New England, and especially the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This, sir, is not the first time in her history that Massachusetts has drawn upon herself reproach and rebuke for unbending adherence to the rights of human nature. In the days of her Colonial existence, her unshrinking devotion to the rights of mankind, often drew upon her the censures of the pliant supporters of the British Crown; but the world now quotes and commends her inspiring example. Now her abhorrence of human slavery brings upon her the condemnation of its advocates and apologists, but the hour will yet come in the march of time when her unwavering fidelity to an unpopular cause, in spite of obloquy and reproach, will be a source of inspiration to men struggling to recover lost rights. Massachusetts clings with the tenacity of profound conviction to the teachings of her own illustrious sons. She was taught by Benjamin Franklin that "slavery is an atrocious debasement of human nature,"—by John Adams that "consenting to slavery is a sacrilegious breach of trust,"—by John Quincy Adams that "slavery taints the very sources of moral principle"—"establishes false estimates of virtue and vice,"—by Daniel Webster that "it is a continual and permanent violation of human rights,"—"opposed to the whole spirit of the Gospel, and to the teachings of Jesus Christ,"—by William Ellery Channing that "to extend and perpetuate the evil, we cut ourselves off from the communion of nations; we sink below the civilization of our age; we invite the scorn, indignation, and abhorrence of the world." Massachusetts cannot forget or repudiate these words of her immortal sons. Enemies may censure her fidelity, timid friends may chide her zeal, but she moves on, right on, assured, confident,—conscious she "has the future grand and great,—the safe appeal of truth to time."

Men, who are quenching freedom's holy fire in this age in Republican America, may level their taunts and gibes at Massachusetts, but she will continue to have unflinching faith in the conviction that human slavery is a crime against humanity. She opens God's Holy Word and the imperative injunction of inspiration—break every yoke—undo the heavy burden—let the oppressed go free, flash upon her vision. She gazes into the graves of perished nations—sees that slavery poisoned their national life, hastened their decay, decline, fall. She reads in the brilliant pages of Bancroft: "It is a calumny to charge the devastation of Italy upon the barbarians. The large Roman plantations tilled by slaves' labor were its ruin. Slavery had effected the decline of the Roman people, and had wasted the land before a Scythian or a Scanclavian had crossed the Alps. Slavery had destroyed the Democracy; had destroyed the aristocracy; had destroyed the Empire; and at last it left the traces of its ruinous power deeply furrowed on the face of nature itself." She also reads in Gurowski's "Slavery in History," that "it was domestic slavery single-handed, which did the work for Greece, and particularly in Sparta and Athens. Domestic slavery enervated the nation and made it an easy prey to foreign conquest. It converted into a putrescent mass the once great and brilliant Grecian world." In the pages of poets, philosophers, philanthropists, jurists, statesmen, of the ages, of the mighty dead of both hemispheres,—of Plato, Socrates, Montesquieu, Burke, Fox, Pitt, Wilberforce, Humboldt, Washington, and Jefferson, Massachusetts finds testimonies which deepen her convictions and quicken her zeal against slavery expansion and domination in America.

The distinguishing opinion of Massachusetts concerning slavery in America is often flippantly branded in these Halls, as wild, passionate, unreasoning fanaticism. Senators of the South! tell me, I pray you tell me, if it be fanaticism for Massachusetts to see in this age, what your peerless Washington saw in his age, "the direful effects of slavery?" Is it fanaticism for Massachusetts to believe as your Henry believed, that "slavery is as repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible, and destructive to Liberty?" Is it fanaticism for her to believe as your Madison be-

lieved, that "slavery is a dreadful calamity?" Is it Fanaticism for her to believe with your Monroe, that "slavery has preyed upon the vitals of the Union and has been prejudicial to all the States in which it has existed?" Is it Fanaticism for her to believe with your Martin, that "slavery lessens the sense of the equal rights of mankind, and habituates us to tyranny and oppression?" Is it Fanaticism for her to believe with your Pinckney, that "it will one day destroy the reverence for liberty which is the vital principle of a Republic?" Is it Fanaticism for her to believe with your Henry Clay, that "slavery is a wrong, a grievous wrong, no contingency can make it right?" Surely Senators who are wont to accuse Massachusetts of being drunk with Fanaticism, should not forget that the noblest men the South has given to the service of the Republic, in peace and in war, were her teachers.

Massachusetts in her heart of hearts loves liberty—loathes slavery. I glory in her sentiments, for the heart of our common humanity is throbbing in sympathy with her opinions. But she is not unmindful of her constitutional duties, to her obligations to the Union and to her sister States. Up to the verge of constitutional power she will go in maintenance of her cherished convictions, but she has not shrunk and she does not mean to shrink, from the performance of her obligations as a member of this confederation of constellated States. She has never sought, she does not seek to encroach by her own acts or by the action of the Federal Government, upon the constitutional rights of her sister States. Jealous of her own rights, she will respect the rights of others. Claiming the power to control her own domestic policy, she freely accords that power to her sister States. Conceding the rights of others, she demands her own. Loyal to the Union, she demands loyalty in others. Here, and now, I demand of her accusers, that they file their bill of specifications and produce the proofs of their allegations, or forever hold their peace.

Has Massachusetts proposed, either by State or Federal action, to interfere directly or indirectly with slavery in the States? Never. Her colored seamen are arrested and imprisoned for no offence under the laws of South Carolina—laws which Judge Johnson and William Wirt pronounced unconstitutional—and she has made it a penitentiary offence to defend their legal rights in the judicial tribunals. Has Massachusetts ever interfered with the rights of South Carolina? Never. The ships of Massachusetts are searched, under the laws of Virginia, and made to pay five dollars for each illegal visitation. Has she wronged Virginia? Never. Her sons, sojourning in the South, are often subjected to insults and indignities—arrested, imprisoned, banished, and their lives put in peril. Has she proposed, does she propose to interfere with the legal rights of those offending States? No, sir, no. In face of the country, before the nations, Massachusetts can lay her hand upon God's Holy Word and declare by Him who liveth ever more, that she has never proposed, does not now propose, and never intends to propose to interfere with the legal and constitutional rights of the Southern States.

But gentlemen of the South tell me that Massachusetts has a personal liberty law; that it is designed to defeat the provisions of the Constitution concerning the rendition of fugitive slaves from service; that it is unconstitutional—an evidence of her hostility. Sir, this law may be of doubtful constitutionality in some of its provisions; but the profoundest jurists of the Commonwealth differ in opinion upon that issue, but it is no evidence of her hostility—it was not designed to evade her constitutional obligations, nor was it intended to defeat the provisions of the Constitution. Massachusetts, sir, entertains the profound conviction that your fugitive-slave act of 1850 conflicts with provisions of the Constitution of the United States; that it disregards those maxims of the common law which the wisdom of ages has devised for the security of personal liberty; that it degrades man and dishonors the nation before the Christian and civilized world; that it puts in extreme peril the security, peace, and liberties of her colored inhabitants. She feels that it is harsh, cruel, inhuman, and unchristian. So believing she enacted this personal liberty law; it was designed to afford protection to her own inhabitants—to be also in perfect harmony with the Constitution of the United States. No case has ever arisen under the act—it has not been judicially interpreted—its constitutionality has not been decided upon, nor has it in the slightest degree worked the injury of the people of the slaveholding States. If unconstitutional it would, should a case arise under it, work them no harm; if in harmony with the Constitution, it would afford protection to her colored inhabitants against mistakes, hasty or corrupt proceedings; but it could hardly work injury to the claimant of a real fugitive from service. Massachusetts sought, in common with several of her sister States, by constitutional an

legal action, to protect her own people against the abuses which might grow up under the summary proceedings of the arbitrary act of 1850. The right of no slaveholder in America has been put in jeopardy by its enactment, nor do I believe it possible that those rights could be jeopardized should the act continue to the end of time upon her statute-book.

None, Mr. President, have entered the lists with more zeal in vindication of this treasonable conspiracy for the subversion of the National Government, than the Senator from Louisiana, (Mr. BENJAMIN.) His bearing, the tone of his voice, his words all gave evidence that the spark of Patriotism, if it ever existed, was extinct in his bosom, that his heart was in this foul and wicked plot, to dismember the Union, to overthrow the government of his adopted country, which gives equality of rights even to that race which stoned Prophets and crucified the Redeemer of the World. His zeal in the cause of treason to the Union, so perverted and blinded his reason as to destroy the distinction between truth and error. Surely this zeal made him outrun his discretion, or even he would not have been so reckless as to have attempted here in this presence to torture the words of James Madison, Daniel Webster, and John Quincy Adams into the support of this wicked dogma of secession, a dogma "intellectually" in the words of Rufus Choate, concerning Nullification "the most contemptible in the whole history of human opinion." To his glittering rhetorical assumptions and perversions, the Senator from Oregon, (Mr. BAKER,) replied, and I know not sir, when I have witnessed such a merciless exposure of Old Bailey Attorney assumptions and perversions. The Senator from Louisiana was kept in face of the Senate for hours in a perpetual state of excuse and justification, qualification and retraction. Under the pressure of the searching arguments of the Senator from Oregon, the Senator from Louisiana wriggled and retreated from position to position, made the fatal admission that the National Government had not interfered with the rights of the States, and that the States as States could not do so. Under the torture of the exposure of his sophistical assumptions, assertions and perversions, the Senator from Louisiana lost his temper, made a passionate assault upon Governor Andrew, the people of Massachusetts, and her Senators upon this floor. His passion acted upon his brain, as his zeal in the work of treason had done—so he invented his facts to sustain his assertions.

The Senator declared that a body of armed men entered Virginia, murdered inhabitants, that a man was found in Massachusetts who declared that the invasion was right, that he approved of it; that the people of Massachusetts by an enormous majority, the fact of that man's action placed before the people as a ground why he should be elected Governor, elected him Governor, indorsed the invasion of a sister State, indorsed the murder of the people of Virginia at dead of night. These reckless assertions have not the semblance of truth in them—they are the coinage of political perversions and malignity. Governor Andrew never said the invasion of Virginia was right, never approved of it. Never! never! Here in the Capital, before the Senate Investigating Committee, under all the responsibilities of an oath, Governor Andrew said: "I had no sympathy with his peculiar conduct touching which he was then indicted. I felt injured by that personally as a Republican." * * *

"Nor do I believe of any other gentleman with whom I agree or act, that the transactions of Captain Brown, at Harper's Ferry, would be deemed justifiable, nor would any such attempt made or contemplated, receive our sympathy." The Republican National Convention, at Chicago, unanimously declared that "we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force, of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext as the gravest of crimes." Mr. Andrew, was a member of the convention, supported this resolution; it was endorsed unanimously by the Republican conventions and assemblages, and by the press in Massachusetts. Mr. Andrew's sworn declarations of want of sympathy with John Brown, or of his approval of his raid upon Virginia, were scattered broadcast over the State; he addressed the people in every portion of the Commonwealth, and his opinions were well known to the people. Sir, here and now I pronounce it a libel upon Governor Andrew, upon the Republicans, upon the fair fame of Massachusetts, to charge him or them or her with endorsing the invasion of Virginia by John Brown.

The Senator from Louisiana made the charge against the people of Massachusetts in their collective capacity that they had sent Senators upon this floor whose only business has been for years to insult the people of the South, to

call them "thieves and murderers," and because the Senators did this that Massachusetts sent them back here to repeat the wrong. Sir, there is not the semblance of truth in this venomous and malignant accusation. During the past seventeen years, in the public journals, before the people, in legislative Halls, I have discussed the mighty issues growing out of the slavery question, but never have I, sir, charged the people of the South, in their collective capacity, with being "thieves and murderers." Never; no, never. The speeches of my colleague have been read in our own and in other lands; some of them reprinted in the Old World; read where the name of the Senator from Louisiana was never heard, unless he had the good fortune to be noticed by my colleague; and I challenge any man to find in those speeches the accusation that the people of the South are "murderers and thieves." This foul calumny against the people of Massachusetts, against her Governor and her Senators in this Chamber is what the most adroit, plausible and skillful of all the leaders in the work of secession—has to give to the Senate, the country, and the world for leaving this Hall, and raising the treasonable banner of revolt against his country. Is not this a pitiable position? It was the remark of Lord Chatham that "that condition was indeed pitiable wherein it was necessary to be contemptible."

In other days when Adams, Webster, Davis, Everett, Cushing, Choate, Winthrop, Mann, Rantoul and their associates graced these Chambers, Massachusetts was then as she is now the object of animadversion and assault. I have sometimes thought, Mr. President, that these continual assaults upon the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were prompted—not by her faults, but by her virtues rather—not by the sense of justice, but by the spirit of envy and jealousy and uncharitableness. Unawed, however, by censure or menace, she continues to move right on, upward and onward, to the accomplishment of her high destinies. She is but a speck, a mere patch on the surface of America, hardly more than one four hundredth part of the territory of the Republic, with a rugged soil and still more rugged clime. But on that little spot of the globe is a Commonwealth where common consent is recognized as the only just basis of fundamental law and personal freedom is secured in its completest individuality. In that Commonwealth are one and a quarter of million of freemen, with skilled hand and cultivated brain, with nine hundred millions of taxable wealth, and an annual productive industry of three hundred and fifty millions—with mechanic arts and manufactures on every streamlet, and commerce on the waves of all the seas—with institutions of moral and mental culture open to all, and art, science, and literature illustrated by glorious names—with benevolent institutions for the sons and daughters of misfortune and poverty, and charities for humanity the wide world over. The heart, the soul, the reason of Massachusetts send up perpetual aspirations for the unity, indivisibility, and eternity of the North American Republic; but if it shall be rent, torn, dissevered, she will not loose her faith in God and humanity, she will not go down with the falling fortunes of her country without making a struggle to preserve and perpetuate free institutions. So long as the ocean shall roll at her feet, so long as God shall send her health-giving breezes and sunshine and rain, she will endeavor to illustrate in the future as in the past the daily beauty of freedom, secured and protected by law.

Honorable Senators tell us that unless we of the North change our sentiments, they cannot continue in the Union, no matter what guarantees are incorporated into the fundamental law. The Senator from Missouri, [Mr. GREEN,] distinctly enunciated this sentiment, and other Senators have assumed this position. We Republicans are arraigned by Senators for having embodied in our platform of principles, the sublime creed of the Declaration of Independence. Yes, sir, in this, the eighty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States, a great political party is arraigned, in these Council Chambers of the Republic, for proclaiming its faith in the self-evident truths of the Declaration of American Independence. The Republican party, we are told, is a dangerous political organization, its success a cause of offence, justifying secession and rebellion, and the formation of a Southern Confederacy. And the head and front of its offending is its avowal, that the sublime creed proclaimed by our fathers amid the storms of battle, that "all men are created equal and have an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," is to them a living faith. Our fathers and the world thought not so. "The new Republic," says the brilliant Bancroft, "as it took its place among the powers of the world, proclaimed its faith in the truth and reality and unchangeableness of freedom, virtue, and right.

The heart of Jefferson, in writing the Declaration, and of Congress in adopting it beat for all humanity; the assertion of right was made for the entire world of mankind and all coming generations.” * * * * *

“‘Put forth in the name of the ascendant people’ it made the ‘circuit of the world,’ and the astonished nations, as they read that all men are created equal, started out of their lethargy like those who have been exiled from childhood when they suddenly hear the dimly remembered accents of their mother tongue.’” Now it is an offence in republican America to avow a living faith in “the truth and reality and unchangeableness of freedom, virtue, and right.” Sir, what would have been the reflections of Jefferson and Franklin and Adams, and their immortal compeers, who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor in support of this declaration, which started the astonished nations from their lethargy, and of Washington and his brave comrades, who upheld it on the perilous ridges of battle, could they have foreseen that in less than one century it would be a cause of offence, justifying the dismemberment of the Republic, for a successful political party to avow its faith in the Declaration of Rights for which they were giving their treasure and toil and pouring out their blood like autumnal rains? Surely slavery has “lessened the sense of the equal rights of mankind,” and “destroyed that reverence for liberty, which is the vital principle of a Republic,” when it is made an offence in America, to avow faith in the creed of the founders of the Republic.

The Senator from Texas [Mr. WIGFALL] graciously assures us of the North, that if we will suppress our pulpits and schools and presses which teach our people that slavery is a wrong, and recognize the rightfulness of property in the bodies and souls of men, then they will condescend to take into consideration the question of continuing in the Union. The Senator dreams of northern campaigns; of going into winter quarters at the Continental Hotel, in Philadelphia, the Fifth Avenue House, in New York, and the Revere House, in Boston. He talks of dictating a treaty of peace in Faneuil Hall, on Plymouth Rock, or at Bunker Hill. That Senator evidently has little faith in the capacities of the North for a contest of arms, should it come upon us, while he magnifies the power of the South. Sons, who bear the names and inherit the blood of an ancestry, that rose at the sound of the alarm gun on the morn of the Revolution, and followed the Flag of Independence over stricken fields to the crowning glories of Yorktown, who crossed bayonets with British veterans on the bloody heights of Lundy’s Lane, and covered your youthful Navy with renown on Ocean and on Lake, are not “less valiant than the virgin in the night; and skillless as unpractised infancy.” We freely concede the bravery of our countrymen of the South, and we do so in spite of their gasconade and boastful vauntings of chivalric courage. We of the North are quite confident we are as strong of arm, as skilled of hand, and as fleet of foot as are our more boastful countrymen of the sunny South; that we can endure toil and cold and hunger as well as they; and I am sure the Senator from Texas will admit we can endure thirst quite as well as they.

But the Senator from Texas tells us that money is the sinew of war; that we of the North have no money; that they gather gold in hundreds of millions from the stalk of the cotton plant. They send the negro, he says, to the field; he gathers cotton from the stalk, brings it to the gin-house, puts it through the necessary process, and rolls out a bale of five ten dollar gold pieces. But the Senator did not tell us that it might have cost six ten dollar gold pieces to get this bale of five ten dollar gold pieces. The Senator seems to belong to that class of political economists that never count the cost of maintaining “King Cotton.” I would remind the Senator that we of the North take this bale of cotton the negro picks, pay the five ten dollar gold pieces, stamp upon it our skill, art, civilization, send it back, and they of the South promise to give five bales of the next crop for it; but I regret to say, sir, we are often forced to take fewer than are promised. I would remind the boastful Senator that the people of the cotton confederacy are in debt to the amount of millions; that they are not paying fifty cents on the dollar of their indebtedness; that the proceeds of the last cotton crop will not extinguish that indebtedness. I would remind the Senator who tells us we of the North have no money—that they pick it by millions from the stalk of the cotton plant—that the working men of Massachusetts, gentlemen of the South predicted would be in a state of starvation and insurrection, ere this, have on deposit, in the Savings Banks alone, forty-five millions of dollars—millions more than are deposited in all the banks of the seven seceding States by merchants, bankers, planters, and all classes of their people.

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DOUGLAS) ostentatiously assumes to rise above parties and party creeds and platforms, up to the level of the occasion. I commend his avowed purpose; but I am constrained to say, after listening to his speeches, he has hardly come up to the promised position. Underneath all his vaunting professions of readiness to ignore party creeds and platforms, and to know nothing but the Union, the Senator discloses his eagerness to join in the reconstruction of the broken ranks of the Democracy, and his readiness to avail himself of passing events to achieve the desired object. To that end he is evidently quite ready, perhaps quite anxious to surrender his "great principle;" he cannot, therefore, fully appreciate the motives and action of those who are less facile than himself.

The Senator from Illinois brings against us of the Republican party the accusation that, after having brought the country to the verge of destruction, we will not accept the Compromise measures of the Senator from Kentucky, (Mr. CRITTENDEN) and are, therefore, notwithstanding our professions, not devoted to the perpetuity of the Union. Sir, I do not understand what the Senator means by these accusations against us of having brought the country to the verge of destruction, and of not being faithful to the Union. We did not at Charleston or Baltimore plot the disruption of the Democratic party, as the first step to disunion, nor secretly plot the dismemberment of the Confederacy or the seizure of the Government. We have not been in complicity with secessionists, chaffering for the postponement of rebellion until after the 4th of March. Nor have we sat in the councils of the Executive, conspiring with plotters of rebellions, ruining the credit of the country, converting the War Office into an organization for robbing the public treasury, swindling the people, and betraying the country—its forts, arsenals, ships—into the hands of disloyal men. No, sir, no. We have violated no law, human or divine—performed no acts not sanctioned by law, humanity, and religion. Whatever may be the issue of this wicked, causeless revolt against the Government, we are ready to abide the judgment of liberty-loving, law-abiding men of the present and of coming ages.

The venerable Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CRITTENDEN] comes forward with his plan of adjustment; he stands forth as a pacificator, commissioned to compromise and adjust pending issues, to give repose to the distracted country. I most cheerfully accord to the Senator from Kentucky purity of motive, and patriotic intentions and purposes. While I believe every pulsation of his heart throbs for the unity and perpetuity of the Republic; while I cherish for him sentiments of sincere respect and regard, I am constrained to say, here and now, that his policy has been most fatal to the repose of the country, if not to the integrity of the Union and the authority of the Government. Whether his task be self-imposed, or whether it be imposed upon him by others, he has stood forth day by day, not to sustain the Constitution, the Union, and the enforcement of the laws; not to rebuke seditious words and treasonable acts; but to demand the incorporation into the organic law of the nation, irrevocable, degrading, and humiliating concessions to the dark spirit of slavery. Had the acknowledged chiefs of secession, or their northern confederates, put forth these demands for concessions to slavery, they would have been promptly and indignantly rejected by the people of the North. Put forth in the honored name of the venerable Senator from Kentucky, they have received support enough to encourage the secessionists in their demands for concessions, which can never, *no, never*, be made by the freeman of the North. The almost certain rejection of these propositions by the North, the secessionists are using to deceive the people of the South concerning the sentiments of the people of the free States, and to lead them into secession and disunion. The ancient philosopher thought he could move the world if he could find a fulcrum for his lever; the secessionists seem to act as if they had found a fulcrum for their disunion lever, in the proposition of the Senator from Kentucky, which in bitter irony is called a compromise.

The Senator proposes to amend the Constitution so as to provide that "In all the Territory now held or hereafter acquired, situate north of latitude thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes, slavery or involuntary servitude is prohibited, and in all territory now held or hereafter acquired south of that line of latitude, slavery shall be recognized as existing, and shall be protected by the territorial legislature during its territorial existence." This, sir, is called a compromise of the slavery question in the Territories of the United States. A compromise! A compromise of the slavery question in the Territories! It is, sir, a cheat! a delusion! a snare! It is an unqualified concession, a complete surrender of all practical issues concerning slavery in the Territories, to the demands of slave propagandism.

Sir, the leaders of slavery propagandism having fixed their hungry eyes on Cuba, Mexico, and Central America, "for the planting"—in the words of the Senator from Mississippi, [Mr. BROWN.] "and spreading of slavery"—demanded of the Democratic party the recognition of slaves as property, the right to take such property into the Territories of the United States, and have it protected by positive law. These far-seeing leaders of slave propagandism, were not fighting for a mere abstraction, for the simple recognition of a favorite theory of constitutional construction. They were practical statesmen. They saw with clear vision that the mighty currents of advancing civilization were bearing them away from the Territories of the northwest. They knew that no recognition of slaves as property, no protection of slaves as property, by positive law, could permanently stamp the institution on the Territory North of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes, on Dacotah, Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Washington. They saw as we saw, that the great struggle between freedom and slavery in Kansas, in which freedom had won, was a battle, not only for Kansas, but for the Territories North and West of its southern boundary. They were contending, not for the Territories North of 36 deg. 30 min., but for the Indian country, New Mexico, Arizona, and portions of Mexico and Central America. They went into the National Convention of the Democracy at Charleston, made their demands, were denied, and they disrupted the Democratic party. That National Convention reassembled at Baltimore, and again the Democracy, under the lead of the Senator from Illinois, rejected their demand, and they disrupted the party, resolved to secure the recognition of their dogma of slavery protection, or destroy the Democratic party, secede from the Union, establish a southern confederacy, absorb Mexico and Central America, and found a magnificent slave-holding empire.

The appeal was made to the country, and the American people fully comprehending the practical issues, gave a majority of two-and-a-half millions against the recognition and protection of slavery in the Territories, by positive law. Beaten ignominiously before the people, the slave propagandists rush into rebellion, threaten the subversion of the Government; and the Senator from Kentucky, under these treasonable menaces, comes into the Senate of the United States, and proposes to put into the Constitution, beyond all power of change, the practical issue made by these slave propagandists; and the Senator from Illinois accepts the proposition which he rejected at the cost of the unity of his party last June, and charges the Republicans—who cannot so readily change their principles—with want of devotion to the Union. The Republicans saw, when they were fighting the great battle for the freedom of Kansas, that it was a battle for all the territory West and North of it. When the victory was won, they comprehended its magnitude. They did not fight the battle of 1860 for the territories North of 36 deg. 30 min., although they knew the moral power of victory would make assurance doubly sure, and that, too, without further legislation. Confident of assured success, they are now organizing Colorado, Dacotah, and Nevada, without slavery prohibition. The Republicans, like the slave extensionists, fought the battle of 1860 for the Indian country, New Mexico, Arizona, and territory which might hereafter be acquired in Mexico and Central America. The Senator from Kentucky, sustained by the Senator from Illinois, now proposes to prohibit slavery in territory where it has been practically excluded by the victory of freedom in Kansas, in territory where no one is attempting its prohibition; and to recognize and protect it in all the territory South of the line of thirty six deg. and thirty min., in all the territory involved in the great contest of last autumn.

Sir, the Senator from Kentucky, not content to obtain the recognition and protection of slavery in the existing Territory south of the line of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes, hastened to accept the amendment moved by his colleague [Mr. POWELL] to recognize and protect it in all Territory hereafter acquired in Mexico or Central America. The chosen leader of the party of slavery protection in the Territories, (Mr. BRUCKENRIDGE,) in his letter to the governor of Kentucky, declares that the protection of slavery in all Territory hereafter acquired "is vital"—that "the Southern States cannot afford to be shut off from all possibility of extension toward the tropics." Acting upon this theory the Senate by direct vote has put into this proposed constitutional amendment the dogma of slave recognition and protection, which will, if incorporated in the Constitution, send propagandist expeditions into the countries south of us on this continent. Ten years ago, Henry Clay, "rising," in the language of Thomas H. Benton, "loomed colossally in the Senate of the United States, his countenance all alive and luminous with the ideas that beat in his bosom;" and "beaming with firmness of purpose" proclaimed "I

owe it to myself, I owe it to truth, I owe it to the subject, coming as I do from a slave State, to say, it is my solemn, deliberate, and well-matured determination that no power—no earthly power—shall compel me to vote for the positive introduction of slavery either south or north of that line." Now the Senator from Kentucky, occupying the seat made vacant by the death of his great leader, and the Senate of the United States demand that we, the people of the free States, shall recognize and protect slavery south of the line of 36° 30' away down to Cape Horn should our Flag wave over it in the coming ages. I tell the Senator from Kentucky, ay, and the Senator from Illinois, who eludes us for not greedily clutching at this fatal proposition, that the laboring men of America, who fought the battle of the 6th of November, for the freedom of the Territories will never accept this plan of adjustment, which includes all the slave protection Democracy battled for in the canvass. Sir, we might consent to accept Mr. BRECKINRIDGE for President, for we should at least have a handsome man in the Presidential Chair, and that is something, but we cannot consent to put his platform into the Constitution of our country—never.

Sir, the right of Congress to exclude slavery from the places under its exclusive jurisdiction within the limits of the States is beyond all controversy. Congress has never attempted to exercise that power, does not now propose to do so, and may never deem it wise to do so. But the Senator from Kentucky is not content; he now proposes to declare "Congress shall have no power to abolish slavery in places under its exclusive jurisdiction, and situate within the limits of the States that permit the holding of slaves." The right to take slaves in transit into and through the free States is claimed by persons in the slave States, and Virginia has now a case pending in the Supreme Court with the State of New York to establish that right. Fearing that Congress might attempt to prohibit or hinder this loathsome traffic which pollutes the land, the Senator from Kentucky proposes so to amend the Constitution as to declare that "Congress shall have no power to prohibit or hinder the transportation of slaves from one State to another, or to a Territory in which slaves are by law permitted to be held, whether that transportation be by land, navigable rivers, or by the sea." Yes, sir, [we of the North are also asked to put in the Constitution of our country a provision denying to Congress power to prohibit the transportation of slaves by land, navigable rivers, or by sea, into or through the free States of the Union. Coffles of chained slaves may be driven through free States to their destination, and the Congress of the United States is to be denied all power to hinder such transportation; and this proposed constitutional amendment, you call a compromise, to be adopted on pain of the dismemberment of the Republic.

Congress has ample jurisdiction over the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia. The Senator from Kentucky now proposes to incorporate into the Constitution of the United States, a provision that "Congress shall have no power to abolish slavery within the District of Columbia, so long as it exists in the adjoining States of Virginia and Maryland." The people of the United States may desire to relieve the nation from the guilt and shame of slavery in the National Capital, but the Government shall have no power to do it, "so long as it exists in the adjoining States of Virginia and Maryland." The people of the District may desire the removal of the cleaving curse—they may nearly unanimously implore the nation to remove from them this evil, to erase this stain, but the Government "shall have no power" to do it, "so long as it exists in Virginia and Maryland." What rights have Virginia in slavery in the District of Columbia? What is it to her? Why should the nation bind itself to await the pleasure of Virginia? Why should the people of this District be forced to consult Virginia, in regard to their own domestic affairs? The Senator from Kentucky, and the Senator from Illinois, and their supporters, in and out of Congress, would by constitutional amendment, deny to the people of the District, to the nation, the power to make the Capital of this Christian Republic free, to cleanse it from the pollution of slavery, "so long as it exists in Virginia." Sir, this proposition is monstrous, an indignity and insult to the people of the United States; ay, to the people of this District, too.

The Senator from Kentucky, seconded by the Senator from Illinois, proposes to incorporate in the Constitution a provision that "THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE SHALL NOT BE EXERCISED BY ANY PERSONS OF THE AFRICAN RACE, IN WHOLE OR IN PART." Why, sir, is this proposition of disfranchisement now made? Who demands it? What is to be gained by this disfranchisement of men, whose ancestors

possessed the right of suffrage, before the Constitution of the United States came from the hands of its illustrious framers? "At the time," says Judge Curtis, in the Dred Scott case, "of the ratification of the Articles of Confederation, all free native-born inhabitants of the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and North Carolina, though descended from African slaves, were not only citizens of those States, but such of them as had the other necessary qualifications possessed the franchise of electors on equal terms with other citizens." In Maryland and Tennessee persons of the African race long exercised the right of suffrage. To the casting votes of that class of men John Bell once owed his election to the House of Representatives.

Massachusetts adopted her Constitution in 1780, during the war of Independence. That Constitution made the slave a freeman—made persons of the African race citizens, entitled to the elective franchise. This right, secured in the troublous days of the Revolution, to persons of the African race, by John Adams, Parsons, Lowell, and their noble associates, has been exercised for eighty years. Now, sir, the Senator from Kentucky comes into this chamber, proposes the disfranchisement and degradation of citizens of Massachusetts, made so by her heroic sires, and I blush to confess that there are men in that Commonwealth so false and recreant to human rights, as to petition Congress to sustain this wicked, this monstrous proposition of disfranchisement. I know, sir, it is an ungracious task, in these days, and in these chambers, to maintain, even the legal rights of a proscribed race; I am not insensible to the gibes and jeers, the taunts and misrepresentations of a corrupted public opinion; but, I never can—I never will consent, by word or act, to this crime against freemen. The material interests of Massachusetts are dear to me, but the rights of her people are far dearer. Sir, I tell her apostate sons who have put their names to these memorials for the disfranchisement of her colored men, knowing what they did, that the constitutional rights of the humblest man who treads the soil of the old Puritan Commonwealth, are dearer—far dearer to me, than all those material interests for which they are ready to sacrifice the rights of their fellow men.

Sir, in the dark days of our weakness, the ancestors of the men you would now, in the days of your power, trample beneath your feet, freely gave their blood for the liberties and independence of America. The leader and first victim of the Boston Massacre of the 5th of March, 1770, which so fired the hearts and roused the patriotism of the people, was Crispus Attucks, a colored patriot. One of that race mingled his blood with the fallen patriots of the 19th of April, 1775, and they stood with our heroic sires on the heights of Bunker Hill, when the storm of battle clung around and beat upon it. They fought side by side and shoulder to shoulder with our fathers, "for the right," says Bancroft, in his narration of the work of that day, "of the free negroes to bear arms in the public defence at that day, was as little disputed in New England as their other rights." When Major Pitcairn—the leader who opened the murderous fire upon the patriots on the green of Lexington common—mounted the works on Bunker Hill, crying "the day is ours," he fell mortally wounded by the unerring shot of Salem, a black soldier.

Hundreds of the ancestors of the men upon whose brows the Senator from Kentucky would stamp degradation, entered the army and fought with heroic courage on the stricken fields of the Revolution. Some of the most heroic deeds of the war of Independence were performed by black men. A braver regiment than the Colored Regiment of Rhode Island, led by the gallant Col. Greene, the hero of Red Bank, trod not the battle-fields of the Revolution. Of this black regiment, Tristram Burges said in the House of Representatives in 1828, that "no braver men met the enemy in battle;" and Governor Eustis, of Massachusetts, Secretary of War under Jefferson, said of them in 1820, "they discharged their duty with zeal and fidelity; the gallant defense of Red Bank, in which the black regiment bore a part, is among the proofs of their valor." Arnold, in his admirable history of Rhode Island, pays this noble tribute to the conduct of this regiment in the battle of Rhode Island—which Lafayette pronounced "the best fought battle of the war,"—"it was in repelling these furious onsets, that the newly raised *black regiment*, under Colonel Greene, distinguished itself by deeds of desperate valor. Posted behind a thicket in the valley, they three times drove back the Hessians, who charged repeatedly down the hill to dislodge them; and so determined were the enemy in these successive charges, that the day after the battle the Hessian Colonel, upon whom this duty had devolved, applied to exchange his command and go to New York, because he dared not lead his regiment again to battle, lest his men should shoot him for having caused them so much loss."

Connecticut, too, raised a battalion of black soldiers, and Colonel Humphrey, attached to the military family of Washington, accepted a command in this corps. The heroic defense of the fort on the heights of Groton, by Colonel Ledyard and his brave comrades is a glorious page in our history. By their side fought and fell men of this hated race. History records that, when the works were stormed, the British officer, exasperated by the heroic resistance, inquired: "Who commands this fort?" "I once did; you do now," answered Ledyard, handing the officer his sword, which was instantly run through his body by the officer. Lambert, a black soldier avenged this murder of his commander, by thrusting his bayonet through the body of the British officer, and then fell pierced by thirty-three bayonet wounds. Sir, in the great struggle for independence, in the war of 1812, on land and sea, the blood of the colored men of New England was freely poured out in vindication of your liberties, rights, and honor; and now you ask us to despoil them of their long possessed rights. Never, sir, never by my consent. In addressing the German workmen of Cincinnati the other day, Mr. Lincoln told them that "they were all of the great family of men, and if there is one shackle upon any of them, it would be far better to lift the load from them than to pile additional loads upon them." That was the utterance of a Christian statesman. These men you propose to disfranchise forever, are all of the great family of men, and if there are shackles upon them, it would be far better to lift the load from them than to pile additional burdens upon them.

The Senator from Kentucky, supported by the Senator from Illinois, proposes to incorporate into the Constitution a provision authorizing "the United States to acquire districts of country in Africa and South America, for the colonization, at the expense of the federal Treasury, of such free negroes and mulattoes as the several States may wish to have removed from their limits, and from the District of Columbia, and such other places as may be under the jurisdiction of Congress."

This proposition is not intended to encourage emancipation, but to perpetuate slavery. It does not propose to send at the public expense such persons as may be hereafter emancipated by masters willing to emancipate on condition of expatriation to distant lands. No, sir, that is not its purpose. That purpose is to make slavery more secure by sending out of the slaveholding States the free negroes. Efforts, inhuman and unchristian efforts, have been made in several of the States, and in some of them successfully to expel or reduce to slavery the free colored population. Judge Catron of the Supreme Court, to his honor, denounced the proposition when made in Tennessee, as an attempt "to commit an outrage, to perpetrate an oppression and cruelty." These efforts "to commit an outrage, to perpetrate an oppression and cruelty" have been defeated only in some of the States by the greatest exertions. The proposition was lately made in the Legislature of South Carolina to reduce all free negroes to slavery and confiscate their property. The committee to whom the subject was referred made an adverse report, in which they say "there is at present within the borders of the State nearly ten thousand free colored persons; that they are thrifty, orderly, and well disposed; that they are the owners of a vast amount of property, both real and personal; that in the city of Charleston alone they pay taxes on \$1,561,870 worth of property; that of this amount *more than three hundred thousand dollars are in slaves*; that the free negroes of Charleston alone pay taxes to the amount of \$27,209 81, and that other portions of the State show as fair a ratio." In answer to the proposition to confiscate the property of these people and sell them into slavery, the committee say they "forbear to consider anything so full of injustice and wickedness."

Adopt this proposition—amend the Constitution, and the wild cry will go up for the removal of the free colored men, whose freedom and prosperity, even under the almost crushing burdens imposed upon them, excites the jealousy of master and the hope of the slave. Put this proposition in the Constitution, and the farmers, mechanics, and working-men of the free States will be forced to contribute millions, earned by the sweat of their brows, to enable the people of the slave States to banish their free colored men. Gladly would I so amend the Constitution as to authorize the Federal Government to acquire territory, in Mexico, or Central or South America, for the colonization, at the public expense, of such persons as the humanity of slave masters may emancipate, on condition of removal, and for the free people of color who may choose to emigrate at their own expense; but, I never can—I never will consent to this proposition for eternizing slavery, and imposing this burden upon the toiling people of the North. No, sir, never, never!

The mails are no longer sacred in the slaveholding States—are searched and rifled at the will of Postmasters, Vigilance Committees, and lawless mobs. I find nothing in this plan of adjustment for the security of the property of Northern men, passing in and through the mails of the Southern States.

Northern colored seamen are taken from the decks of their vessels, thrust into prison, fined, and sometimes sold into perpetual slavery to pay jail fees, and it is made a penitentiary offence to attempt to defend their rights in the judicial tribunals. Neither the Senator from Kentucky nor the Senator from Illinois propose in their plans of settlement, any security against these wicked and cruel wrongs.

Northern ships entering the waters, or passing along the shores of Virginia, are visited, searched, and compelled to pay five dollars for each unwelcome visitation. The Senator from Kentucky does not propose to right this illegal, tyrannical and burdensome action of the authorities of the old Dominion, nor do the compromising Senators from Illinois and Pennsylvania, [Mr. BIGLER,] propose to protect in any degree, the rights and interests of the North against such legislation.

Northern men, sojourning in the southern States, are subjected to petty annoyances, offensively watched, often for no offense, seized, searched, subjected to the greatest personal insults, and indecent indignities, imprisoned, lashed, banished, and sometimes brutally murdered. There is no land under the cope of heaven, where the citizens of the free States are subjected to such wanton outrages of person and property, as in portions of the slaveholding States of this Union. Mechanics pursuing their lawful avocations; merchants and business men, engaged in the almost hopeless effort to collect something from reluctant or bankrupt debtors; gentlemen sojourning for health, pleasure, or business, are often subjected to insult, sometimes to danger. To have in one's possession a northern newspaper, to utter the faintest word of explanation, or justification of their section, to uphold the Union, and vindicate the Government, often, in portions of the South, subjects the northern gentleman to insult and personal danger. These outrages upon northern men are known, admitted, often justified; yet, the Senator from Kentucky proposes nothing for their protection—no, nothing whatever. The rights and interests of northern freemen are of no moment in these chambers.

But the Senator from Kentucky asks us, of the North, by irrevocable Constitutional Amendments, to recognize and protect slavery in the Territories now existing or hereafter acquired south of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes;—to deny power to the Federal Government to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, in the Forts, Arsenal, Navy Yards and places under the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress;—to deny to the National Government all power to hinder the transit of slaves through one State to another;—to take from persons of the African race the elective franchise;—and to purchase Territory in South America or Africa, and to send them, at the expense of the Treasury of the United States, such free negroes as the States may desire removed from their limits. And what does the Senator propose to concede to us of the North? The prohibition of slavery in Territories north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes, where no one asks for its inhibition, where it has been made impossible by the victory of freedom in Kansas—and the equalization of the fees of the Slave Commissioners. And this, this plan of concession, is called a compromise—the Crittenden Compromise—to be supported by the Representatives of millions of northern freemen, on pain of having their fidelity to the Union, questioned by the Senator from Illinois, and his confederates in and out of this Chamber.

Such, Mr. President, are the propositions of the Senator from Kentucky, which we of the North are asked to put into the Constitution of the United States, beyond the power of the American people ever to change or repeal. The unclouded Reason, the enlightened Conscience, the Love of Country, and of our Race, all, all forbid that Northern freemen should commit these crimes against mankind, our country, and the cause of popular freedom and Republican Institutions. We cannot, no, sir, we dare not do so. We fear—should we consummate these wrongs to our country, to our race,—the perpetual reproaches of insulted reason and violated conscience, the irreversible judgment of Earth and of Heaven. We fear that our names will be enrolled, not with the Benefactors of Mankind, but with those who have betrayed the cause of the People. We fear—should we assent to this eternization of slavery in the Constitution our Father framed to secure the blessings of Liberty, that we shall sink, after life's fatal fever, into dishonored graves, amid the curses of a betrayed people; and that our names will be consigned to what Gratian, the great Irish Orator called "Oppression's natural scourge—the moral indignation of History."

