





S P E E C H

OF

HON. E. H. WEBSTER, OF MD.,

DELIVERED AT

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FEBRUARY 18, 1861

The House having under consideration the report from the select committee of thirty-three—

Mr. WEBSTER said:

Mr. SPEAKER: In submitting some remarks to the House this morning upon our national affairs, I desire, so far as possible, to lay aside every feeling of personal or sectional character, and come up to the consideration of the question upon a single, not only to the interest and welfare of the State whom I represent, but also to the interest and welfare of the whole country, believing, as I do, that they are inseparably connected; and, although I am well aware that I shall not be able to bring to this discussion the ability, the research, and the eloquence which have characterized many efforts made upon this floor, yet I do claim to have as earnest a desire and as honest a purpose as any man can possess to assist in bringing to a peaceful settlement our present unhappy difficulties.

Sir, I am not a friend to secession. I have not been taught in the school of politics. I have learned, at the feet of Clay and of Webster, that when this Government was formed by our fathers, it was intended to be a strong, a self-sustaining, a permanent Government; that they did not suppose that they were planting in it the seeds of its own destruction, but believed that they were forming a Government that should exist through all time. But, sir, even if such a right does exist, I hold that the policy of the seceding States, in attempting, at this time, to exercise it, has been precipitate, unwise, and selfish.

Who, when he knows that in three short months after the American people in all the States peacefully, at the ballot-box, have declared their preference for a President of the United States, seven of these States have determined to break up this great Government which our fathers were long years in originating and perfecting, and who also knows the fact that the action of those States in severing themselves from the General Government—the highest exercise of sovereign power—has in no instance been submitted to the people for ratification, can deny that the action of these States has been precipitate? Who that knows that if the Representatives of the seceding States in both Houses of Congress had remained in their places, even if the incoming Administration had designed to take measures for the injury of the South, it would not have had the ability, that the South and the friends of the South would have controlled both branches of the national Legislature; and that, consequently, the Administration would have been harmless for ever; who, I say, that knows these facts, can doubt that the action of the seceding States has been unwise? And, sir, who that knows that the seceding States have taken their course without consulting the

wishes and feelings of their sister southern States—well knowing, as they did, that our institutions were similar to theirs: that we have the same interests in this struggle as they: that our rights were as much involved as theirs: that the dangers resulting from such a course were much greater and more imminent to us than to them—can deny that they selfishly and arrogantly have endeavored and are endeavoring to drag us, the border slave States, into secession against our wishes and against our interests?

But, sir, I have no desire to discuss this question, nor the alleged causes that have led to the action of these States—the wrongs inflicted on the southern people by the unfriendly and unconstitutional legislation of certain northern States, and the formation and triumph of a great sectional party at the North, selecting its candidates from that section, and electing them by the votes of that section alone, founded upon the idea of resistance to the institutions of the South; and, as it were, endeavoring to ignore the South in the control of the Government. These questions I do not believe to be pertinent to this discussion: I know they are not profitable. I refer to them simply to express my disapproval of them and of the results they have, in a great measure, assisted to produce. I desire, sir, to bring my thoughts to the practical questions that are before us. Leaving the past, letting the dead bury their dead, I wish to consider the present and to provide for the future.—And, sir, if we would fully comprehend the great responsibilities that are upon us, we must not shut our eyes to the present condition of the country. It will not do to declare that there is “no crisis” in the land: that “the Union is safe:” that “no man is injured:” that “nobody has been hurt.” We must admit the facts as they are: and not, like the stupid osrich, hide our heads when danger comes, and imagine that it is passed because it comes not within the range of our mere physical vision.

What is the present condition of the country, in brief? Why, sir, although we have had the most abundant harvest that ever blessed our fields: although our granaries are bursting with the rich fruits of the earth: although gold is pouring into our coffers—not only from our own Ophir, but from across the waters—it is nevertheless a sad fact that the arm of labor and trade is paralyzed throughout the land: that the wrecks of shattered fortunes are gathering thick around us: that the cry of the laboring man is coming up for relief: and that even the credit of the Government itself is crippled and almost destroyed. Yes, sir: and although our pioneers are pressing upon the wilderness, the soldiers that were intended to protect them no longer fill the forts of the West, but are here, in the very federal capital itself, to see that legislation is carried on without interruption, and that the President elect of the United States is peaceably inaugurated: although, sir, our hardy and adventurous merchantmen are spreading their sails upon every sea, the ships intended to protect them in foreign waters are hugging our own coast, in order to protect our own troops against attacks from citizens of the United States. Ay, sir, and while the President elect is making his triumphal procession to this city, and while we are here talking about the safety and preservation of the Union, and saying that there is no crisis and no danger, the President of another Confederacy within our limits is making his procession to another capital of another system of confederated States, received by the plaudits of the multitude and salvos of artillery—States that number five million human souls: States that have a vast empire within their limits: States that declare that they are free and independent of our control, and that they mean to maintain their independence at the point of the sword. Sir, the country *is* in danger: there *is* a crisis in the land: the temple of liberty *is* quaking to its foundations: and it becomes us, the Representatives of the American people, charged with the interests of the people, charged to see that no detriment comes to the Republic, to take steps, if possible, to avert this danger: to meet this crisis; to see that the rights and interests of the people are guarded and protected, and that this Republic is not broken in twain.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the responsibility is upon us, and we cannot escape from it. True, there is a highly intelligent, respectable, and influential body of citizens sitting at the other end of the avenue—the Peace Conference: and I trust in God that, in their wisdom and patriotism, they will be able to recommend some measure of adjustment: but when they have done this, their duties terminate. They can do no more. They cannot legislate. That responsibility will still be upon us, and we cannot escape it.

Now, sir, what shall we do to preserve the Union of these States? I declare to you, sir, and to the American people, that the one great object I have in view is the preservation of the Union and the rights and liberties of all the citizens of the Republic within the Union. Two lines of policy are before us, separate and distinct, each having its advocates upon this floor and throughout the country, and each claimed by its friends to be the only policy that will lead to that result. What are they? One is the policy of compromise, of conciliation, of peace: the other is the policy of a rigid enforcement of the laws, and a prompt suppression of rebellion, *without* compromise and *without* concession. Sir, between these two policies runs the same line of demarkation which marked those which were advocated, in the days when our fathers first resisted the laws of the mother country, by Lord North and the Earl of Chatham. "Listen," said the old earl, "to the complaints of your colonies. Redress their grievances." "Let us first suppress rebellion," replied Lord North. "Let us first enforce the laws: let us first see whether we have a government." And the Parliament, actuated by that natural prompting of the human heart, which we all have, and which, I think, has been actuating us here this morning to punish whoever resists our authority, yielded to the views of Lord North: and the world knows the result. The rebellion was successful, and the English empire was dismembered.

Now, sir, who are the advocates of this coercion policy? Who are they that declare that they "make no compromise on this occasion?" that "they will enforce the law at all hazards?" that they have "millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute?" I say, sir, with all respect to gentlemen, that in this House and elsewhere they are the men who have been remarkable heretofore for their hostility to the institutions of the South. I do not like to be invidious, but I may mention some names. There is the reverend gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. LOVEJOY.] There is the worthy successor of Mr. Giddings, [Mr. HUTCHINS.] There is the senior member from Pennsylvania, [Mr. STEVENS.] and his more youthful colleague from the Wilnot district, [Mr. GROW.] There is the member from the Syracuse district of New York, [Mr. SEDGWICK.] and his redoubtable colleague from the Orange district, [Mr. VAN WYCK.] There is the gentleman from Massachusetts, [Mr. BURLINGAME,] who so gracefully "reposes on the bosom of the North End." There is the gentleman from Connecticut, [Mr. FERRY,] and there is the gentleman from Wisconsin, [Mr. WASHBURN,] the distinguished representative of a distinguished family. So I might go on and tell the nation the characters of the men who declare here and elsewhere that they will make no compromise: that they intend to enforce the laws at all hazards: that they intend to put down rebellion at the point of the bayonet. The country will believe that, in their policy here, these gentlemen are but carrying out their hostility to the South and her institutions. I do not intend to express any doubt about the honesty of motives of these gentlemen; yet the country will look through their action, and will believe, as I believe, that they see in it the unfriendly hand of men whose prejudices against the institutions of the South render them unsafe advisers in questions in which rights, connected with these institutions, are involved.

Now, what will be the effect of this policy? In my humble judgment, it will certainly lead to bloodshed and civil war, and probably to a further dismemberment of this Republic. In all human probability, it will drive from beneath the shield of the Republic other States that are now true in their fealty. If it does not do this, it will dig, between Republican

States and the States that have seceded, a ditch so wide that never again can they get together. It will sow the seeds of such a harvest of hate as will forever prevent the coming together of the States that have seceded and the States that are true. This, in brief, will be the effect of the policy. Now, after you have carried out your policy of coercion without compromise, of war without concession, of enforcement of laws without conciliation—when you have brought these results on the country, when you have seen the southern cities laid in ashes, her fair fields blackened and destroyed, and her sons given to the sword, when you have seen her women and children wandering homeless and friendless; and when, recurring to your own section, you find that your own people are burdened with intolerable taxation, that a skeleton stands beside each of your own doors; that you are oppressed under the weight of military despotism; when you find that the country is irretrievably broken up, what consolation will it be to you, in that hour to reflect that all these calamities have been brought upon the country in name of the Union, of the enforcement of the laws, and of the protection of public property?

Sir, there is no other policy; and I trust that its friends are in a majority on this floor. It is the policy of compromise and conciliation and peace. It is the policy which our fathers followed when they framed the Constitution. That instrument originated in a spirit of compromise. General Washington declared, in the letter in which he submitted it (the Constitution) to the old Congress, that it was "the result of a spirit of amity," and of "mutual deference and concession." The same spirit has actuated the leading men of the Republic, whenever the Republic has been in danger. In 1820, it controlled the legislation of the country, and brought peace. This same spirit of compromise preserved us again in 1850. It is the policy of Cnathan, the policy of Washington, the policy of Clay, the policy of Crittenden. I am one of the men who desire to see this policy inaugurated. Every man who believes that our present difficulties should be terminated by peaceful legislation, who thinks that, instead of appealing to the arbitrament of the sword, we should appeal to the intelligence and patriotism of men; who is willing to make concessions, and, if necessary, to trample on party platforms and selfish ambitions, and everything that might stand in the way of a peaceable, honorable, fair, and final settlement of the questions dividing us, must desire, with me, to see such policy inaugurated.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if every gentleman here would get rid of the idea that the country must be saved on his proposition or not saved at all; if gentlemen, instead of laboring for their own ultimatum, would only determine that there shall be a fair, just, and honorable settlement, we will have no trouble in coming to such a result. I desire that every man who has a proposition of his own shall not imagine that his is the panacea for all the public evils; but that he shall be willing to take that or anything else which will cure the disease of the "sick man."

Much has been said here and elsewhere about my own State. I am not authorized by the State to speak her sentiments. I shall only utter what *I believe* to be her sentiments. I believe that she stands upon the policy of compromise. She would be willing to take any fair, reasonable, just settlement of this question of slavery, and adhere to it. Stain not her honor, trample not on the rights of her people, and she will rejoice in any measures you may take that will preserve the peace of the country and maintain the unity of the Government. She is a southern State, having southern feelings and southern interests. But she is also a national State. She loves the nation in which she has grown so large, as well as the section of which she is a part. She desires to maintain her present position in both. She desires to remain a southern State; and she desires to remain a national State. She is not willing to yield her right to her social institutions, nor is she willing to give up all the blessings which come to her from her great national institutions. She is now in the heart of the Republic. There she desires to remain forever. She is not ambitious to be either the northern boundary of a southern confederacy, or the southern boundary of a northern confederacy. Her safety, interest, honor, all demand that she shall hold, if possible, her present position. Sir, our fathers, in the days of Washington, and at his request, ceded this district for the purposes of the national capital. We, the sons of those men, are not willing that it should become the seat of Government for any fragment of a broken country. We are not desirous of repossessing it ourselves, nor of seeing it go into the possession of any other nation than that which Washington and our fathers founded. Sir, at the very hour when a foreign foe was thundering at the gates of our chief city, a distinguished son of my State composed the song of the "Star-spangled Banner." And now, when our own brothers, carried away by passion, aroused by real and imaginary wrongs, are thundering at the gates of our great Union, we desire to maintain not only our claim to the song, but our right to the banner.

Now, sir, in the name of that State, so loyal to the Union, so regardful of all its obliga-

tions, so fraternal in its relations, as well to its northern as to its southern sisters. I desire to appeal to northern gentlemen to listen to her voice. I believe it is the voice of wisdom. I know it is the voice of patriotism. What does she desire? What does she demand? Her sympathies are strong towards her southern sisters, for they are bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh; they are filled with men who have gone out from her borders; and she loves her sons, wheresoever they may be scattered; yet she still remains true to the Union, true to the flag of the Republic, true to your Government. Under such circumstances I have the right to ask you to listen to her counsels.

Sir, her people, with a unanimity hardly ever seen upon any subject, among any people, ask that they shall not be plunged into deadly strife with their brethren and friends; but that these difficulties shall be peaceably settled by fair, reasonable, and honorable compromise. They ask you to so guaranty their rights, and the rights of all the southern States, as to quiet all apprehensions that they may ever be invaded; and they ask you to pursue a policy of conciliation and peace towards their erring sisters of the South. If gentlemen will only listen to these counsels of my State, and pursue the policy she thus indicates, what results would follow? Throughout all the land, wherever the glad tidings went that a peaceful solution of our difficulties had been found, bonfires would blaze, bells would ring, cannons would roar, and men would rejoice! In the northern States especially, business would immediately revive. Factories and furnaces would soon be in operation; laboring men would have bread and employment; the great ships would spread their sails in every sea, laden with the products of every part of the Republic; and general prosperity and happiness returning, would pervade every department of society. This in itself, it seems to me, would furnish northern gentlemen with sufficient inducement to pursue this course.

But, sir, more than this: let this policy be inaugurated here, and the southern States which have not seceded, and do not desire to secede, will be forever bound to the Union by bonds stronger than chains of iron—memory, affection, interest, and honor. And, sir, I take it for granted that northern men, appreciating the conservative position these border States now hold, admiring the stand which Kentucky and Virginia and Tennessee and Missouri have just taken for the Union, and for further fellowship with them, will feel in their own breasts a corresponding conservatism and fraternity, and will rejoice to give expression to those sentiments in prompt and honorable legislation. Pursue this policy, and, in my opinion, you will also bring back the States which have attempted to go out from the Union. Why do I so believe? Because they have adopted a constitution almost *in totidem verbis* like our own; because they are debating the question of adopting a flag as nearly like our own as it is possible; because they have elected as the chief officers in their Republic, not secessionists *per se*, but men who have loved this Union, and who have stated that they desired a reconstruction of its parts; and especially because, in all these States, with the exception perhaps of South Carolina, there is a strong Union party to-day, which, if you will settle these vexed questions; if you will accept fair compromises; if you will give to the southern States what they believe they are entitled to—security from invasion of their rights within the Union—I say, if you will do this, this Union party, which still exists in these States, will use all their efforts to bring them back. And, sir, when the passions of the hour have subsided, and cooler reflection has come; when memory brings up the old flag, and the friends they have left behind, I doubt not their hearts will turn again to the Union, and they will come once more to their accustomed places. I have no doubt whatever that this will be the result. And, for myself, I will say that it is a result that I much desire. I am ready to admit that they have acted with precipitation, and, as I said before, with arrogance and selfishness; and I will admit that I am willing to see them punished by the burdens they are bringing upon themselves for this conduct, in the taxation they are bringing down upon their people, and which must continue to increase, if they remain in a republic not larger than their present confederacy. Yet, sir, they are our brothers; they have gone out from our midst; and if they shall be willing to return, my people will go forth to meet them. Ay, sir, if, like the prodigal son, when they have filled their bellies with the husks of secession, they shall again return to their father's house, we will go forth to meet them; we will bring forth the fatted calf; we will make merry and be glad, because these, our brothers, were dead and are alive again, and they that were lost are found.

Now, gentlemen of the North, I ask you whether this is not "a consummation devoutly to be wished?" But if this policy shall fail of such a result: if it shall fail to bring back the seceding States; if it shall fail to restore the unity of the Republic, then you will have done your duty; you will have at least acted as patriots; and in so acting, you will have committed no wrong, and inflicted no injury upon any human being. You will have brought no damage upon any constituent; you will have degraded no State that you represent, and have heaped no obloquy upon yourselves. Then, too, you can take such course as may seem

best, wisest, and most patriotic, to preserve the dignity of the flag and the unity of the country.

I have spoken in general terms about the duty of compromise and concession. So far as I am concerned, sir, I prefer the proposition of Senator CRITTENDEN, from Kentucky. I prefer it especially on this question of slavery in the Territories, which is the most difficult one to settle. I prefer that a line should be run between us, that no man may misunderstand his rights. I desire that a surveyor's compass, and not the decision of a court, which is disputed and may be reversed, shall determine how far the northern people may go in the Territories, and not be interfered with in the slightest degree on the subject of freedom, as they call it, and how far the southern men may go with their slave property, and have it protected without molestation. Do this in the Territories, and there can be no dispute between us; you settle that question forever. I am not talking about territory hereafter to be acquired; for I confess, in all candor, that I do not care ever to have another foot of territory added to the Union. I am not willing to imperil the institutions of the country and the Union itself, about territory which we may never acquire, and which, so far as my present impression goes, and if I have anything to do with it, we never will acquire.

My friend near me [Mr. ABRAMS] says, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Very true. I think we have as much evil upon our hands now as we can well attend to, and I do not want to have any more by anticipation. Why should we not run that line? Some gentleman the other day—I do not now recollect his name, but I will get it and put it into the Globe—[Mr. HUTCHINS,] that gentleman said that compromise presupposed concessions from both parties. So it does. We do not ask anything else. We agree to give up our opinions, to a certain extent, and all we ask is that you shall yield yours to a certain extent also. What is the running of this line? Under the Chicago platform, gentlemen of the Republican party claim that slavery does not exist in a single foot of territory, and that it never did, and never shall, exist there. The southern people, without regard to party—there is not a southern man who denies it—the southern people unanimously hold to the opinion that they have a right to go with their slave property into all of the Territories. They imagine that that claim is founded upon a decision of the Supreme Court—the Dred Scott decision. What is this proposition we offer? We propose to apply the Chicago platform to three-fourths of the Territories, and the best parts of them, and we ask you to apply the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States to the other quarter, and that the worst of the Territories. I hold that that is a *compromise*. I hold that the South has done all, in the way of concession, in that proposition, that any fair man could desire.

Mr. Speaker, let the House adopt this policy, run this line, and gentlemen know—no man doubts it; I do not believe there are three men upon this floor who doubt it—I say, that if we run this line of 36° 30' through the Territories, we will retain every border State in the Union, and, in all human probability, bring back every seceding State, excepting, it may be, South Carolina. She may stay out awhile; and I should not be sorry if she did. I should like to see her, with her three hundred thousand white people, play grand nation for a time and pay the expenses. I think she will get tired of the honor, as well as its cost, in a very short period of time.

I say I prefer this; but, Mr. Speaker, at the same time, I will take any other plan that will settle permanently this question. But I do ask that, in whatever compromise you pass, you will settle this question of slavery everywhere. I hope that you will forever exclude it from these Halls. Take away that bone of contention, not only in the Territories, but here in this District. Gentlemen say that they have no intention to interfere with slavery in the District of Columbia, and that consequently there is no necessity for legislation on the subject now. I believe they have no such intention; but the time may hereafter come when it will be the means of mischief between us. Put it in the Constitution that slavery, except under certain circumstances, shall not be interfered with in this District. Put it where we cannot touch it. Settle the question in regard to the forts, arsenals, and dockyards, in the southern States. I ask you to do it, not only because of the condition of feeling in the South on the subject, and for the peace and harmony of the country, but for your own sake. You know that there are men in your midst (Abolitionists) who will strike at slavery wherever they can reach it. Their attention, for some years, has been called away from this District to a larger field for their operations—the Territories; but, sir, you know, when we have settled this question in the Territories, they will bring their batteries to bear upon it here. Settle the question here in this District, or it will settle you at home if your party continues to exist. The Abolition wing, if you do not respond to their petitions to abolish slavery here, will split from you and defeat you.

Now, sir, what good has ever resulted to the country from this discussion of the slavery question? Who has been benefited by it? Is there a single man or a single State in the

Union which has received the slightest advantage from the discussions that have taken place here and elsewhere upon this subject? Not one. You have not decreased the number of slave States by it. You have not added to the number of free States by it. You have not reduced the number of bondmen by it. You have not increased the number of freemen by it. You have done nothing by it, except array one part of the Republic against the other. The result is the peril which now threatens the very existence of the country. I ask you, as wise men, as patriots, in the settlement of this question, to make it final—to bury it forever. Never let it come up to divide those who ought to be united; to make enemies of those who ought to be friends.

But, Mr. Speaker, this House may refuse to pass any measure of adjustment. I hope not. I confess my faith is a little shaken. The vote* this morning has been a damper upon my feelings, and hangs a cloud over my former bright prospects. I hope I misunderstood the meaning of that vote. I hope it is not the intention of gentlemen of the North to refuse all conciliation, to refuse all compromise, to refuse all concession necessary to compose the public mind, and restore the public tranquillity, but to unsheath the sword and come down upon the South with it, to enforce the laws, to protect the public property, or to destroy the South in an effort to do so. I trust that is not the intention. I will not say I believe it is; and yet I do say, it has somewhat shaken my confidence in the intention of this House to come to a fair, honorable, and just measure of compromise. But, sir, if the House shall refuse, if the Peace Conference shall fail to recommend measures of adjustment, or if they recommend measures which this House shall fail to put in execution, I still am not willing to despair of the Republic; I will not advise my people at home to lay rash hands upon the pillars of the Republic; I shall still advise them that I believe there is a better day in store for them. We complain of the precipitancy of the seceding States; and I desire that our people shall not be liable to the same charge. But I tell you, your course is also precipitate. You complain of the rashness with which the southern States have rushed out of the Republic; and yet, in the same rash way, you draw the sword to come down upon them. Give them time to reflect before you charge upon them with your mailed legions.

Mr. SHERMAN. I desire to say one word to the gentleman from Maryland. I ask the gentleman if he will allow the acknowledged property of the United States to remain in the hands of the officers of the United States? If so, there will be no danger of a collision.

Mr. WEBSTER. I will say to my friend, that I have no intention to seize any property of the United States, or to take any steps to prevent such property remaining in the hands of the officers of the United States.

Mr. SHERMAN. I will ask the gentleman whether he himself, and the people of Maryland, are not willing to defend the property of the United States from all assaults, by any and everybody, no matter where situated?

Mr. WEBSTER. I am looking to the actual condition of affairs in the country. If, by precipitate action in defending property and punishing treason, you bring more dangers upon my people and upon the country, than you would by taking a conciliatory course, I say I will not enforce the laws. [Great applause in the galleries.] It is a mere question of policy. If I believed that the Union of these States could be preserved, or restored to harmony, by enforcing the laws and by protecting the public property at all points, I, and I believe the people of my State, almost to a man, would rally to the enforcement of the laws and the protection of the public property. [Renewed applause in the galleries.]

The SPEAKER. The Chair is under the necessity of requesting that there shall be no manifestation of approbation or disapprobation in the galleries. If it is allowed upon one side it must be allowed upon the other, and we should be constantly annoyed.

Mr. WEBSTER. A gentleman near me asks if we will carry the war into the North? Sir, I thank the gentleman for the suggestion. I will advise my people to carry the war into the North. I will advise them not to rush rashly upon the Republic because the Representatives of the North refuse—if they shall refuse—just and honorable compromise. I will advise them to attack the North, not with sword and musket and cannon, but by their wisest and best men, sent into every hamlet, village, and city, to call upon the people to rise up in their defence. Sir, I believe that when the conservative men of the South shall appeal to the sympathy, the fraternity, and the conservative sentiments of their brethren of the North, they will respond to that appeal. If you refuse now to take steps of concilia-

* Reference is made to the vote upon the motion to reject, on its second reading, Mr. STANTON'S "Force Bill," which resulted as follows: Ayes 68, noes 109.

tion, I believe that *your people*, when we have called upon them, asking only for our rights, and asking that in the spirit of fraternity, will rise up in the majesty of their power and the might of their patriotism, and trample upon all men, crush all platforms, and destroy all parties, which stand between them and a full acknowledgment of the rights of their southern brethren.

I repeat, I will not despair of the Republic because you refuse to take steps here for its preservation. We will appeal to the power behind the throne. We will appeal to the mighty people who sent you here; for I feel assured that if we shall do this, and do it in that spirit which I know the people of Maryland, and the men of the other border States, will exhibit, your people will be willing to come up again to the common altar of the Republic, and standing with their southern brethren around that holy altar, I believe they will be willing to renew to each other the vows their fathers made in the cause of liberty, in the cause of freedom, and in the cause of the Union, pledging to each other "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt, if all the gentleman here would forget that they ever belonged to a party, forget their party ties—I speak of both sides of the House—would forget that upon the stumps of their various districts they have used exaggerated language, and made strong declarations; and would remember that the duty upon which they are here engaged is legislation for the interests of the whole country, legislation for the well-being of every man within the limits of the country—if they would do this, I believe we would be able to agree upon measures which would settle these difficulties, or at least that we could initiate measures which would lead to a settlement. So far as I am concerned, I pledge gentlemen that I am willing to forget self and party; that I am willing to forget everything but the good of my country and the honor of my State; and I ask gentlemen to come up to the assistance of the men of the South who have battled against disunion, who have arrayed themselves against secession; that you shall strengthen their arms and encourage their labors, that thus they may bring to a successful termination this battle for the Union.

If you do this, not only the plaudits of your fellows will be upon you, but all coming time will heap blessings upon your heads. If you and I refuse to take the proper steps, if we refuse to do all that patriotic men should do to bring about such a result, then I doubt not the maledictions not only of our own fellows, but of posterity and all humanity, will bury us deep in eternal infamy.

Sir, I desire to leave my children no such heritage as this. I desire, if this Union is to be broken up, and poverty and oppression are to be their heritage, that the bitterest drop in all that cup shall not be that their father assisted in bringing these evils upon them and their country. I desire that, when they look back to this time, in which we might have saved a mighty nation, but in which we destroyed one, they shall at least believe that the man from whom they sprung did all that his feeble efforts enabled him to do to preserve his country, and the rights, liberties, and happiness of its people.



