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Howard, William

Speech of... 1861

SPEECH

OF

HON. WILLIAM HOWARD, OF OHIO,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 30, 1861.

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

Mr. HOWARD, of Ohio, said:

Mr. SPEAKER: We have arrived at a period in the history of our country which was never even dreamed of by the gallant and far-seeing men who signed the Declaration of Independence, and the statesmen who framed the national Constitution. They never conceived the idea that, in the short space of eighty-four years, our population would have increased from three to thirty million; that our territory would have occupied a geographical area of three million three hundred thousand square miles; and that the taxable property of our prosperous and industrious people would have increased to the enormous sum of \$40,000,000,000; that our foreign trade would have advanced from \$8,000,000 to \$800,000,000 annually; that the States of the Union would have numbered thirty-three; and that all civilized nations would have bowed in humble reverence before the supremacy of our power. Such, at this day, is the position that the North American Republic occupies in the great family of nations.

But could they again have lifted the veil of that mysterious future, and have seen that, in 1860 and 1861, in the very midst of such unparalleled prosperity, we should have been falling to pieces, and crushed out of existence by the weight of our own power, they would have shrunk from the importance and responsibility of their work, and left us to struggle on in our oppression to a foreign yoke; and their pens would have fallen powerless and paralyzed from their hands, could they have imagined for a moment that, at this day, surrounded by such exalted advantages, commanding such profound respect, we should, for such light and trifling causes, and by our own overtacts, have placed ourselves upon the very verge of destruction and dissolution; could they have thought that, at so early a period of our country's history, we should have brought upon ourselves the contempt of other nations, and that they would be laughing at our calamities, and mocking when our fear cometh, and that they would be smiting the demonic smile of delight because our destruction is coming upon us like a whirlwind. Even with all the defects that can be traced out by the most fervid imagination, do we not owe all that we are, that we have been, or that we will be in all future time, to the Union, as we have received it from our noble ancestry? We, sir, are responsible for

its safe transmission to our immediate successors; and they again to theirs, until it reaches, by lineal and collateral descents, the most distant futurity. We have in it no other title than a life-estate, and have no right to lay upon it violent hands, and break the chain that is to carry it to our children and our children's children, to the remotest period of time.

Mr. Speaker, the day has gone by when we may manufacture political capital from passing events; for the time has fairly arrived when all true patriots must throw aside all political distinction and difference, and meet together upon a common platform, and exert our whole energies to the utmost tension to save our sinking country from utter ruin and desolation. He who now refuses to do so is recreant in his duty to his country, to his God, and to all posterity; for the mysterious Mover of nature, the universal Lord of being, that God that in the immensity of his works directs the movements of all nations, will hold this people responsible for the preservation of our national privileges. We pray God that in this case, as in all others, He may make the wrath of man to praise Him, and that the remainder of wrath He may restrain; and that future generations may be spared the pain of serious contemplation over the ruined splendor of our achievements and the memory of our fallen greatness. We know that all human power cannot prevent the dictates of destiny, which is the voice of Divinity. Sir, every lover of his country should humble himself in sackcloth and ashes, that our doom, which seemingly is sealed, may be averted, as was ancient Nineveh, even after the prophet of God, by his express commands, had proclaimed her immediate and terrible destruction.

If we allow this nation to be destroyed, when we have the power within our own hands to perpetuate it, history will hold us responsible; and no argument that we can now place upon record will be sufficient to hush to silence the voice and judgment of an outraged and defrauded posterity. And though, under the heat and excitement of the hour, we may think the cause sufficient to justify the effect, yet, in the estimation of a cool and collected posterity, the cause will be considered but as the dust of the balance; and they will justly consign to perpetual infamy the memory, not only of those who did the act, but of all those who did not exert all the energies conferred upon them in its prevention. Upon the members of the Thirty-

Sixth Congress of the United States rests the destiny of this Republic; and to you the future historian will point perpetually either the finger of scorn and contempt, or will deeply inscribe your names upon the dial-plate of our country's records as the sure gnomon that is to indicate upon its face its perpetual motions through the annals of time.

You cannot screen yourselves behind the flimsy gauze of a want of example; for the last eighteen hundred years have borne down before them the wreck of empires, kingdoms, and republics. They have risen, culminated, and fallen; and can we close our eyes against the causes which have brought about such fatal revolutions; and can we fail to profit by their precept, and evade the rock upon which they split? And do they not stand as buoys and beacon lights even in their darkness and desolation to point us to a surer harbor of safety? Six stars of various magnitude have glided solemnly, though certainly, from our constellation, where, but a few days since, they reposed in peaceful security in their places; and nine others are showing evident signs of the disturbance of the center of their system; and yet, we are merely disinterested and deliberate spectators of this disruption, while the whole civilized world is looking with horror and astonishment upon our inactivity and indifference. And again, sir; heretofore the genius of the nation has always been sufficient for every emergency; and this can be successfully met, if we present before it but a bold front. I have tried to study the destiny of the Republic. I have tried to examine, carefully and candidly, the causes of the present discontent and distrust; and I now believe that none that have yet transpired have been sufficient to justify secession and separation. And I believe the national Government possesses the inherent power, by the laws and Constitution of the United States, to prevent a State or States from seceding, and to bring any State back into the Union, even after its separation. But I believe, also, that every means should be resorted to, within the grasp of our power, to bring back the erring member into the family of States before an appeal to force. It is the duty of the statesman and patriot to examine thoroughly the causes of the existing evils, whether they are either real or imaginary, and to act at once, without hesitation or delay, and remove and correct them.

I would understand that this Union is a contract: that no State can come into the Union without the consent of the other States; and once she takes her stand as one of the parties of this Confederacy, she cannot leave it without the consent of the other States; and any attempt to do so is a violation of the contract. And, as we understand it, every wrong has its remedy; and if that be so, the only question is, how that remedy shall be enforced? Now, I admit to the fullest extent the sovereignty of the people, and the rights of the States; yet, when they come into the Union, and give in their adherence to the Federal Government, they yield up certain rights for the benefit of the whole; and one of these rights given away, is their right, by their own consent, to resolve themselves back into their original element at any time, and at their own pleasure. Then, sir, every individual, yes, every State, should be held to strict obedience to the Constitution and laws of the United States, while the legislative enactments

of the national Government are in accordance with her own Constitution.

Sir, it would be futile to attempt to close our eyes against the danger to which we are this day exposed. But what has led us to our present perilous position? Why are we this day standing, as it were, upon the very verge of our national ruin? It can all be traced to the direct violation of the laws and Constitution of our national Union.

Now, the Constitution of the United States makes express provision for the recapture of fugitives from labor; and in pursuance of that provision of the Constitution, the national Legislature, in 1793, passed a fugitive slave law; and that act, for the purpose of making it more effective, was amended or reconstructed in 1850. In every case in which that act has come before any court of competent jurisdiction they have always pronounced it constitutional; and even before the President would place his signature to that act, he presented the question of its constitutionality to his Attorney General, (Mr. Crittenden,) at that day, as now, one of the most masterly statesmen and best lawyers in the Union; and he, after due reflection, pronounced the act constitutional. The Supreme Court of the United States have again and again pronounced the same judgment upon the same act.

Sir, it is an undeniable fact that the execution of this law has been obstructed in every manner that could be devised by the most masterly intellects in the Republican party. And again, sir, twelve sovereign States of this Union have interposed their legislative authority to prevent and obstruct the execution of that law. Now, this is nullification to the very fullest extent; and these States are as guilty as was South Carolina in 1833. They have set an example of the violation of law that is returning upon their own heads with an irresistible fury. They have opened the flood-gates of disobedience, that is about to sweep before it to certain destruction all the elements of a well-organized Government.

If a State reserved to herself the right to secede from the Confederacy, the conditions upon which she intended to secede should have been clearly defined at the time she entered the compact; and then each State would understand upon what conditions each of the other members of the family occupied their positions within the common circle. And if a State comes into the Union reserving to herself the tacit right to withdraw from the compact whenever her rights, in her own estimation, have been violated, it is a fraud upon the other contracting parties. Now, admit the right of a State to secede at pleasure, or even allow her to be the judge of the causes sufficient to warrant her separation, and it is the end of all government, and system and order are thrown into chaos and confusion. The Constitution of the United States provides for the admission of new States into the compact, but nowhere, either by word or even implication, does that instrument make provision for the secession of a State or States; and hence any attempt at the same is a direct violation of that article. That instrument was intended to bind together the States, and each one is an additional link in the great chain. All civilized society is based upon strict obedience to law, and hence the necessity of establishing proper tribunals to which individual citizens can resort to have their rights

established and their wrongs redressed. And no single individual can be allowed to avenge his own supposed injuries, for, in such a case, society could have no guarantee for its safety a single day, and courts and juries would become a nullity. If a State within the Confederacy supposes that the peace and safety of herself and the peace and safety of her institutions are endangered, by remaining longer within the Union, she should, at least, submit her causes of complaint before some disinterested umpire, and leave it to the judgment of the same, after full examination of all the evidence in the case. This Union, under our Constitution and laws, was intended to be perpetual, and hence their silence upon all questions involving the right of separation.

Now, sir, it was the design of the framers of our national Government that we should live together in perfect peace and harmony. And however obnoxious the peculiar institutions of one section may be to the particular training and education of the others, it is no just excuse for complaint; but, upon the other hand, they are, under that tacit allegiance they owe to the laws and Government of the nation, not only bound to tolerate their existence, but to preserve and protect them in their full use and occupation. And had this idea been kept steadily before the public mind, and had it always been faithfully and fervently obeyed and adhered to, we should this day have been occupying that proud position which has heretofore so emphatically characterized us as a nation; and we would have still been living in that harmonious union which was intended for us by our ancestors even before the foundation of our free and enlightened institutions. That great statesman, Andrew Jackson, says, in his celebrated proclamation in the case of South Carolina, that—

"In our colonial state, although dependent on another Power, we very early considered ourselves as connected by common interest with each other. Leagues were formed for common defense; and before the Declaration of Independence, we were known in our aggregate character as THE UNITED COLONIES OF AMERICA. That decisive and important step was taken jointly. We declared ourselves a nation by a joint, not by several acts; and when the terms of our Confederation were reduced to form, it was in that of a solemn league of several States, by which they agreed that they would collectively form one nation for the purpose of conducting some certain domestic concerns and all foreign relations. In the instrument forming that Union, is found an article which declares that 'every State shall abide by the determinations of Congress on all questions which, by that Confederation, should be submitted to them.'"

But it is now too late to reason upon these important questions, for I fear that the armless hand of destiny is tracing our inevitable destruction upon the wall in legible characters, too plain to be misunderstood, and that it will require no Daniel to be brought forth from his prison to the palace to give them their true interpretation.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us examine the history of the past to see if we can discover the causes which have contributed to bring about the dangers which now threaten to mingle in one promiscuous ruin our happy and prosperous country. Let the question be seriously asked, why it is that States are seceding from the Union, and that this great Confederacy—the masterpiece of the most illustrious men that ever graced or honored this or any other nation—has been torn asunder? These present difficulties are not the spon-

taneous production of a day, but of the increasing and untrifling threats, taunts, and insults of years. Bad faith, dishonesty of law, and a host of other evils, have brought upon us our present alarming and truly appalling condition. In pursuance of that provision of the Constitution for the recapture of fugitives from labor, Congress, in 1793, defined the mode, manner, and means of recapture; and, in 1850, passed an act, amendatory of that act, making it more effective in its operations.

Then I ask, has this law been obeyed and enforced in the northern States? Every one who is acquainted with the history of the country, is ready to answer in the negative. It is these acts of disobedience upon the part of the northern States, that are so rapidly obscuring the two sections from each other, and digging an impassable gulf between people that should have always been one, and which demands at the hands of all loyal and law-abiding citizens an open condemnation and reproach. Twelve of the northern States have not only refused to enforce its provisions, but have actually passed laws in direct violation of its spirit and letter, and in hindrance of its execution. When a State interposes its legislative authority to obstruct the due execution and enforcement of one of the constitutional acts of our National Legislature, she is as guilty of nullification as was South Carolina in 1833, when she interposed her legislative authority in obstruction of the revenue laws of the United States. However obnoxious a law may be to our own sense of right and wrong, we, for the peace and safety of the nation, should strictly obey until the same is repealed, or its obnoxious features are removed by the power that created it. If we intend to set at naught the laws of the State and nation to which we look for protection and safety because they do not meet our preconceived and predetermined notions of justice, let us cease to condemn the pirates that infest our high seas, plunder our vessels, murder the crews and unoffending passengers; let us cease to condemn the midnight assassin that plunges his dagger to your heart merely to get possession of your purse; let us cease to condemn the whole catalogue of crime; for it is only a violation of law, without which it would cease to be criminal. When we place ourselves in such a situation, we are upon a political sea without compass or polar star. Listen to what the hero of New Orleans says upon that question, in the same proclamation:

"I consider, then, the power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by one State, incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed."

Such was the opinion of Andrew Jackson at that day, and that attempted nullification of the laws of the United States he fearlessly and promptly suppressed; and for that act, more than any other of his life, he has received the applause and approbation of the people of the whole Union.

Then, sir, in this case, it is very evident that the northern States were the aggressors; and, if they really, at heart, desire the preservation of the Union, let them first correct the errors at home. Let them do equity before they demand equity at the hands of others. Let them come into court with clean hands and pure hearts; for they laid the foundation of the present difficulties and dangers

that now beset us, by the nullifying acts of their own Legislatures. Let the northern States immediately and without delay repeal the obnoxious laws that now are on their statute-books. Let them cease to obstruct the enforcement of the fugitive slave law. Let the executives of those States respond promptly to the legal demand of the southern States, and yield up the fleeing criminal to justice to be tried by the laws of the States which he has violated, and not undertake to obstruct the settled comity of States by the interposition of pettifoggery technicality. Let them cease their incessant abuse, vilification, and misrepresentation of their southern brethren. Let them cease to make crime honorable by holding out rewards and inducements for its commission. Let them cease to commission and send forth their emissaries to stir up the unsuspecting slave to insurrection, to murder, rape, arson, and all other crimes known and recognized by the calendar, not that they have the slightest interest in the happiness and welfare of the slave, but that they may use his condition for political effect. Let them cease to entice the slave from his master, and to remove him beyond his reach and control. Let them cease to endanger the liberty and happiness of twenty-six million people to obtain that of four. Let them not stand up in the Halls of the national Legislature and boast that they are eighteen million strong, and they are prepared in their strength for their southern brethren if they do not submit to such terms as they may dictate. Let them themselves be loyal to the laws, the Constitution, and Union, before they demand and enforce loyalty at the hands of others. Let them do these things; for every evil which I have enumerated is in existence among them, and not one has, in the slightest degree, been exaggerated.

We have attempted thus honestly and fairly to portray to the public mind the undeniable evils that exist in the northern States; and for the safety and preservation of the Union, we are decidedly in favor of bringing to bear upon them all the legal and constitutional powers of the national Government for their suppression. There are two little States of this Union whose incessant disloyalty has disturbed the harmony of the whole, more than all the others combined. They are always imagining that the hand of the oppressor is upon them, and that their rights and liberties are always endangered unless they separate themselves from the Confederacy, place themselves in a posture of defense, and protect themselves against the assaults and tyranny of the whole force of the Union. Now, sir, there is no man who could have a more exalted opinion of their bravery and independence than myself; but it seems to me they too frequently consider themselves insulted to have some plausible pretext upon which they may have the privilege of insulting the whole balance of the Union. From 1808, at the time of the embargo, up to 1815, the close of the last English and American war, Massachusetts exhibited so much disloyalty, and so frequently threatened to separate herself from the Confederacy, that the English nation, presuming that she was in earnest, actually sent a fleet to her assistance, and offered to take her in charge; but as soon as she beheld the flag of her ancient enemy, she immediately returned to her allegiance under the national flag, which is always the safest and most exalted po-

sition that any State can possibly occupy. During the war of 1812, the whole New England States rejoiced at the success of the British arms, and again and again mourned over American victories. Their journals were loud in their applause of the cause of the enemy, and bold and open in condemnation of the success of their own countrymen; and the battles of New Orleans and the lakes were hailed by them as harbingers of evil and iniquity, simply because they drove from the nation its enemies, which they had become to regard their special friends. And again: Massachusetts placed upon her records a resolution at that time, which we will not quote here, for it was expunged in 1824, but which has placed upon her fair escutcheon a stain which cannot be effaced through the annals of time.

Mr. Speaker, again, at the time the great State of Texas was taken into the Union, this little State became so exasperated because she was not exclusively consulted upon the question, that, while that great State was coming in upon one side, and swelling to a vast extent this mighty empire, she was threatening to leave upon the other side, and break up the equilibrium of the Union. And to make a full exhibition of her obstinacy in the case, she actually placed upon her State records these resolutions:

"1. *Resolved*, That Massachusetts has never delegated the power to admit into the Union States or Territories without or beyond the original Territories of the States and Territories belonging to the Union at the adoption of the Constitution of the United States; and that in whatever manner the consent of Massachusetts may have been given or inferred to the admission of the States already, by general consent, forming part of the Union, from such territory, the admission of States, in the judgment of Massachusetts, forms no precedent for the admission of Texas, and can never be interpreted to rest on powers granted in the Constitution.

"2. *Resolved*, That there has hitherto been no precedent of an admission of a foreign State or foreign territory into the Union by legislation; and as the powers of legislation granted in the Constitution of the United States to Congress do not embrace a case of the admission of a foreign State or foreign territory, by legislation, into the Union, such an act of admission would have no binding force whatever on the people of Massachusetts."

And, again, on another occasion, they passed the following:

"*Resolved*, That Massachusetts hereby refuses to acknowledge the act of the Government of the United States authorizing the admission of Texas, as a legal act in any way binding her from using her utmost exertions in cooperation with other States, by every lawful and constitutional measure, to annul its conditions and defeat its accomplishment."

Now, sir, does she not expressly state there that she will not be bound by the acts of the national Congress? That although passed by the people's representatives in Congress assembled, which was presumed to be the voice of the people themselves, and although it received the signature of the President of the Union, yet she takes upon herself the responsibility of repudiating the whole thing, simply because it does not happen to meet her views of national policy?

Mr. Speaker, is not this a direct disobedience of law, and are we not this day witnessing the fearful results of such destructive disloyalty, in the breaking up of the mightiest nation upon heaven's footstool?

But, sir, we would suppose that these New England States, with the great State of New York, think that the whole moral and political condition of the nation was intrusted exclusively to

them; and in all the Pharaaical sympathy of their souls, take upon themselves the responsibility of the same, without even the slightest idea that they themselves have a single moral evil among them, or a single political sin to answer for. Did they ever think that their own common prisons are crowded to overflowing with criminals, and that the State prisons of New York contain more convicts than all the penitentiaries of all the southern States?

Mr. SICKLES. Mr. Speaker, let me say to my friend from Ohio, that I have not examined the statistics of the prisons; but if it be as he states it, I have to say they do not all come from the State of New York.

Mr. HOWARD, of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I will admit that my friend, or the people of his State, have never stopped to study the moral condition of their own State; but they are very careful in the exhibition of the sins of other people; for, in the self-righteousness of their souls, they have never supposed there was any iniquity at their own doors.

Mr. GOOCH. Mr. Speaker, let me say to my friend from Ohio, that the reason why there are so many convicts in the State prison of Massachusetts is because all persons that ought to be there are there: while I cannot say the same for other States.

Mr. HOWARD, of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, do I understand my friend from Massachusetts to say that all persons are in prison in his State who ought to be there? If that be the case, allow me to ask him if there is not a great part of his population there, then? [Laughter.] But, Mr. Speaker, it is not my province to cover up the evils of the people of any part of this Union; for I would warn these seceding southern States to be careful and thoroughly examine the whole question, to see if the case will justify the effects, not in their own estimation, but in the estimation of posterity, who is to be your judge: for recollect that Massachusetts and other disloyal States might have thought at the time that their injuries were sufficient, and that they were suffering unbearable injustice at the hands of their country; but they now feel that they have placed upon themselves a stain that cannot be effaced and washed out by time and a faithful repentance.

And such will be the fate of these seceding States; and such will be the imputation cast upon all who contribute the smallest iota in the breaking up of this glorious Union of States. Look, sir, at their prosperity since the beginning of the Government; their trade has increased from \$3,000,000 to \$350,000,000; their wealth has advanced to \$20,000,000,000; their population from one and one half to twelve million; her geographical area is nine hundred thousand square miles, and her prosperity has been unparalleled; her national position unequalled for natural advantages, and her political greatness is unrivaled. And how has she thus swelled to such magnificent magnitude? All under the benign influence of the national Government, and all under the protection of the national flag; and can she thus break up the one and insult the other?

This is the best Government upon the face of the earth; and we do not believe that any State can find a just and sufficient cause to separate herself from it. South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Geor-

gia, Louisiana, and Florida, have recently, in solemn convention assembled, passed ordinances of secession, and no longer consider themselves as part and parcel of this great Confederacy of States. The whole nation seems to be agitated and appalled from center to circumference; and a revolution solemnly, though certainly, seems to be making rapid strides in our midst. Now, sir, what has either one of these seceding States suffered at the hands of the Federal Government, to thus, without cause or provocation, break up a union of States that gives protection, not only to every State, but every citizen of every State?

What is the reason assigned by each one of those States for the fatal and important step so hastily taken? The election of Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States, who is a Republican. And we must say that, however much we regret the occurrence of that fact, yet it is no just cause for the step thus taken. Now, no citizen even of those States can deny that Mr. Lincoln was legally and constitutionally elected to that high position; and that being the case, it is not only the duty of every law-abiding citizen to tacitly submit, but to lend all aid in his solemn inauguration according to the due forms of law, and then to await patiently the development of his administration. And then, if it does not, like the dews of heaven, fall alike upon all classes, then, and not till then, let our voices be heard. And if that is done, and the President should ever attempt any overt act by which he should even attempt to interfere with the established institutions of any section, we pledge the sympathy and support of a half million of freemen to their protection and support from the Northwest. We think that it is going a step too far to presume, in the advance of taking his seat, that the Executive will take any measures to apply to practice the irrepressible conflict doctrine, and under that violent presumption to lay violent hands upon the Union of the States. We regret sincerely the success of the Republican party in the recent presidential campaign; but we must acknowledge that it has all the forms of law to support it.

We believe the seceding States do not pretend to be acting upon anything which has already transpired, but upon that which is to occur; and they are only fearful that the incoming Administration will do something which will operate deleteriously upon their peculiar institution, and which is to result in its final extinction. The President elect has said that slave and free States cannot exist together; that they must all become one or the other; that they were incompatible in principle; and must one or the other yield. But, sir, every intelligent man must know that, although that assertion was made by Mr. Lincoln, and that upon that assertion the Republican party seized upon him, and, under the excitement of the hour, elected him President of the United States, yet it is false, and the whole experience of our constitutional existence proves it to be false; for there are at this day more slave States than the whole Union contained, both free and slave, in its inception, besides a greater number of free States even than slave. Then, sir, no region of this nation, whatever may be its peculiar institutions, has anything to apprehend from a political principle based upon an untruth.

Mr. Speaker, I am truly rejoiced to know that

my colleague [Mr. SHERMAN] has at last come to the conclusion that, for the safety and preservation of this Union, the Constitution must be observed and the laws must be enforced. And I regret that the whole Republican party had not discovered that important fact long since, for it would have saved this nation from its present perilous crisis. Then, sir, I cannot believe that any of these seceding States had a just, or at least sufficient, cause for so hastily and abruptly breaking off their connection with this Confederacy; for we consider it as a self-evident proposition that ours is the best system of Government ever produced by human ingenuity for the happiness and prosperity of any people, and all who cannot live within its pale and precincts do not deserve to have a Government. And those who stand upon this floor and talk so loudly about its oppression, its tyranny, its corruption, and its unequal working, are only acting under the misguided and uncertain effects of a heated imagination. Condemn not our institutions—for they offer equal rights to all, and monopoly and oppression to none—for by so doing you are casting an imputation upon your own ancestry, and offering an insult to the spirit that conceived and the genius that brought forth the most complete plan of popular rights that has ever been devised; and which, like a political earthquake, is shaking the solid foundation of European thrones. Let our glorious sun be extinguished in the political firmament, and it will be succeeded by a long political night, the darkness of which will only be dispelled by the splendid dawn of the morn of that grand millennium that is to renovate the world.

Sir, there are no conditions upon which I, or the constituency which I have the honor to represent, can give up this Union; and I would be recreant to the duty which I owe to myself, to them, and to all posterity, if I were in the slightest degree to favor such an idea. And in order that I may be clearly understood, I believe that this Government possesses the power within itself to perpetuate its own existence: for if it does not, or if it never did, or if the salt has lost its savor, the sooner it is known the better; the sooner it is thrown out and trodden under foot of men, of aspirants, of demagogues, the better. We ought not for another day to be thus placing our exalted hopes of empire upon the baseless fabric of this vision.

What is our condition to-day? The credit of our nation sacrificed and destroyed by the spirit of faction; and whereas but three months ago we could have commanded the confidence and coffers of Europe to the extent of \$100,000,000, at the very smallest rate of interest, we cannot to-day keep up our current expenses, in loans from our own citizens, at the heavy rate of twelve per cent. Her trade is paralyzed, her industry checked, her citizens thrown out of employment, her manufacturing establishments stopped, her merchants and business men clamoring, and her agricultural interests, the certain source of her real wealth, completely prostrated. Her States seceding, her ports, arsenals, forts, castles, and dock-yards seized, her vessels taken and fired into, her flag torn from its place, insulted, and hurled to the dust; and all by the madness of faction, and our people seemingly bent upon their own ruin.

Mr. Speaker, are we thus suddenly to be cut

off without hope, and destroyed without remedy? I believe, for the present, it is the duty of the Government to protect her property, to keep open her ports and collect her revenue; and, if that is coercion, we are for coercion to that extent. My colleague, [Mr. PENDLETON,] in his masterly and eloquent speech and his most ingenious and able argument, mistook the whole cause of the American Revolution upon which he based his elegant and eloquent remarks. Did the American people refuse to pay their taxes? Did they refuse to pay the revenue? Did they refuse to pay their duties? Did they refuse these obligations to the English Government? They did. But what was the cause? It was because these things were imposed upon them without their consent, and it was taxation without representation. They had laws put upon them which they had no say in making, and the enforcement of which was undertaken against a free and independent people without their consent; and they did just what they ought to have done; they resisted; and in that bold resistance they received the sympathy of all civilized nations and the support of the empire of France.

But, sir, has not every State an equal representation in the national Legislature? Is the people of any section taxed without representation; and have not all the revenue laws found upon our statute-books been passed by this Congress, and received the signature of the Executive of the Union? Why, sir, so jealous is this Government of the rights of the whole people, that the Territories, which in reality are our colonies, and occupy about the same position to us that we in our colonial condition sustained to the English Government, are exempt from the obligations of taxation; and, because they have not a full representation upon this floor, the whole expenses of the government of a Territory are defrayed by the national Government. And, with all due deference to the opinions of my distinguished colleague, I must consider it as unjust to this magnificent Government, and to the constituents of every Representative upon this floor, to even compare the workings of our free institutions to the tyranny and oppression of the English Government, which aroused the outraged and insulted colonies to a successful resistance. The American Revolution is the most brilliant and glorious in history, simply because it was founded upon right and justice and resistance to tyrants. The present secession movement is beneath the dignity of the American people, because it presents the humiliating spectacle to the world of the bravest and most chivalrous people upon earth fleeing in the advance of a mere ghost of tyranny, a specter painted upon the imaginary map of a distant future. Sir, did the American colonies act upon the unreal imagery of fancy, or the certain earnestness of a devoted truth?

Sir, in the present position of the crisis, I am opposed to coercing any of these seceding States, because I believe the tramp and tread of hostile armies would in reality place our people at a returnless distance from each other. And I believe that the whole question is yet within the reach and arrangements of the arts of peace. I believe that concession and compromise is now, as it has been on many occasions heretofore, potent in the full adjustment of every difficulty that now besets us. The satisfactory adjustment of this whole

question is yet within the hands of the Republican party; they hold in their hands the destiny of this mighty empire, and it yet remains to be demonstrated to the country and to the world whether they will hold on to their platform at the expense of the Republic,—whether they will hold on to the shadow at the expense of the substance. The eagle eye of a distracted and disturbed nation is upon them; and will they pour oil upon its troubled waters? And though the General Government may possess the full right to coerce a State, in the present disturbed condition of the southern mind, it would be ruinous in its results, for this seceding movement has the sympathy, and, in case of war, would have the support, of every southern State; and it would be bringing twelve million determined and brave people in collision with eighteen, and God only knows what would be the end of such a contest: but there is one thing certain, it would be the end of the American Republic.

Now, sir, there are propositions upon which these questions can be fully settled; and it is the duty of all parties to throw aside all platforms and come forward to the rescue. Let us resort to concession and compromise; for in this we have the precept and example of Clay and Webster, Calhoun, Cass, and Jackson, and all others of the great statesmen who have graced our halls of legislation. But, sir, we cannot pursue this all-absorbing question any further, but must turn our attention to the great West, the region which we more immediately represent. We cannot have secession; we cannot tolerate separation; we cannot listen to dissolution, for, in that event, we are ruined. And I say here to-day, that there are eight million people loyal to the Constitution and faithful to the Union, occupying that vast valley, who will never suffer the mouth of the Mississippi river to go beyond their control without the utmost strife. We are told here by gentlemen that the southern confederacy, when formed, do not design to close that natural highway against the great West. But stop, gentlemen, and listen to reason: when that southern confederacy is formed, it will be as much a foreign Power, as far as we are concerned, as France was at the time we made our purchase; it was then closed against us; and if it falls into the hands of a foreign Power, it will be again. But again: we are told that the necessities of trade will keep it perpetually open to the enterprising of all that mighty region which it drains. That may do for the sunshine of peace; but the clouds of war may overshadow, and then will you allow the free navigation of the Mississippi river? No, sir; our trade will be cut off; our products will rot upon our hands; and our whole commercial and agricultural interests will be ruined.

Again: we are asked if we doubt the honor and integrity of our southern brethren. We do not, while you remain part and parcel of us, but as soon as you separate without cause or provocation from us, we will have to regard you, as we regard all other foreigners, enemies in war, in peace, friends. And why are you this day refusing to trust the Republican party, upon a legal and constitutional election, with the reins of this Government? It is because it is sectional in its feelings and forms, and pledged to the doctrine of the most possible conflict, and to the final extermi-

nation of your own peculiar institution. Now, sir, there is no power upon earth to which we will silently yield to take peaceable possession of that river; for, gentlemen, at any hour, with a very slight expense of blood and treasure, you can close that stream against us, and ruin our peculiar institutions.

Mr. Speaker, it was at the urgent demand of the people of the Northwest that the mouth of the Mississippi was purchased. When we were but one half million people, we soon discovered that the products of that vast region must find an outlet at some point; and naturally turning our eyes upon the Mississippi, we saw at once that that was the outlet to that whole productive country; but it was in the hands of a foreign Power. We demanded its acquisition at the hands of Mr. Jefferson, who was then President of the United States. He examined the Constitution, and was led to the conclusion that that instrument did not vest the power in the General Government to make such a purchase. Sir, he was told that there was a power above the Constitution; and that was the voice of the people; and he looked again to that article, and he found that it was inserted there that "all powers not delegated by this Constitution are reserved to the States and people;" and finding nothing there prohibiting such an arrangement, he concluded he had the authority; and, under that supposition, he added to the Union that grand and fertile region, and thereby obtained for us the mouth of the Mississippi; and can it be imagined for a moment that, at this day, we will give it over to seceders to satisfy their insatiable thirst for power? We are now nine million people; our wealth has amounted to the sum of \$700,000,000; we have advanced more rapidly than any other region; we have the most loyal population in the country; we are for the Union of these States, the whole Union as it is; we are for each and every right of each and every citizen. And do they suppose that we will give up our right to that mighty stream? If they do, they are miserably mistaken.

Then, sir, let these vexed questions be settled at every hazard; for, viewing them in their most favorable light, they will bring upon the nation all the terrible consequences of civil war, bloodshed, and rapine. And are you willing, to-day, to have Lincoln, like the ancient emperors of Mexico, installed into the Chief Magistracy of the American Republic over a hecatomb of human sacrifices? Recollect that but a few months ago you were asserting that the election of your candidate would give peace and prosperity and happiness to the nation, and that confidence would be fully restored; and in the short space of three months after that event, are you demanding at the hands of the nation the powers of the Army and Navy, not to repel foreign aggression, but to butcher and destroy your own citizens. Sir, I do not believe that this can be yet; I do not believe that the end of the Republic is yet; but I believe there is yet sufficient moral force to repel all physical force, and that the nation will again be restored to its original exalted position among the nations of the earth, and yet remain as an evidence of the capacity of this people for self-government.

There are men yet living who were present at the birth of the Republic; and shall they survive as mourners around its grave? Shall the soldiers

of the Revolution survive to see the splendid fabric erected by themselves totter to its fall? for a few of them remain as the last rays of the setting sun upon the loftiest mountain peak. I believe that the nations demand at our hand, to settle this question in harmony and peace; and he who fails to do it, or determines to do otherwise, will bring upon himself the perpetual infamy of an injured and outraged people. The question is not, shall we adhere to our own political notions? but the question is, shall we be plunged in a civil war, or shall our nation still continue to shed forth the benign influences of peace?

Recollect that from the smallest causes sometimes flow the mightiest results. A princess of the house of Austria once carelessly remarked, that kings and potentates should pay no more attention to the voice of the people than to the barking of dogs; and this single observation so inflamed the public mind in France that that same princess, in the short space of a few years, saw the heads of kings and princes rolling from beneath the ax of the guillotine like autumn leaves after a desolate storm; and that storm did not cease till it had driven religion from its sanctuary, virtue from her empire, and government from existence, and finally brought about those terrible campaigns that desolated every division of Europe, and one million one hundred thousand men were at one time arrayed in hostile combat against each other. Then, I believe that this day this national Legislature holds within its control the destiny of thirty million people. Allow it to slip unimproved beyond your power; allow the American people an appeal to arms in the adjustment of their imagined rights, and you will be responsible for its results; for you hold in your hands the olive branch of peace.

What American citizen does not feel a glow of pride thrill his very soul to see the present Executive, in the declining days of his administration, standing by the Constitution and Union, enforcing the national laws, elevating our flag, and showing a determination at all hazards to preserve and perpetuate our national honor? Who does not admire the brave and chivalrous Major Anderson, who, in the integrity of his heart, with an iron will, a patriotic spirit, and a firm resolution, is standing by his own and his nation's glory? He will never allow that flag that he has been sent to protect to trail in the dust. Let him, as a gallant soldier, be firm and unwavering in the discharge

of his duty; for the burning focus of the nation's eye is upon him as one of her noblest sons. The indelible expression of human gratitude is coming up from every part of an injured nation; and the ceaseless homage of all posterity will identify his name with the history of his country.

I am willing to go for the Crittenden proposition, not that it meets my own political views—for they are in direct opposition to many of my notions of policy—but I believe that it will settle the present difficulties more fully and satisfactorily than any other before this body and the country. It comes from a statesman whose experience reaches through three fourths of our constitutional existence, and who certainly understands, as well as any other man living, the spirit of our institutions, and the theory of our Government. It comes from a statesman who is not ultra, but conservative, in his whole political policy, and in favor of the Constitution and Union, and the enforcement of the laws. It comes from a patriot who, like myself, does not believe that there is any question upon which he could consent to give up this Union; but who believes that all national questions are within the reach and adjustment of the arts of peace.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that if the patriots who lived in the past could speak from their last resting place, they would say to the national Legislature, settle that all-absorbing question, for it is incompatible in principle for people of the same blood to be disputing over a mere abstraction. If we could listen to the voice of the thirty million freemen who inhabit this great and growing country, it would fall like thunder tones on this Congress, commanding it to arrange this detestable question, for it is only uselessly disturbing the peace of a people that should live together in harmonious union. If we could listen to the two hundred million oppressed and downtrodden Europeans, they would say to us, perpetuate the American Republic in peace, for it is a terrible example to trembling tyrants upon their crumbling thrones. If we could hear the language of the oppressed of the whole civilized earth, they would say to this Congress, keep the American flag waving in triumph over your whole nation; for among whatever people it is seen, over whatever ocean it is flying, in whatever port it makes its appearance, all people are pointing to it, and exclaiming, Behold the flag of liberty, that is taking away the slavery and oppression of the world!

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