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SPEECH

OF

MR. GEORGE A. STARKWEATHER,

OF NEW YORK,

ON

THE MEXICAN TREATY.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 16, 1849.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, and having under consideration the bill to provide for carrying into execution, in part, the twelfth article of the Treaty with Mexico, concluded at Gaudalupe Hidalgo—Mr. STARKWEATHER obtained the floor.

Mr. ROOT appealed to the gentleman from New York to yield him the floor a moment, to enable him to propound a question to the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. STARKWEATHER having yielded—

Mr. ROOT said he would be obliged to the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, (Mr. VINTON,) if he would indicate to the Committee at what time he (Mr. V.) would move his gag resolution. He would like to know at what time the gentleman proposed to stop the debate, so that the Committee could run this discussion—if it was desirable to have one—into the evening a little.

Mr. VINTON, in reply, stated that this was an appropriation which necessarily involved the whole question respecting California and New Mexico. It was not his intention to close the debate upon this bill until gentlemen had the opportunity to express their views concerning the questions involved.

It would, however, be remarked, that there was one other appropriation bill which had not yet been acted upon by the House. There was another appropriation bill which had come back from the Senate with a very large amendment. The civil and diplomatic bill had also received, he learned, large amendments in the Senate; and what amendments might be made to the naval appropriation bill, he did not know. The House would see, therefore, that the bills which had gone out of the House, when they came back would necessarily occupy considerable time of the House.

He proposed, in order to meet the views of the Committee generally, to close the debate, say on Tuesday or Wednesday next; and in the mean time he would suggest that it might be as well that gentlemen should come here and have two or three evening sessions.

Mr. ROOT, (in his seat) Say Wednesday, at two o'clock.

Mr. VINTON said he would propose, as that was suggested, that this debate be closed on Wednesday next, at two o'clock—or rather, as that motion could not be made here, he would give notice that when he had a proper opportunity to do it, he would hereafter offer a proposition to close the debate on Wednesday next, at two o'clock; and, in the mean time, he would suggest that, by general consent—if gentlemen were prepared with their speeches—they have an evening session to-day, and that the House take a recess.

[Cries of "Agreed! agreed!"]

Mr. STARKWEATHER then resumed the floor, and proceeded to address the Committee, as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I shall offer no apology for asking the indulgence of the Committee to submit my views on the question of slavery, which, in fact, is the great question of the day.

I maintain, Mr. Chairman, first, that Congress has the constitutional power to extend its legislation over Territories belonging to the United States, and consequently to exclude slavery therefrom: Second, that slavery is a great political, social, and moral evil, in direct conflict with the fundamental principles

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of this Government, opposed to its growth, prosperity, and future welfare; and that therefore it follows, as a necessary and irresistible conclusion from the two first propositions, that Congress should adopt all constitutional measures to prevent its further extension. I am aware, Mr. Chairman, that my *first* proposition is denied by some gentlemen of high consideration and talents. The honorable gentleman from South Carolina, (Mr. RHETT,) in a labored, talented, and I must be permitted to add, very *ingenious* speech, delivered at the second session of the twenty-ninth Congress, assumed the position, and claims to have maintained it, that Congress has not the power to exclude the people of the Southern States from entering and colonizing with their slaves the Territories of the United States, and that the sovereignty of the several States existed in all its plenitude over Territories belonging to the United States, as much as within the States themselves. Having demonstrated this proposition satisfactorily, at least to himself, in a speech made at the first session of the present Congress, he said:

"At the last session of Congress, I endeavored to show that Congress had no power under the Constitution to exclude us (meaning the South and their slaves) from these Territories. I propose now to consider, *first*, Can the Territories by their legislation exclude us? and, secondly, are we excluded by laws of Mexico—or, in other words, are the inhabitants of our Territories, or Mexicans, sovereign in our Territories?

These last two propositions the honorable gentleman from South Carolina claims to have maintained and established. Well, sir, if Congress has not the constitutional right to exclude the South from occupying with their slaves these Territories belonging to the United States, and if they cannot be excluded by territorial legislation, and if they are not excluded by the laws of Mexico, I should like to know where this *sovereign right* to exclude or admit does reside. The answer given by the gentleman from South Carolina is "in the *several* States in all its plenitude."

Mr. Chairman, the South, by this mode of reasoning, literally break into the Territories with their slaves; and having thus broken in, *then* constitute an integral part of the inhabitants of the Territory. But what is their condition? They have no power, *according* to the reasoning of the gentleman, to legislate for themselves upon this question, or any other, until a government is provided for them. Congress cannot legislate for them—the States cannot legislate for them, for the reason that the sovereignty is in all the States coequally as tenants in common. What is to be done in such a dilemma as this? Unless there is some constitutional provision, some power somewhere, I see not but California and New Mexico may send up their petitions to Congress—as New Mexico has done—and pray for territorial governments to be provided for them, to protect them against the evils of slavery, in vain. Congress will be compelled to send back the chilling response, We have no constitutional power—it is not nominated in the bond. If the Territories press the right to legislate for themselves, the answer is, You *have* no constitutional right. If they press still further, and ask the States, where the sovereignty exists in all its plenitude, according to the gentleman's doctrine, to make some provision for them, the answer is, that this plenitude of sovereignty in the States is so nicely divided and balanced, that by a well-settled mathematical principal that *two* bodies meeting each other with equal momentum are put at rest, so this sovereignty is unavailable. Are the Territories, then, without hope and without remedy?

Mr. Chairman, I trust I shall be able to show, in the course of my remarks, that there is a constitutional remedy; and, in fact, I might venture to let the gentleman himself answer. He says:

"It [the Constitution] declares that the Territories belong to the United States. They are tenants in common, or joint proprietors and co-sovereigns over them. As co-sovereigns they have

agreed, in their common compact, the Constitution, that their agent, the General Government, may dispose of and make all the needful rules and regulations with respect to them; but beyond this, they are not limited or limitable in their rights; yet there can be no conflict, for none of the States can make any "rules and regulations" *separate* within the Territories. The rules and regulations prevailing will be made by all and obligatory on all, through their common agency, the Government of the United States. The only effect, and probably the only object of their reserved sovereignty, is, that it secures to each State the right to enter the Territories with her citizens, and settle and occupy them with their property, with whatever is recognized as property by each State."

It is true he also says:

"To dispose of or sell the public lands is the primary object. But can this be done without a government and laws which will assure the title to the settler, and protect the purchaser in the quiet and peaceable possession of the property we sell to him? Who will purchase land or emigrate to a territory when there is no safety for person or property? To fulfil, therefore, the commission given to Congress to sell the public lands in a Territory, it may fairly be inferred, as an incident, under the words "to make all needful rules and regulations," that "Congress may authorize and set up a restricted government in the Territories."

But, sir, this is begging the question. Where is the boundary line which marks the limitation of this power? Where does the power of Congress stop, and that of the Territory commence? Most certainly Congress has not only the power to regulate the form of government of the Territories, but also to reserve to themselves the right to approve or disapprove of any laws or regulations which may be passed by the legislative power which they have created. The territorial legislature has no power except such as is derived from Congress, and, therefore, all the laws must be considered as emanating from the United States, through their agent, the Congress of the United States.

I submit, therefore, Mr. Chairman, whether we are not, in fact, back in the argument to the very point of departure; that is, to the question of rules and regulations.

The honorable gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BAYLY) occupies the same position in reference to the power of Congress to legislate for the Territories. He says, "I wholly deny the power of Congress to legislate for the Territories in respect to their domestic affairs." He also denied the validity of the ordinance of 1787, and entered upon a long train of reasoning to show, that if the ordinance is considered a legislative act, then it is null and void, because the Congress of 1787 had no authority to pass it as such; and if it is considered a compact, then it is void for want of contracting parties. Having made these preliminary remarks, I propose to examine this question of constitutional power, as embraced within my first proposition.

By the third section of the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States, "Congress shall have power to dispose of, and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States." Now, it is maintained by gentlemen who deny the power of Congress to legislate for Territories, that inasmuch as this grant of power, to make rules and regulations respecting the territory, is connected with the words "or other *property* belonging to the United States," that therefore it follows conclusively, that the power to make such rules and regulations is confined to the territory as *property*, and does not and cannot by any fair construction extend to anything else. But I submit, Mr. Chairman, whether this is the fair construction of that portion of the Constitution to which I have referred. "The Congress shall have power to dispose of"—dispose of what? The public lands in the Territory. This is a perfect, independent grant. What else, sir? *And*, not *or*—"*and* to make all needful rules and regulations respecting it." It may be well to inquire here what is the meaning of the word *rule*. The first book put into my hands to read, as a student at law, was Blackstone's Commentaries. That learned commentator defines *law* to be a *rule* of *action* prescribed by the su-

preme authority, commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong. If this definition be correct, the terms *rule* and *law* are synonymous, and they *command* and *prohibit*. It is very obvious, therefore, that the grant of power to to make rules and regulations was not designed by the framers of the Constitution, and cannot by possibility be restricted to, or controlled by, the words "*or other property*;" but, on the contrary, must have been used in a broader sense, as applicable to the *acts* and *rights* of citizens within *such territory*. It would be absurd for Congress to make a rule or law for the *government* of *inert matter—land, territory*—commanding *it* to do, or prohibiting *it* from doing, *certain acts*. And yet the position occupied by gentlemen who advocate the restrictive sense of this clause in the Constitution, involves them in this very absurdity. That I am borne out in the construction which I have given to this section of the Constitution, appears to me to be obvious, from the fact also, as well as from other considerations, which I shall proceed by-and-by to notice, that the words *rules* and *regulations* are frequently used elsewhere in the Constitution as synonymous with the word *laws*.

Thus, in the *first* article, section 8: "Congress shall have power to *regulate* commerce with foreign nations; to establish a uniform *rule* of naturalization; to coin money and *regulate* the value thereof; to make *rules* for the government and *regulation* of the land and naval forces." And by article 4th, section 2d: "No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any *law* or *regulation* therein, be discharged from such service or labor," &c.

Again, sir, Virginia, in 1784, ceded to the United States her right and title to the Northwest Territory, on condition "that the States therein to be formed should be admitted *members* of the Federal Union, having the same *rights of sovereignty*, freedom, and independence, as the other States." The ordinance of 1787, which is similar to the ordinance introduced by Mr. Jefferson in 1784, and which I am informed is in his handwriting, was passed in July. It received the unanimous vote of all the States. It is as follows:

"And for extending the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty, which form the basis whereon these republics, their laws, and constitutions are erected; to fix and establish those principles as the basis of all laws, constitutions, and governments, which forever hereafter shall be formed in the said territory; to provide, also, for the establishment of States, and permanent government therein, and for their admission to a share in the Federal councils, *on an equal footing with the original States*, at as early a period as may be consistent with the general interest:

"*It it hereby ordained and declared by the authority aforesaid*, That the following articles shall be considered as articles of compact between the original States and the people in the said territory, and forever remain unalterable, unless by common consent."

Then follow the articles; the sixth article being as follows:

"There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said *territory*, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: *Provided, always*, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed, and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service, as aforesaid."

The States to be formed out of this territory, ceded by Virginia, were to have the same rights of *sovereignty, freedom, and independence*, as the other States. Virginia was represented in the Congress that passed this ordinance. Shall she now be permitted to say, that the sixth article of this ordinance deprived the States thus to be formed of any rights of sovereignty, freedom, or independence? The Convention which framed the Constitution was in session at the time of the passage of the above ordinance. The Constitution was not adopted, however, by the Convention, until September following. The Convention, with a full knowledge, as is reasonable to suppose, of the provisions of the ordinance which applied to the Northwest Territory, made no constitutional provisions inconsis-

tent with that ordinance ; but, on the contrary, conferred upon Congress the power of making all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory of the United States. The ordinance of 1787 had already provided for the Northwestern Territory, and it is therefore very obvious that the framers of the Constitution designed, not only to recognize the validity of that ordinance, as applicable to that territory, but to extend that grant of power without limitation, from the very fact that Congress was authorized to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory of the United States. The State of Virginia was represented in the Congress that passed that ordinance ; also, in the Convention that framed the Constitution. Besides, subsequently, and by act of the Assembly, passed December 30, 1788, Virginia consented to this very ordinance, and ratified and confirmed the same.

By what authority then, I ask, does Virginia now urge that this ordinance is null and void? Is she not precluded by her own acts from setting up this plea? It appears to me most clearly that she is.

Again: in 1790 North Carolina ceded to the United States that portion of her territory which comprises the State of Tennessee. The grant was made upon the condition "that no *regulation made or to be made* should tend to *emancipate* slaves." The peculiar phraseology of this condition is worthy of notice. The word used is *regulation:* "that no regulation *made* or to be made," so as to prevent any law then existing from attaching on the one hand, and at the same time prevent Congress from exercising that power which North Carolina must have supposed was clearly conferred in the grant "to make all needful rules and regulations respecting territory belonging to the United States." North Carolina has, therefore, by her own acts, given her construction to this grant of power contained in the Constitution? Will she abide by that construction? or will she now abandon it?

Again: the State of Georgia, in 1802, ceded to the United States the Mississippi territory, which provided that said territory should form a State, and be admitted into the Union upon the same conditions as is provided in the ordinance of 1787, with the exception of the sixth article, which prohibits slavery. Here, then, we have the construction which Georgia has given to this ordinance. That State could not then have supposed it was unconstitutional, or entertained the opinion that it was null and void. If so, why was the condition annexed to the grant?

The first Congress that assembled after the adoption of the Constitution, in 1789, recognized the validity of this ordinance. The preamble of the act to which I refer is as follows:

"Whereas, in order that the ordinance of the United States, in Congress assembled, for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio may *continue* to have full force and effect, it is requisite that certain provisions should be made to adapt the same to the present Constitution United States: therefore, Be it enacted," &c.

Now, if the ordinance was void, if the Constitution had abrogated it, then no provisions would have been necessary to adapt it to the present Constitution.

At a convention held at Vincennes, Indiana Territory, on the 28th December, 1802, over which General Harrison presided, a memorial was adopted praying Congress to suspend the sixth article of the ordinance of 1787 for the period of ten years, so as to permit the introduction of slaves born within the United States from any of the individual States. At the next session of Congress, (in 1803,) this memorial was read, and referred to the Committee of the Whole House; and the committee reported against the prayer of the memorialists.

In 1790, upon the question of committing the memorial of the Quakers on the slave trade, Mr. Madison said: "He adverted to the western country and the cession of Georgia, in which Congress have certainly the power to regulate the

subject of slavery, which shows that gentlemen are mistaken in supposing that Congress cannot *constitutionally* interfere in the business in any degree whatever."—(*Elliot's Debates, vol.* 4, *p.* 213.) But whether this right is conferred by the clause in the Constitution which I have been considering, or whether it is incident to the power to acquire territory, is not very material to my argument. The fact that it has been exercised ever since the organization of the Government, and the principles of the ordinance of 1787 applied to the Territories and several of the States, and has also received the sanction of Presidents Washington, and Adams, and Jefferson, and Madison, and Monroe, and Jackson, and Van Buren, and Polk, should afford satisfactory proof to every reasonable mind that this power has been constitutionally exercised.

The position which I have taken is sustained by elementary writers and sanctioned by the judicial tribunals of the country. I might cite numerous authorities, but I will only refer to the following :

" Whichever may be the source whence this power is derived, the possession of it is unquestionable."—1 *Peters' Reports*, 543.

Again :

" Rules and regulations respecting the territories of the United States : they necessarily include complete jurisdiction."—5 *Peters' Reports,* 44.

Chancellor Kent, in his Commentaries, volume 1, page 385, says :

" It would seem, from the various Congressional regulations of the Territories belonging to the United States, that Congress have supreme power in the government of them, depending upon their sound discretion."

Rawle, in his work on the Constitution, page 227, says :

" Congress has always been considered as entitled to regulate not only the form of government of the territory, but also to reserve to themselves the *approbation* or rejection of such laws as may be passed by the legislative power which they may establish. These laws are considered as emanating from the United States."

But, sir, I have another authority, which I think is conclusive : it comes from the fountain-head, the people—the source of all sovereignty. They have ratified and forever confirmed the principles of this ordinance. For what, I ask, Mr. Chairman, was the issue presented to the people to pass upon and decide in the late Presidential election ? It was, whether Congress had the constitutional power to make such rules and regulations in reference to the territories of New Mexico and California as would prohibit slavery from entering there ; and if so, whether such power should be exercised. Was there any other issue ? Does any one pretend there was any other issue ? Was there a word said during the canvass about a Bank of the United States ? Was there anything said about a protective tariff? Anything about the disposition of the proceeds of the public lands ? Anything in regard to the constitutional power of Congress to make appropriations for the improvement of our rivers, lakes, and harbors ? Anything in relation to the independent treasury ? These questions, or some of them, may have been incidentally adverted to, but no one will pretend that any issue was made in reference to either of them. Who, Mr. Chairman, made up this issue, and in what shape was it presented to the people for their approval or disapproval ?

The issue was made by the South. Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Virginia, and other slaveholding States, passed resolutions, in advance of the Baltimore Convention—for I am now speaking of the Cass party—that they would not support any men for the Presidency and Vice Presidency, unless they would clearly and unequivocally declare that they were opposed to the principles of the provisions of the Wilmot proviso. It was conceded that the North was entitled to the Presidential candidate. Several prominent men were spoken of. None, however, were to be taken on trust. The South understood their interest too

well to be caught. No Northern man could be nominated, under the operation of the two-thirds rule, without the aid of the South. The prize was a golden one—the temptation great. General Cass was induced, under these circumstances, to abandon, virtually, the position which he had occupied with so much credit to himself and satisfaction to the North, to address a letter to Mr. Nicholson, of Tennessee, virtually declaring himself in favor of the *extension* of slavery, and denying that Congress had any constitutional power to legislate upon the question in the Territories.

Here Mr. SAWYER interposed, and asked the gentleman from New York to read that portion of General Cass's letter which showed he was in favor of the extension of slavery.

Mr. STARKWEATHER said, certainly; and then proceeded to read, as follows:

"But there is another important consideration, which ought not to be lost sight of, in the investigation of this subject. The question that presents itself is not a question of the increase, but of the diffusion, of slavery. Whether its sphere be stationary or progressive, its amount will be the same. The rejection of this restriction will not add one to the class of servitude; nor will its adoption give freedom to a single being who is now placed therein. The same numbers will be spread over greater territory; and so far as compression, with less abundance of the necessaries of life, is an evil, so far will that evil be mitigated by transporting slaves to a new country, and giving them a larger space to occupy."

In the other portion of the letter to which I referred, General Cass, speaking of the constitutional power of Congress over this question, says:

"I do not see in the Constitution any grant of the requisite power to Congress."

Thus I repeat that General Cass expressed himself in favor of the extension of slavery. I do not stop here to consider the question, whether extension will promote increase: that is a proposition too plain to admit of argument.

Well, sir, in this state of things the Baltimore Convention meets; and in order to render this issue morally certain and to force it upon the country, *nolens volens*, the delegation from the State of New York were excluded from participating in the deliberations of that body: General Cass was nominated, according to the conditions of the bond, which had been signed, sealed, and delivered by the high contracting parties. The Democracy of the State of New York refused to ratify the contract. She was not a party to it; not even a witness to it. She was not wanted. The South was strong enough without her. In this state of affairs, the Democracy of the State of New York nominated Mr. Van Buren for their candidate, whose nomination was subsequently confirmed by the Buffalo Convention. No sooner had the State of New York refused to be controlled by Southern dictation and asserted her rights as a sovereign State, than Mr. Van Buren and his friends at the North were assailed and denounced by the South with the most opprobious epithets.

The honorable gentleman from Georgia, (Mr. IVERSON)—a State that has never cast its electoral vote for a Northern President—charged that Mr. Van Buren "had deserted the South and taken his stand in the ranks of its mortal enemies;" that he would "descend to the grave with the brand of *traitor* upon his forehead, bearing with him the contempt and scorn of all honorable men"—meaning Southern men, I presume. Sir, this was designed as a direct attack upon the State which I have the honor, in part, to represent. It is an indignity which, for one, I will not submit to in silence. Mr. Van Buren deserted the South! Sir, the South deserted him! In 1844, when Mr. Van Buren was a candidate, he had the united delegation from his own State, elected by general ticket, according to the custom of the Democratic party, for more than twenty years, which custom has never been changed by any legitimate authority. A majority of the convention was in favor of his nomination. The South had determined he should not be nominated. The two-thirds rule was put in operation to defeat him. He was no longer in favor with the South. He had written

the Texas letter. Mr. Van Buren must be sacrificed or the Southern policy would be endangered. The South, always true to their own interest, procured, by address and management, the nomination of Mr. Polk, of Tennessee.

What, I ask, was the conduct of the State of New York under these circumstances? Their own candidate had been defeated. Did New York desert the South then? No, sir. She came manfully into the field. She invested her whole political capital to sustain the issue which the South had made. She consented to withdraw from the Senate of the United States the only man who was equal to the emergency—Silas Wright—the eminent statesman, the profound jurist, the man whose very name was a host, and around whose standard the Democracy of the State of New York rallied as one man, with an energy and strength which defied all opposition. Sir, the banner was first unfurled in that campaign in the State of New York in my own little village. The names of Polk and Dallas, *Wright* and Gardner, were inscribed upon its ample folds. Under that banner we fought, under that banner we conquered. If any one inquired who James K. Polk was, we referred him to Silas Wright. But, alas! this eminent statesman, this great and good man is no more. He has gone, Mr. Chairman, to "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." His memory lives. It *lives*, and will continue to live, in the hearts of his countrymen. It is written on "memory's tablet, and will only disappear when recorded things are washed out by the stream of time." Sir, the South are indebted to the State of New York for the victory of 1844. And now, sir, what do we witness? The delegates from New York appear at the Baltimore Convention in 1848, fresh as it were from the field of victory. The armor of warfare had scarcely been flung aside, when, lo and behold! we were met at the very threshold by the South, and required to take a fresh oath of allegiance—allegiance to the South—that we would be true to the democratic cause, and faithfully and cordially support the nominees of the convention. This oath of allegiance was made the condition precedent of our admission. Sir, the North were alarmed, and that alarm was not without cause, as recent developments have clearly demonstrated. The South, however, were inflexible. They had the game, as they supposed, in their own hands. They could carry the election without New York. There were the conditions, and submission the only alternative. Sir, was there ever, could there ever by possibility *be* a greater indignity than this offered to a sovereign State? I thank God—for the honor of my State, of which I feel proud—that the condition was spurned from her with a dignity which truly became her character. The issue being thus made up, the whole patronage of the Administration was called into requisition to sustain it. Gentlemen of high standing and moral worth—gentlemen who had contributed largely to elevate the present Chief Magistrate to the position he now occupies, were turned out of office, not for official misconduct, not for incompetency, but because they dared to differ with the South upon the question of slavery, and their places filled with those more subservient to Southern views. Four country postmasters were turned out of office in my district, without consulting even their Representative, for the sole reason, and none other than that they differed with the Postmaster General in reference to the Presidential candidate. I have seen the papers on file, and made extracts from them. The charges are, that they were deserters from the democratic ranks—deserters, because they were opposed to the extension of slavery: that was the test—deserters! Why, sir, if that be desertion, then there are over one hundred and twenty thousand deserters in the State of New York. The deserters are more numerous than the regular army. If they keep on so, there will not be regulars enough by the 4th of March next to form a court-martial. And yet, sir, the Postmaster General, who was so particular as to recommend that newspapers should be dried before mailed, in his report at

the commencement of the present session, before the ink was dry upon the pen with which he had written the sentence of excommunication against these postmasters, holds the following language:

"It may not be inappropriate to remark, that those connected with administrative duties of this department could not but have observed that there has been for some years past a strong feeling pervading the country, that the system had been conducted by an organized corps, extending throughout the Union, into every neighborhood, under the control of politicians at the seat of Government, wielded with the view of promoting party purposes and party organization, rather than the business and social interests it was created to advance; that the offices were bestowed as the reward of partisan services, rather than from the merit and qualifications of those selected; and that each Presidential contest is to produce a new distribution of the offices, and hence embittered political contest are excited in almost every neighborhood, demoralizing in their tendencies, and injuriously affecting the purity of elections.

"Whilst such apprehensions are entertained by a respectable portion of the community, a want of confidence in the honesty and correctness of the officers, however pure and upright in their conduct, soon shows itself, seriously injuring the business of the offices, and bringing discredit upon the system itself. The post office system was designed for business purpose, for the cultivation of the social and friendly feelings among the citizens of the different sections of the Union, and should be in nowise connected with the party politics of the day. This will give that degree of confidence in its agents necessary to render it the most useful to the people.

"There does not seem any reason why this business and social agent of the people should be more connected with them than the officers of the courts of justice, or the accounting officers of the Government. If it were believed that the latter officers performed the duties assigned them with a view to the advancement of party purposes, public opinion would soon correct the evil. If the post office were alike exempt from political influence and party contests, public confidence would be maintained, and the best interests of the system promoted.

"It may well be worthy of consideration if these objects would not be advanced, should the Postmaster General be nominated by the President to the Senate for a specific term of years, be separated from the Cabinet, and only removable by impeachment, and the appointment of the principal subordinate officers for a like term of years be given to him; and to provide that no removal should be made except for good and sufficient cause, to be reported to each session of the Senate.

"I am, respectfully, your obedient servant, C. JOHNSON."

This, Mr. Chairman, is the position occupied by the newspaper-drying Postmaster General of James K. Polk's administration, which old Father Ritchie has proclaimed to the world will go out in a blaze of glory. Sir, notwithstanding all the efforts put forth to sustain the issue thus forced upon the country by the South, it has resulted in a most signal failure. This failure is chargeable to the South for deserting their Northern friends, and making an issue which they knew the North ought not and would not sustain, and which, as the result has shown, the South could not. General Cass, with all his popularity, sustained by party organization, and the patronage of the Administration, has been beaten upon this issue, and General Taylor elected upon it. The reasons are too obvious to be mistaken. The Northern Whigs supported General Taylor upon the ground that he would not interpose the Executive veto to any law Congress might pass prohibiting slavery in the Territories, and the Southern Whigs supported him because he was a Southern man, and could be relied upon with quite as much confidence as General Cass, whose mind had undergone such a sudden and mysterious change. On the other hand, the Northern Democracy could not support General Cass, for the reason that he had declared that Congress had no constitutional power to legislate upon the question of slavery, and, therefore, under his constitutional oath, would be bound to veto any law Congress might pass upon that subject. In addition to this, many of the radical democracy of the State of New York voted *directly* and openly for General Taylor; and the democrats of the South would not support General Cass, for the reason that his conversion was too sudden and miraculous to inspire them with confidence that he would adhere to his position. Thus, Mr. Chairman, I affirm that the sovereign people have proclaimed to the world, through the ballot-box, that they are opposed to the extension of slavery, and are in favor of the principles of the Jef-

fersonian ordinance of 1787. They have weighed the institution of slavery in the balance and found it wanting, and have written its sentence of condemnation upon the inner walls of the Temple of Liberty. It remains to be seen whether the will of the people is to be carried out. Gentlemen may struggle—they may change positions—they may temporize for the present—they may delay—but they will not escape the just indignation of an insulted people which awaits them. It were better for that man that a millstone were tied about his neck, and be cast into the depths of the sea, than for him to attempt to defeat the will of the people, or tarnish his country's honor for a mess of pottage!

But, sir, notwithstanding Congress has the constitutional power to legislate for Territories belonging to the United States, the expediency of such legislation by no means follows as a matter of course. The exercise of a power must be controlled and governed by the results to be produced. If the benefits to be derived to the country by the exercise of *this* power will not counterbalance the evil, then, in my judgment, it should by no means be exercised. The Constitution was ordained and established in order, among other things, to promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity.

This naturally leads me, sir, to the consideration of my second proposition—the influence of slavery upon the country, in a political, moral, and social point of view. It is not enough for the North to prove that their interests would be promoted by restricting slavery to its present limits. Nor is it sufficient for the South to show that their interests will be advanced by extending it to these Territories. Something more than this must be shown. This was designed for a perfect and perpetual Union. It cannot be perfect and perpetual unless the general interest is cared for. The South would hardly be willing to take the position, and attempt to maintain it, that although their interest might be promoted by the extension of slavery, that it would be right and just, if it could be shown that the aggregate interests of the whole would be materially impaired thereby. We are, then, to inquire, whether the extension of slavery is calculated to promote the general welfare of the country, elevate its moral character, and give strength and stability to our institutions. Does any one *believe this?* Can any one *believe it?*

Let us proceed in all candor to examine this question a little in detail. And here I beg gentlemen will understand that I am not passing any censure upon them, but looking at the influence of slavery upon the country. Comparisons are unpleasant, but sometimes necessary, by way of illustration. Were we to compare the value of the crops of the State of New York, the amount of funds invested in manufactures, the amount invested in merchandise, for any given period, with the value of the crops of Virginia, and the amount of funds invested in manufactures and merchandise in that State, I venture to say that the amount would be more than as five to one in favor of the former. In 1790, Virginia had ten representatives, and New York six. Now, New York has thirty-four, and Virginia fifteen. Here is a political power growing out of the increase of population. The reasons of this increase are obvious. If we look at the common school system, it will stand thus: The number of organized school districts in the State of New York, as appears by the returns for the past year, and as stated in the Governor's message, was 10,621; and the number of children taught in the common schools during the year was 775,723, being an increase of 27,336 over the number reported the preceding year. The number of unincorporated and private schools reported is 1,785, in which 32,256 children were taught, making the aggregate of 807,979 children who receive instruction in the common and private schools of the State. The amount of public moneys paid for teachers' wages during the year was $639,008, and the amount paid on rate bills for teachers' wages was $466,674 44, being an aggregate of $1,105,682 44.

The number of schools in one hundred and twenty-one counties and towns in Virginia, as appears from the American Almanac, was 3,718. The total number of children educated in one hundred and twenty-seven counties and towns was 29,122. The amount expended for tuition of poor children, including books, compensation to officers, and all other expenses, was only $70,306 08. I leave gentlemen to account for this difference. "Intelligence is the life of liberty." It is the fountain-spring of all the future hopes of the Republic. It is one of the main pillars upon which the permanency and perpetuity of the government depends.

Again, Mr. Chairman, if we contemplate this question of slavery in another aspect, we cannot fail to see its true character. If slavery did not now exist in this country, where, I ask, is the member in this House who would dare rise in his seat and propose to engage in this unholy traffic? If he is here, let him stand up. Sir, the very proposition would be revolting to all the better feelings of the heart. No one at the present day could come to the deliberate conclusion to engage in such a traffic. We should be told that it was an inhuman traffic. The evils of slavery and the enormity of such a traffic would be portrayed in all their appalling features; it would be condemned in strains of irresistible eloquence from all quarters, and none would be more eloquent in its condemnation than the South. They would tell you that a traffic which proposes to deal in human beings as merchandise—a traffic which separates husband and wife, parent and child, brothers and sisters, and puts them up in market overt, to be struck off to the highest bidder, and taken from their homes into a distant land to drag out a wearisome and miserable life of toil and bondage, without the hope of release, and without the hope of visiting the land of their birth and seeing those they once loved—was a damnable traffic, and against the laws of God and humanity, and could never receive their sanction! And yet, how strange it is! gentlemen are advocating the continuance of this very slave traffic; and the only apology urged for such a course is, that slavery exists without their fault, and therefore the traffic may be lawfully prosecuted for their profit. In the name of God, and for the honor of our common country, I beg gentlemen to pause.

Mr. Chairman, I might here go into a catalouge of evils, to show the influence of slavery upon the country in a social and moral point of view; but I forbear, and will content myself, upon this occasion, by referring to the opinions of others.

Mr. Jefferson said:

"There must be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people, produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions—the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one-half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part and the *amor patriæ* of the other. With the morals of the people their industry is also destroyed."

Washington said, in a letter addressed to Robert Morris:

"I can only say, that there is not a man living, who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be done, and that is, by the legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall not be wanting."

General Lafayette, in speaking of the prospects of this country, said:

"While I am indulging in my views of American prospects and American liberty, it is mortifying to be told, that in that very country a large portion of the *people* are slaves. It is a dark spot on the face of the nation. Such a state of things cannot always exist."

Again, he said:

"I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery."

Again:

"The *character* of the institution of slavery may be understood from the laws regulating it. I will refer to some of these laws. When any sheriff or other officer shall serve an attachment on slaves, horses, or other live stock, and the same shall not be immediately replevied or restored to the debtor, it shall and may be lawful for such officers, and they are hereby required, to provide sufficient sustenance for the support of such slaves and live stock," &c.—*Tate's Digest of the Virginia Laws, 2d edition,* p. 68, prepared in 1841.

The provision for sustenance, when a levy shall have been made, is as follows:

"*Provided,* The allowance so made shall not exceed twenty cents per day for each slave' seventeen cents per day for each horse or mule, nine cents per day for each head of horned cattle or hog, and six cents per day for every sheep or goat.—*Idem,* p. 379.

By the above law slaves are put upon an equal footing with *other* live stock. Here follows an exception in favor of the slaves:

"No sheriff or other officer to whom any writ of *fieri facias* shall be directed, shall take in execution any slave or slaves, unless the debt and costs mentioned in such *fieri facias* shall amount to the sum of *thirty-three dollars,* or two thousand pounds of tobacco."—*Idem,* p. 372.

By this law, if the debt is over the value of two thousand pounds of tobacco, the slave may be sold and the tobacco kept for *home* consumption.

"If any slave, free negro, or mulatto, shall prepare, exhibit, or administer any medicine whatever, he or she so offending, shall be judged guilty of felony, and suffer death without benefit of clergy."—*Idem,* p. 852.

"By *the statutes of South Carolina,* slaves may be baptized and become Christians, but shall not thereby be manumitted or set free."—*7th vol. Statutes of South Carolina,* p. 364.

"Slaves, if manumitted, must leave the province in six months, and if they return within seven years, to lose their freedom, unless the manumission has been approved of by the Legislature."—*Idem,* p. 395.

"No negro, by receiving the sacrament of baptism, is thereby manumitted or set free, nor hath any right or title to freedom or manumission, more than he or she had before."—*Laws of Maryland,* 1715, chap. 44, sec. 23.

"When any negro or mulatto shall be found, upon due proof made to any county or corporation court of this Commonwealth, to have given false testimony, every such offender shall, without further trial, be ordered by the said court to have one year nailed to the pillory, and there to stand for the space of one hour, and then the said ear to be cut off, and thereafter the other ear nailed in like manner, and cut off at the expiration of one other hour; and moreover, to receive thirty-nine lashes on his or her *bare back, well laid on,* at the public whipping post, or such other punishment as the court shall think proper, not extending to life or limb." *Tate's Digest of the Virginia Laws,* p. 276.

But we are told by some that this slavery question is a mere abstraction—that there can be no practical legislation in relation to it; that it is morally and physically impossible for slavery to exist in these Territories; that they are now free, and will remain so; that the moment slaveholders take their slaves there, their shackles fall off. Mr. Chairman, if gentlemen honestly entertained these views, they would not object to the passage of a bill providing governments for these Territories prohibiting slavery therein. The passage of such a bill would satisfy the country, and stop all further agitation. But we know the South entertain views entirely different. They claim the constitutional right to enter these Territories, and to carry their slaves with them, as property, and hold them as such; and they deny that Congress has any constitutional power whatever to prohibit them from the exercise of this right. Nay, some gentlemen of high standing and influence maintain that slavery now exists in New Mexico and California. The Attorney General of the State of Mississippi, in reply to an invitation to address the citizens of Alabama, affirmed that the act of the Mexican Congress, abolishing slavery, was an act of usurpation, and therefore null and void. He also made a severe attack upon the honorable gentleman from Georgia, (Mr. STEPHENS,) and charged that his course was calculated to deprive the South of *thirteen* slave States, and, consequently, twenty-six Senators in the National Legislature, and members of Congress in proportion. Here, sir, is the secret of the Southern movement—thirteen slave States to advance their political pow-

er, and open a profitable market for the sale of slaves! Extension is demanded by the South. They consider the issue made a direct attack upon their constitutional rights. But it must be remarked, that this is not a proposition to interfere with slavery where it now exists. It is not a proposition to abolish slavery in the States. All that is proposed is, to prevent the extension of it into territory now free; and that, too, upon the principle that the general welfare of the country will be promoted by it, its character vindicated, and its honor maintained. The South, however, are unyielding. Extension or dissolution is the only alternative.

And what, I ask, are you of the South to gain by a dissolution? Will separate and small confederacies be profitable? Will it open a better market for your cotton, your rice, your sugar, and your tobacco? The whole world is open to you now. Will it lessen your burdens for the maintenance of government? Will it promote good neighborhood? Are no difficulties to be apprehended from such an extent of Northern frontier? With the elements of destruction within your own limits, will it add to your strength and security in time of war? Have the free States been unprofitable partners? Are they too exacting? When Florida was acquired by treaty with Spain, did the North claim it? Did she not give it up to the South? Will you dissolve the Union for that? When we acquired Texas, which has cost the country, connected with the war which followed in consequence of it, $200,000,000, did the North claim it? Has she not yielded it to the South? Will not Northern labor and Northern capital have to pay two-thirds of this debt? Will you dissolve the Union for that? The fifteen slave States contain 900,000 square miles of territorry, while the free States contain only about 450,000: Is that cause of complaint, and will you dissolve the Union for that? The amount paid for carrying the mails in the slave States exceeds the amount of receipts by more than $550,000 per annum, all of which excess is paid by the North: You would not dissolve the Union for that! The free States furnish all your schoolmasters and schoolmistresses: I know you would not dissolve the Union for that! The slave-holding States have had twelve of the Presidential terms, making forty-eight years, and have now secured four years more. You would not dissolve the Union for that! The South have had *seventeen* judges of the Supreme Court, and the North *eleven; fourteen* Attorney Generals, and the North *five; twenty-one* Speakers of the House of Representatives, and the North *eleven; sixty-one* Presidents of the Senate *pro tem.*, and the North *sixteen; eighty* foreign ministers, and the North *fifty-four:* the disproportion in the army and navy is still greater; while the appointments in the several Departments are substantially all given to the South: You would not dissolve the Union on this account!

But, Mr. Chairman, I will not pursue this train of thought further. This question rises infinitely above all such considerations. For what, then, I ask, is this glorious Union to be dissolved? Let the country hear it; let the civilized world hear it; let the fact be recorded as a matter of history: The Union is to be dissolved, because slavery is not permitted to go into territory now free. Are you of the South prepared to make this issue? Are you willing to occupy such a position? Who will uphold you in it? The civilized world will condemn you; posterity will condemn you; and the "Almighty has no attribute that can take sides with you in such a" work.

Mr. Chairman, every expedient has been resorted to by the advocates of slavery to raise false issues in order to defeat the will of the people. At one time we are told that Congress has no constitutional power to legislate upon the question; again, admitting the power, its exercise is considered of doubtful expediency. Now, we are pressed to leave the settlement of the question to the people in the Territories. Frightened at this proposition, the notorious compro-

mise bill is introduced, which was laid upon the table in the popular branch of the National Legislature without debate. *There let it remain.* All these expedients having failed, a new system is adopted. The honorable Senator from Illinois (Mr. DOUGLAS) brings in a bill for organizing a kind of territorial State, as though baptizing it by a new name would change its character or escape the difficulty. The editor of the Union immediately proclaims to the country that a perfect child has been born into the world, and he is ready to stand sponsor for it; and he calls upon all to fall down and worship it. I tell you, Mr. Chairman, the child is born under the law, and is not *free*. It is not entitled to christian baptism, but according to ancient rites and ceremonies, must be *circumcised*.

Sir, as the deep fountain of public opinion breaks up, overwhelming the advocates of slavery, or driving them from their position, they retreat and assume another. Like Noah's dove, they can find no resting place. Now, the point of attack is changed, and the resolution introduced by my honorable colleague (Mr. GOTT) is made the subject of severe remark. The resolution is in these words:

"Whereas, the traffic now prosecuted in this metropolis of the Republic in human beings, as chattles, is contrary to natural justice and the fundamental principles of our political system, and is notoriously a reproach to our country throughout Christendom, and a serious hindrance to the progress of republican liberty among the nations of the earth; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the Committee on the District of Columbia be instructed to report a bill as soon as practicable, *prohibiting the slave trade in the District*."

Is there anything wrong in this resolution? What does it propose? Does it propose anything more than to prohibit the *slave trade* in the District?

The honorable gentleman from Indiana, (Mr. THOMPSON,) in a speech made in this Hall, but a short time since, raised a false issue upon this resolution, and talked in strains of burning eloquence about the right of Congress to *abolish slavery* in the District. He cited the opinion of Judge Story, delivered in the case of Prigg *vs.* the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, reported in 16 Peters, 611. This was a case which involved the right of the master to reclaim his slave, under the provisions of the 2d section of the 4th article of the Constitution of the United States. The honorable gentleman then goes down on his sliding scale to what General Harrison said, in a letter written in 1836 to one Thomas Sloo, Jr., about the right of Congress to *abolish* slavery in the District of Columbia. Then he goes up on his sliding scale to the great embodiment of Whiggery, and tells us what Mr. Clay said upon the same subject; and finally quotes what Washington said in his Farewell Address about combinations and associations, with a view to awe the regular deliberation and action of constituted authorities. Well, sir, I should like to know what all that has to do with the resolution. The resolution of my honorable colleague does not propose to resist the constituted authorities; nor does it propose to abolish *slavery*, but the *slave trade*.

If the gentleman from Indiana had postponed his remarks until the petition from the Board of Aldermen and Common Council of the city of Washington had been presented to this House, he would have better understood the import of the resolution. That petition is as follows:

"The undersigned, members of the Board of Aldermen and Common Council of the city of Washington, having, in common with their fellow-citizens, long regarded with disapprobation the *importation* of slaves into the District of Columbia for purposes of *sale* or *traffic* elsewhere, and deeming it alike *prejudicial to the interest of our city*, and *offensive* to public *sentiment*, request your honorable body to *restrain such traffic* by the enactment of some law similar in its provision to that embraced in the code of laws for the District of Columbia, reported to the House of Representatives in the year 1832, by Mr. Wilde, of Georgia, and to the Senate by Mr. Chambers, of Maryland, the enactments of the adjoining States of Maryland and Virginia on this subject, or grant to the respective corporate authorities of Washington and Georgetown such powers as will enable them to remedy this evil."

I beg the attention of gentlemen to the language of this petition. It states that the traffic IS PREJUDICIAL TO THE INTEREST of the city, and *offensive* to *public sentiment.* This is quite as strong as the language employed in the resolution.

This petition from the Board of Aldermen and Common Council, presented but a few days since, asks precisely what the resolution introduced by my honorable colleague contemplates—"*the abolition of the slave trade in the District.*" Can there be any doubt of the constitutional right of Congress upon this question? By article 1, section 8, of the Constitution of the United States, "Congress shall have power to exercise *exclusive legislation*, in all cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of government of the United States." But do you not know, say the advocates of slavery, that although Maryland and Virginia, at the time of the cession, agreed that Congress might provide for the government of the District, as contemplated by the eighth section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States, it was not anticipated that any such jurisdiction would be exercised without their consent? Did not the country know that slavery existed in the District at the time of the cession, and that it was not expected that any law would be passed by Congress to prevent us from selling our surplus slave stock to slave dealers who visit Washington, from Baltimore or elsewhere, for the purpose of making profitable investments? Are our rights and our feelings to be outraged by such a law? Are we to be treated with such indignity? Are we to be told that our slaves are not *articles* of merchandise? Is dealing in human beings to be brought into disrepute at this late day, in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Christianity is spreading its benign influence to the remotest parts of the world? Is the Congress of this enlightened Republic prepared to adopt a measure so monstrous, as to prevent slaveholders from Maryland, and Virginia, and elsewhere, from selling their slaves at the seat of Government as they would sell any other merchandise? Why, sir, Congress might as well say we should not sell our horses and our mules here! It is an invasion of Southern rights. It is an encroachment, and must be resisted; or, at least, if this is not an encroachment upon our constitutional rights, it is very evident Congress designs to do something by and by that will be.

But the honorable gentleman from Indiana (Mr. THOMPSON) asks, in an air of total indifference, "What is the 'slave trade' in the District of Columbia? I have heard a great deal said about 'slave pens;' about slaves sold at auction; and about stripping the mother from the child, and the husband from the wife. These things may exist here, but I do not know of them. Since I have been in the habit of visiting the District—which is from my boyhood—I have never seen a band of negroes taken off by the slave trader. I do not remember that I have even seen the slave trader himself. I know *nothing of the slave pen that is so much talked about.* It may be here, however, and these things may happen every day before the eyes of gentlemen who choose to hunt them up; but for myself, I have no taste for such things."

Mr. Chairman, I am credibly informed that from four to six hundred of these unfortunate beings are sold annually at the slave pen situated near the Smithsonian Institution. Of the seventy-six slaves who escaped from their masters in this District during the last session of Congress, and who, after they were recaptured, were *driven* directly by the door of the boarding-house of the gentleman from Indiana, *forty* of them were sold at the common jail in this District, to a slave dealer from Baltimore, and taken to that city. Where they now are, God only may know.

Mr. Chairman, there was a black man named Ware arrested during the last session of Congress, in open day, on Pennsylvania avenue. He made his appeal

to members of Congress for help, as they were going from this Hall to their respective boarding-houses. That appeal was made in the very sight of the American stripes and stars which proudly floated over this Capitol. The appeal, however, was made in vain. The black man was taken to Alexandria for sale. He was not sold, however. A subscription paper was started, and the pound of flesh demanded, paid for, and the black man restored to his wife and children, and they were again a happy little household. The honorable gentleman from Indiana, (Mr. Thompson,) although a member of this House at the time, and although in the habit of visiting this District from his boyhood, did not see this. He knows nothing about any slave pen here. I presume he would not know a slave pen if he were to see one. He has never even seen a slave dealer. He has no *taste* for such things. Mr. Chairman, I hope the free constituency of the gentleman from Indiana will correct his *taste* and improve his *sight*, so that he will be able to distinguish between a *slave pen* and a *seminary of learning*.

Sir, if the evils of slavery are such as I have attempted to portray them, and if the prosperity, welfare, and honor of the country demand that its progress be stayed, shall we, will we, fail to repudiate "masterly inactivity," and act, discharge our duty fearlessly as the representatives of a free people? Great Britain and Denmark, the South American Republics, and France, have abolished slavery—nay, the whole world is moving in this great principle of freedom; and shall it be left for this, our boasted model Republic, not only to perpetuate, but extend slavery? Sir, this country occupies an important and interesting position. When we look at the origin of this Republic, and contemplate the design of its founders, can we fail to see that upon us devolves a most important and sacred trust? Let us not fail to discharge it faithfully. I, for one, solemnly believe, that the interests of this country imperiously demand that slavery should be checked in its progress. Are we prepared to act? Are we ready to meet the question? If we dare not meet it now, how shall we be able to meet it when it has become more formidable? Shall avarice, pride, and sordid interest, prevail over duty? For one, sir, my mind is made up. I am prepared to act. I am opposed to the extension of slavery over another foot of territory now acquired, or hereafter to be acquired, by the United States. I am in favor of abolishing the slave *trade* in the District of Columbia and wherever else the Constitution will permit. And while I say this, I will also add, that I always have been, am now, and shall continue to be, opposed to any and all interference with the question of slavery in the States. The States alone have the control over it there, and Congress has no right to interfere. But, sir, I maintain that it is a libel upon the country and its free institutions; it is a libel upon the memory of the fathers of the Revolutian; it is a libel upon the fair fame of departed patriots and statesmen; it is a libel upon the eternal and immutable principles of truth and justice; nay, more, it is a libel upon the attributes of the Almighty, for gentlemen to contend that this Government has no control over the question, but that we are compelled, by the laws of inevitable necessity, to let the question of slavery *alone*, until its blighting influences have literally despoiled our glorious Union of its beauty, magnificence, and moral grandeur! Sir, I believe in no such doctrine of necessity.

These, Mr. Chairman, are my sentiments. I have expressed them fearlessly, but honestly; I am willing to live by them, and I hope to be willing to die by them. And when that hour shall come, and come it will, I shall hope to have one consolation at least—that I have not given a vote, nor done an act knowingly, calculated to rivet the chains of slavery upon a single human being. Sir, let us do right, and trust to Him who controls the destiny of nations for the consequences.