

THE NORTH CAROLINA STAR.

NORTH CAROLINA.—"Powerful in intellectual, moral and physical resources, the land of our sires and home of our affections."

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MR. WEBSTER'S SPEECH.

Mr. Webster read the following extract from the speech of the honorable Senator... "Gentlemen, we will see that, by whomsoever possessed, Texas is likely to be a slaveholding country; and I frankly avow my entire unwillingness to do anything which shall extend the slavery of the African race on this continent, or add other slaveholding States to the Union."

When I say that I regard slavery in itself as a great moral, social, and political evil... I shall do nothing, therefore, to favor or encourage its further extension... I do not entirely agree with my honorable friend from Tennessee, (Mr. Bell), that as soon as the time comes when she is entitled to another Representative, we should create a new State...

my friend from Rhode Island to read another extract from a speech of mine, made at a Whig Convention in Springfield, Massachusetts, in the month of September, 1847... "We hear much just now of a paucity for the dangers and evils of slavery and slave annexation, which they call the 'Wilnot proviso.' That certainly is a just sentiment; but it is not a sentiment to found any new party upon. It is not a sentiment on which Massachusetts Whigs differ. There is not a man in this hall who holds it more firmly than I do, not one who adheres to it more than another."

I feel some little interest in this matter, sir. Did not I commit myself in 1838, to the whole doctrine, fully, entirely? And I was permitted to say that I cannot quite consent that more recent discoverers should claim the merit and take out a patent... "I deny the priority of their invention... Allow me to say, sir, it is not their thunder... We are to use the first and last and every occasion which offers to oppose the extension of slave power."

Now, Mr. President, I have established, so far as I proposed to go into any line of observation to establish the proposition with which I set out, and upon which I propose to stand or fall; and that is, that the whole territory of the States in the United States, has a fixed and settled character, now fixed and settled by law, which cannot be repealed in the case of Texas without a violation of public faith, and cannot be repealed by any human power in regard to California or New Mexico; the under one or the other of these laws, every foot of territory in the States or Territories has now received a fixed and decided character...

Conscientious men in the North, of all men who are not carried away by any fanatical idea or by any false idea, whatever be their constitutional obligations... "I put it to all the sound minds at the North as a question of conscience. What right have they, in their legislative capacity, or any other, to endeavor to get round this constitution, to embarrass the free exercise of the rights secured by the constitution to the persons whose slaves escaped from them? None at all; none at all. Neither in the forum of conscience nor before the face of the constitution are they justified, in my opinion. Of course it is a matter for their consideration. They probably, in the turmoil of the times, have not stopped to consider this; they have followed what seems to be the current of thought and of motives for the occasion, and they neglect to investigate fully the real question, and to consider their constitutional obligation; as I am sure, if they did consider, they would fall from their seats. Therefore, I repeat, sir, that here a ground, which ought to be removed, which it is now in the power of the different departments of this Government to remove; which calls for the enactment of proper laws authorizing the jurisdiction of this Government, in the several States, to do all that is necessary for the recapture of fugitive slaves and for the restoration of them to those who claim them."

Complaint has been made against certain resolutions that emanate from Legislatures at the North, and are sent here to us, not only on the subject of slavery in this district, but sometimes recommending Congress to consider the means of abolishing slavery in the States... "I should be sorry to be called upon to present any resolutions here which could not be referred to any committee or any power in Congress, and therefore, I should be unwilling to receive from the Legislature of Massachusetts any instructions to present resolutions expressive of any opinion whatever on the subject of slavery, for two reasons: because first, I do not consider that the Legislature of Massachusetts has any thing to do with it; and next, I do not consider that I, as her representative here, have any thing to do with it. Sir, it has become, in my opinion, quite too common; and, if the Legislatures of the States do not like it, they have a great deal more power to put it down than I have to uphold it. It has become, in my opinion, too common a practice to present resolutions here on all subjects, and to instruct us here on all subjects. There is no public man that requires instructions more than I do, or desires it more heartily; but I do not like to have it come in quite too imperative a shape. I took notice, with pleasure, of some remarks upon this subject, made the other day in the Senate by a gentleman, a young man of talent and character, from whom the best hopes may be entertained. I mean Mr. Hilliard. He told the Senate of Massachusetts that he would vote for no instructions whatever to be forwarded to the members of Congress, nor for any resolutions to be offered, expressive of the sense of Massachusetts as to what their members of Congress ought to do. He said he saw no propriety in one set of public servants giving instructions to another set of public servants. To their own master all of them must stand or fall, and that master is their constituents. I wish these sentiments could become more common. A great deal more common. I have never entered into the question, and never shall, about the binding force of instructions. I will, however, simply say this: if there be any matter of interest pending in this body, while I am a member of it, in which Massachusetts has an interest of her own not adverse to the general interest of the country, I shall pursue her instructions with gladness of heart, and with all the efficiency which I can bring here. But if the question be one which affects the interests of all other States, I shall not regard her political wishes or instructions (that I would regard the wishes of a man who might appoint me an arbitrator or referee to decide some question of important private right). If there ever was a Government upon earth, it is this Government; if there ever was a body upon earth, it is this body, which would consider itself as composed by agreement of all, sitting here under the solemn obligations of oath and conscience to do that which they think is best for the good of the whole."

Then, sir, there are those abolition societies, of which I am unwilling to speak, but in regard to which I have very clear notions and opinions. I do not think them useful. I think their operations for the last twenty years have produced nothing good or valuable. At the same time, I know thousands of them who are honest and good men; perfectly well meaning men. They have exerted feelings, they have done something for the cause of liberty, and in their sphere of action they do not see what else they can do, than to contribute to an abolition press or an abolition society, or to pay an abolition lecturer. I do not mean to impute gross motives even to the leaders of these societies, but I am not blind to the consequences. I cannot but see what mischief their interference with the South has produced. And it is not plain to every man! Let any gentleman who doubts of this recur to the debates in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1832, and he will see with freedom a proposition made by Mr. Randolph for the gradual abolition of slavery was discussed in that body. Every one spoke of slavery as he thought very ignominious and disparaging names and epithets were applied to it. The debates in the House of Delegates at that occasion, I believe, were all published. They were read by every colored man who could read, and if there were any who could not read, those debates were read to them by white men. At that time Virginia was not unwilling nor afraid to discuss this question, and to let that part of her population know as much of it as they could learn. That was in 1832. As has been said by the honorable member from Carolina, these abolition societies commenced their course of action in 1835. It is said—I do not know how true it may be—that they sent incendiary publications into the Slave States; at any event, they attempted to arouse, and did arouse, a very strong feeling in other words, they created great exasperations in the North against Southern slavery. Well, what was the result? The bonds of the slaves were bound more

firmly than before; their rivets were more strongly fastened. Public opinion, which in Virginia had begun to be excited against slavery, and was opening out for the discussion of the question, drew back and shut itself up in its castle. I wish to know whether any body in Virginia can now talk as Mr. Randolph, Gov. McDowell, and others talked there, openly, and send their remarks to the press in 1833. We all know the fact, and we all know the cause, and every thing that this agitator people have done has been, not to enlarge but to restrain, not to set free, but to bind faster the slave population of the South. That is my judgment. Sir, as I have said, I know many of them in my own neighborhood, very honest good men, misled, as I think, by strange enthusiasm; but they wish to do something, and they are called on to contribute, and they do contribute; and it is my firm opinion this day, that within the last twenty years as much money has been collected and said to abolition societies, abolition presses, and abolition lecturers as would purchase the freedom of every slave man, woman, and child in the State of Maryland, and send them all to Liberia. I have no doubt of it. But I have yet to learn that the benevolence of these abolition societies has at any time taken that particular turn. [Laughter.]

Again, sir, the violence of the press is complained of. The press violent! Why, sir, the press is violent every where. There are outrageous reproaches in the North, against the South, and there are reproaches in the South against the North. Sir, the extremists of both parties of this country are violent; they mistake loud and violent talk for eloquence and for reason. They think that he who talks loudest reasons the best. And this we must expect, when the press is free, as it is here, and I trust always will be—free and absolute freedom of the press is essential to the preservation of Government on the basis of a free constitution. Whenever it exists, there will be foolish paragraphs, and violent paragraphs in the press, as there are, I am sorry to say, foolish speeches and violent speeches in both House of Congress. In short, sir, I must say that in my opinion, the venacular tongue of the country has become greatly vitiated, depraved, and corrupted by the style of our congressional debates. [Laughter.] And if it were possible for our Legislature in Congress to violate the principles of the people as much as they have depraved their taste, I should cry out, "God save the Republic!"

Well in all this I see no solid grievance, no grievance produced by the South, within the redress of the Government, but the single one to which I have referred; and that is the proper regard to the injunction of the constitution for the delivery of fugitive slaves... "The first and gravest is, that the North adopted the constitution, recognizing the existence of slavery in the States, and recognizing the right, to a certain extent, of representation of the slaves in Congress, under a state of sentiment and expectation which do not now exist; and that, by events; by circumstances, by the eagerness of the South to acquire territory and extend their slave population, the North finds itself, in regard to the influence of the South and North of the free States and the Slave States, where it did not expect to find itself when they entered the compact of the Constitution. They complain, therefore, that instead of slavery being regarded as an evil, as it was then, an evil which all hoped would be extinguished gradually, it is now regarded by the South as an institution to be cherished and preserved and extended; an institution which the South has extended to the utmost of her power by the acquisition of new territory. Well, then, passing from that, every body in the North reads, and every body reads whatever the newspapers contain; and the newspapers, some of them, especially those presses to which I have alluded, are careful to spread abroad among the people every reproachful sentiment uttered by any Southern man bearing at all against the North; every thing that is calculated to exasperate, to alienate; and there are many such things, as every body will admit, from the South, or some portion of it, which are spread among the reading people; and they do exasperate and alienate, and produce a most mischievous effect upon the public mind at the North. Sir, I would not notice things of this sort appearing in obscure quarters; but one thing has occurred in this debate which struck me very forcibly. An honorable member from Louisiana addressed us the other day on this subject. I suppose there is not a more amiable and worthy gentleman in this chamber—a gentleman who would be more slow to give offence to any body, and he did not mean in his remarks to give offence. But what did he say? Why, sir, he took pains to run a contrast between the slaves of the South and the laboring people of the North, giving the preference in points of condition, and comfort, and happiness, to the slaves of the South. The Senator doubtless did not suppose that he gave an offence, or any injustice. He was merely expressing his opinion. But does he know how remarks of that sort are received by the laboring people of the North? Why, who are the laboring people of the North? They are the North. They are the people who cultivate their own farms with their own hands; freetholders, educated men, independent men. Let me say, sir, the five-sixths of the whole property of the North is in the hands of the laborers of the North; they cultivate their farms, they educate their children, they provide the means of independence; if they are not freetholders, they earn wages, these wages accumulate, are turned into capital, into new freholds, and small capitalists are created. That is the case. And what can these people think when so respectable and worthy a gentleman as the member from Louisiana undertakes to prove that the absolute ignorance and the abject slavery of the South is more in conformity with the high purposes of an immortal, rational, human being, than the educated, the independent free laborers of the North!

That in any case, under the pressure of any circumstances, such a dissolution was possible. I hear with pain, and anguish, and distress, the word secession—especially when it falls from the lips of those who are eminently patriotic, and known to the country, and known all over the world, for their political services. Secession! Peaceable secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. The dismemberment of this vast country of our continent! The bursting up of the fountains of the great deep without ruffling the surface! Who is so foolish—I beg every body's pardon—as to expect to see any such thing? Sir, he who sees these States, now revolving in harmony around a common center, can expect to see them quit their places and fly off without convulsion, may look at the next hour to see the heavenly bodies rush from their spheres and jostle against each other in the realms of space without producing a crash in the universe. There can be no such thing as a peaceable secession. Peaceable secession is an utter impossibility. Is the great Constitution under which we live here—covering this whole country—is it to be dashed and melted away by secession, as the snows on the mountain melt under the influence of a vernal sun, disappear almost unobserved, and die off? No, sir! No, sir! I will not state what might produce the disruption of the States; but, sir, I see it as plainly as I see the sun in heaven—I see that disruption must produce with a war as I will not describe in its woful consequences.

Peaceable secession!—peaceable secession! The concurrent agreement of all the members of this great republic to separate! A voluntary separation, with alimony on one side and on the other. Why, what would be the result? Where is the line to be drawn? What States are to secede? What is to remain American? What an I to be? What is the flag of the republic to lower? or is he to cover and shrink and fall to the ground? Why, sir, our ancestors—who are yet living amongst us with prolonged lives, would rebuke and reproach us, and our children and our grandchildren would cry out shame upon us, if we of this generation should dishonor these ensigns of the power of the God everday felt among us with so much joy and gratitude. What is to become of the army? What is to become of the navy? What to become of the public lands? How is each of the thirty States to defend itself? I know, although the idea has not been stated distinctly. There is to be a Southern Confederacy, perhaps. I do not mean, when I allude to this statement, that any one seriously contemplates such a state of things. I do not mean to say that it is true, but I have heard it suggested elsewhere that the idea has originated from a design to separate. I am sorry, sir, that it has never been thought of, talked of, or dreamed of, in the wildest flights of human imagination. But the idea must be of a separation, including the slave States upon one side and the free States on the other. Sir, there is not—I may express myself too strongly perhaps—but some things, some moral things, are almost as impossible as other natural or physical things; and I hold the idea of a separation of these States, those that are free to form one government and those that are slaveholding to form another, as a moral impossibility. We could not separate the States by any such line, if we were to draw it. We could not sit down here to-day and draw a line of separation that would satisfy any five men in the country. There are natural causes that would keep them together—social and domestic relations which we could not break if we would, and which we should not if we could. Sir, nobody can look over the face of this country at the present moment—nobody can see where its population is the most dense and growing, without being ready to admit, and compelled to admit, that among all the States in the valley of the Mississippi, Mississippian! Well, now, sir, I beg to inquire what the wildest enthusiast has to say on the possibility of cutting off that river and leaving free States at its source and its branches, and slaves States down near its mouth? Pray, sir, say, let me say to the people of this country, that those things are worthy of their pondering and of their consideration. Here, sir, are five millions of freemen in the free States north of the river Ohio; can any body suppose that this population can be severed by a line that divides them from the territory of a foreign and an alien Government, down some where, the Lord knows where, upon the lower banks of the Mississippi? What would become of Missouri? Will she join the arondissement of the slave States? Shall the man from the Yellow Stone and the Mad River be connected in the new Republic with the man who lives on the southern extremity of the Cape of Florida? Sir, I am ashamed to pursue this line of remark. I dislike it—I have an utter disgust for it. I would rather hear of natural blights and milder wars, pestilence and famine, than to hear gentlemen talk of secession. To break up to break up this great Government; to dismember this great country—to astonish Europe with an act of folly such as Europe for two centuries has never beheld in any Government! No, sir, no, sir! There will be no secession—Gentlemen are not serious when they talk of secession.

Sir, I hear that there is to be a Convention held at Nashville. I am bound to believe that if worthy gentlemen meet at Nashville in Convention, their object will be to adopt counsels conciliatory, to advise the South to forbearance and moderation, and to inculcate principles of brotherly love and affection, and attachment to the constitution of the country as it now is. I believe if the convention meet at all, it will be for this purpose; for certainly, if they meet for any purpose hostile to the Union, they have been singularly inappropriate in their selection of a place. I remember, sir, that when the treaty was concluded between France and England at the peace of Amiens, a stern old Englishman and an orator, who disliked the terms of the peace as ignominious to England, said in the House of Commons, that if King William could know the terms of the treaty he would turn in his coffin. Let me commend the saying, in all its emphasis and in all its force, to any body who shall meet at Nashville for the purpose of concerting measures for the overthrow of the Union of this country over the bones of Andrew Jackson.

That in any case, under the pressure of any circumstances, such a dissolution was possible. I hear with pain, and anguish, and distress, the word secession—especially when it falls from the lips of those who are eminently patriotic, and known to the country, and known all over the world, for their political services. Secession! Peaceable secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. The dismemberment of this vast country of our continent! The bursting up of the fountains of the great deep without ruffling the surface! Who is so foolish—I beg every body's pardon—as to expect to see any such thing? Sir, he who sees these States, now revolving in harmony around a common center, can expect to see them quit their places and fly off without convulsion, may look at the next hour to see the heavenly bodies rush from their spheres and jostle against each other in the realms of space without producing a crash in the universe. There can be no such thing as a peaceable secession. Peaceable secession is an utter impossibility. Is the great Constitution under which we live here—covering this whole country—is it to be dashed and melted away by secession, as the snows on the mountain melt under the influence of a vernal sun, disappear almost unobserved, and die off? No, sir! No, sir! I will not state what might produce the disruption of the States; but, sir, I see it as plainly as I see the sun in heaven—I see that disruption must produce with a war as I will not describe in its woful consequences.

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well worthy the consideration of Congress, and I shall be happy to concur in it myself, if I should be in the public councils of the country at the time. I have no other remark to make. In my observations upon slavery as it has existed in the country, and as it now exists, I have expressed no opinion of the mode of its extinguishment or amelioration. I will say, however, though I have nothing to propose on that subject, because I do not deem myself so competent as other gentlemen to consider it, that if any gentleman from the South shall propose a scheme of colonization to be carried on by this Government upon a large scale, for the transportation of free colored people to any colony or any place in the world, I should be quite disposed to incur almost any degree of expense to accomplish that object. May, sir, following an example set here more than twenty years ago by a great man, than a Senator from New York, I would return to Virginia—through her for the benefit of the whole South—all the money received from the lands and territories ceded by her to this Government, for any such purpose as to relieve, in whole or in part, or in any way to diminish or deal beneficially with the free colored population of the Southern States.

I have said that I honor Virginia for her cession of this territory. There have been received into the treasury of the United States eight millions of dollars, the proceeds of the sale of the public lands ceded by Virginia. If the residue should be sold at the same rate, the whole aggregate will exceed two hundred millions of dollars. If Virginia and the South see fit to adopt any proposition to relieve themselves from the free people of color among them, they have my free consent that Government shall pay them any sum of money out of its proceeds which may be adequate to the purpose.

And now, Mr. President, I draw these observations to a close. I have spoken freely, and I meant to do so. I have sought to make no display; I have sought to relieve the occasion by an animated discussion; I have sought only to speak my sentiments fully and at large, being desirous only and for all to let the Senate know, and to let the country know, the opinions and sentiments which I entertain on all these subjects. These opinions are not likely to be suddenly changed. If there be any future service that I can render to the country consistently with these sentiments and opinions, I shall cheerfully render it. If there be not, I shall still be glad to have an opportunity to disabuse my constituents from the bottom of my heart, and to make known every political sentiment that therein exists.