SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH
BY
HON. JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE,
Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives, at
Frankfort, Kentucky, December 21, 1859.

FELLOW-CITIZENS: My purpose to-night is a simple one. I come to express my profound gratitude to the Representatives of the people for the honor they have conferred on me, by electing me to the office of a Senator in Congress; and also to give my views, at the request of a portion of the legislature, on certain questions of public interest.

I have no language, fellow-citizens, adequate to the expression of the gratitude I deeply feel for this great distinction. Conferring in my absence, with a unanimity which I had no right to expect; and accompanied with cheering proofs of the legislative confidence, it is invested with every pleasant and gratifying circumstance. Among those who honored me with their suffrages, I observe the names of some who were the cherished associates of my boyhood; of others who have been the firm friends of later years; of others still, whose faces I had never seen. To all, to old and new, and to the General Assembly, I pledge myself to devote such faculties as I possess to the conscientious, and vigilant discharge of this high trust.

Several eminent gentlemen were spoken of in connection with the office of Senator, who were not candidates for the position. One of them has since passed away, and both Houses of the Legislature have recorded, in appropriate and eloquent terms, their high appreciation of his character and talents. There was, indeed, much of the old Roman in Linn Boyd. He was a firm, nay, inflexible man in all his purposes. Having served with him in the Congress of the United States, and observed his conduct closely at periods of great interest, and sometimes of peril, I unite my willing testimony to the general voice of all who knew him, that he was a real patriot, faithful to his convictions and a thoroughly honest public man. His death is a public calamity, and his memory and services will be gratefully cherished by his old constituents, his State, and his country.

I have heard that the only gentleman whose name was before the preliminary meeting with his own consent, was the veteran Hise, whose services for thirty years deserved whatever honor you could bestow.

How often have we all felt a thrill of gratified pride, as we listened to his grand appeals, and saw him smiting with a giant's strength, the ranks of his opponents! To be selected by you, when you had the opportunity to vote for such a man, imposes upon the object of your choice the highest obligation to devote all his faculties to the service of the State.

This election occurred in my absence. If I had been in private life, it would have given me pleasure to mingle personally and interchange opinions with my fellow-citizens here. But, under existing circumstances, I thought it more respectful to the legislature, to remain where my public duties called me.

It is probably not necessary, yet I am sure every generous spirit will pardon me for referring to some vague rumors which have reached my ears, traceable to no distinct source, and apparently owning no respectable parentage, to the effect that my election was the result of some understanding or arrangement between certain distinguished gentlemen and myself, or between their friends and mine. Nothing could be more unjust and insulting to you, and to all embraced by the imputation. Standing in the presence of the men who elected me, I pronounce these rumors to be wholly unfounded and false; and for myself, I publicly declare that I have not in connection with these proceedings, said, written, or done anything, which I am unwilling should be known to the whole Legislature. This trust was your free gift, and when it came to my hands, I received it unstained by the slightest taint of bargain or intrigue. I accept it proudly, gratefully—happy to be associated in the public service with your admirable delegation in the House of Representatives, and the able and true-hearted gentleman who will be my colleague in the Senate; and with a loyal purpose to deserve your confidence.

On Sunday, the 11th day of December, only the day before the election of Senator occurred, I received at Washington, a letter signed by a number of members of the Legislature, asking my views touching the Dred Scott Decision, Territorial Sovereignty, and the duty of Congress, in reference to private property in the Territories. I received that letter, with the profound respect due to the position and character of its authors, and if time had allowed, would have answered it before the day fixed by law for the election. Your action, however, in advance of an answer, was an expression of confidence in me, which I cherish with just pride. I have not, for a moment, thought of sheltering myself behind an election, and indeed it was of little consequence whether the interrogatories were answered before or after the election, for I am of toat school which holds the doctrine of instructions, and whenever my convictions will not allow me to receive and obey the instructions of the State, I shall be ready to give back the trust confided to my hands.

Gentlemen, I accept the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, on every question within its jurisdiction, whether it corresponds with my private opinion or not. I accept it the more cordially when, as in the case of Dred Scott, it accords with my own convictions. I approve the opinion of the Supreme Court in that case, in all its parts, as a sound exposition of the Constitution and the law, and of the relations of the black race to the white race under our political system. Indeed, so solicitous was I, that the principles and reasoning of that opinion should be understood and sustained in Kentucky, that I printed and circulated a large edition through the State, and perhaps there is scarcely a member of the General Assembly who has not received a copy under my frank.

WASHINGTON CITY: ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1860.
To approve the opinion of the Court in that case would seem to settle the question of Territorial Sovereignty, as I think will presently appear. A brief review of the action of Congress on the territorial question for some years before that celebrated opinion was rendered, will show the manner in which the legislative department supposed the question of slavery in the Territories could come properly before the court.

I was in Congress when the Missouri line was reported. Congress was afforded a majority in Congress to settle the distracting question of slavery by the extension of that line to the Pacific Ocean, which, obnoxious as it was to the Southern States, they were willing to accept, I never would have voted for the Territorial organization of Kansas and Nebraska while that odious stigma remained on the statute book. I voted cheerfully for its repeal, but without reflecting on the motives of the patriot statesmen who acquiesced in its establishment. The abolition or quasi abolition party asserted the right and duty of Congress to exclude slavery from the Territories of the Union. The Democratic party, sustained in this respect by most of the opposition from the South, held the opposite opinion. Our object was, if possible, to withdrawing the question of slavery from the Halls of Congress, and place it where it could no longer disturb the public tranquility. Its perpetual agitation on the Federal theatre distracted the country and threatened the public safety. Our purposes were patriotic and peaceable, though unhappily they have not been realized. In pursuance of these purposes, a law was passed to organize the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, containing, among other features, the declaration that it was the intention of Congress neither to legislate slavery into those Territories nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. What limitations the Constitution imposed on the freedom of territorial action in regard to slave property under this delegation of power by Congress, was a point of difference between the friends of the measure.

A considerable portion of the Northern Democracy held that slavery was in derogation of common right, and could only exist by force of positive law, and they denied that the Constitution furnished this law for the Territories. The representatives of the South with few exceptions held that the citizens of the United States might enter the common Territory with whatever was recognized by the Constitution as property, and enjoy it there. This did not seem to be denied as to any description of property; nor seem to be judicial in its character; at any rate, the friends of the bill, agreeing not to make it the subject of legislative conflict, inserted a provision that any question of title to a slave in the Territories might be carried up to the Supreme Court of the United States, without regard to the value of the matter in controversy, and with the understanding that whatever the judicial decision might be, it should be binding on all parties, not only by virtue of the agreement, but under the obligation of every citizen to respect the authority of the legally constituted courts of the country. It was under these circumstances, before the question had been determined by the courts, and while the Territory of Kansas was in a state of civil commotion, that the country was thrown upon the Presidential election of 1856. It became my duty at the request of my political friends to visit the States of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, and to address the people; and I avail myself of this occasion to declare that in all these States I proclaimed the same principles which I have ever uttered in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and am ready to utter again. It had been charged that the Democratic party desired to employ the Federal Government to propagate slavery. I denied it. It had been charged that the Democratic party, not content with the guarantees of the Constitution, had erected itself into a pro-slavery organization. I denied it, and declared that the national Democracy was neither a pro-slavery nor anti-slavery party, but was a constitutional party; and I repeat the declaration here to-night. I argued earnestly against the renewal in Congress of agitation upon the question of slavery in the Territories. By the Kansas bill the people were left free to mould their institutions, subject only to the Constitution. How far the Constitution would restrain their action in regard to private property, during the territorial condition, was a question which by the same bill had been submitted to the Supreme Court, and it was not doubted that governments and citizens alike were subject to the judicial authority of the Union. So that non-interference, tranquility and peace were confidently anticipated by the friends of liberty and order. Very well; the Presidential contest passed by, and soon afterwards the Supreme Court of the United States decided the question which had been the subject of Legislative dispute; not indeed upon a case from Kansas, but upon one from Missouri. Without following the reasoning of the Court, I content myself with quoting the conclusion reached by that august tribunal:

"Upon these considerations, it is the opinion of the Court that the act of Congress which prohibited a citizen from holding or owning property of this kind by the Territory of the United States, north of the line therein mentioned, is not warranted in the Constitution, and is, therefore, void; that neither Dred Scott himself, nor any of his family, were made free by being carried into this Territory, even if they had been carried there by the owner, with the intention of becoming a permanent resident."

Again:

"The powers over person and property, of which we speak, are not only not granted to Congress, but are in express terms reserved and they are forbidden to exercise them; and this prohibition is not confined to the States, but the words are general, and extend to the whole territory over which the Constitution gives it power to legislate, including those portions of it remaining under Territorial Government, as well as that covered by States. It is a total absence of power everywhere within the dominion of the United States, and places the citizens of a Territory, so far as those rights are concerned, on the same footing with citizens of the States, and guards them as firmly and plainly against any intruders which the general Government might attempt under the plea of implied or incidental powers. And if Congress itself cannot do this—if it is beyond the powers conferred on the Federal Government—it will be admitted, we presume, that it could not authorize a Territorial Government to exercise them. It could confer no power on any local government, established by its authority, to violate the provisions of the Constitution."

The Court drew no distinction between slaves and other property. The distinctions drawn by some foreign writers have nothing to do with our political system. Our Government rests, not on the speculations of philanthropic writers, but on the plain language of a written Constitution. Hence we are not to look to the supposed analo-
gies of the laws of nations, but are to regard the Constitution alone, which is the written expression of the respective powers of the Government, and of the rights of the States and the people. The rights of person and property, and the absence of power in Congress to subordi-
inate governments created by Congress, to destroy or impair them, are much enlarged upon and enforced throughout the opinion, the whole tone and spirit of which accord with the extracts already read.

The fact that neither Congress nor a Territorial Legislature can constitutionally exclude from, or confide in a Territory, private property having been judicially determined by the highest court in the United States, I confess that I did not anticipate the doctrine of unfriendly territorial legislation in regard to African slaves. It has no warrant from the Constitution, if we recognize the highest judicial interpretation of that instrument.

In another part of the same opinion, the Su-
preme Court points out the duty of the judicial department in its proper sphere of administering the Constitution the right of the citizen in his person and property. In speaking of the acquisi-
tion of territory they pronounce it a political question; and then hold the following language:

"And whatever the political department of Government shall recognize as within the limits of the United States, the judicial department is also bound to re-
cognize and administer in it the laws of the United States, so far as they apply, and to maintain in the Territory the authority and rights of the Government; and also, the personal rights and rights of property of individuals natural and foreign citizens. All we mean to say on this point is, that as there is no express regulation in the Constitution defining the power which the General Government may exercise over the person or property of a citizen in a Terri-
ty thus acquired, the Court must necessarily look to the provisions and principles of the Constitution and its distribution of powers for the rules and princi-
ples by which its decision must be governed."

So that in regard to every description of pro-
erty, including slaves, recognized and guarded by the Constitution, it is the duty of the courts of the country to protect and guard it whenever the question is brought before them. To which I add that every good citizen will admit that the decisions of the courts within their appropriate sphere must be sustained and enforced. In common with many public men, I hold that the exist-
ing machinery of our Government is adequate to execute the decisions of the judicial tribunals. But should the time ever arrive when the decision of a competent court on a question of private right is likely to fail for want of adequate reme-
dies to execute it, those remedies, executive and legislative, if need be, should be afforded, or government must fail in its duty—and from this conclusion, I see no escape for any government that would uphold the authorities of the country.

In this connection, I do not hesitate to say that the aim of every good citizen should be to keep the question of slavery out of Congress. Its agita-
tion there has been productive only of evil to us, and that continually. In the present condition of public affairs, I can see no motive to thrust the Territorial question on the Congressional arena that has its origin in a feeling of loyalty to the Union. At present, the slavery question, in this aspect of it, is not before Congress. No Southern Senator or Representative proposes legislation upon it. No complaint of violated rights comes from any Territory. No evidence is offered that the Constitution, the laws, and the courts are not competent to protect personal right and pri-
vate property. Hence, while I would never aban-
don a constitutional right, especially after it had been judicially determined, I never would prema-
turely raise any question to distract the country, when no voice demands it, North, South, East, or West.

It should be cause of congratulation to every patriot that the Territorial question is nearly fought out. It is nearly fought out. No man of sense and observation ever supposed that the in-
stitution would penetrate into Minnesota, Ne-
braskas, and other Northern Territories. As to the territory south of a certain parallel of latitude, where slave property is really profitable, and where the interests of both races seem to harmonize in this relation, I do not doubt that climate, and interest, and the proximity of slave States, and the Constitution and the courts, will sustain us there in all our rights, and that we will have Southern States out of Southern soil.

Fellow-citizens, I propose now to offer you some reflection on another aspect of public affairs. We have been speaking of questions that concern Kentucky no more than the other States; but we may soon have to meet questions that come nearer home,—fireside, heartstone questions. I dis-
claim the spirit of an alarmist or a demagogue; yet, since I have been acquainted with public affairs, there never was a time when the interests of this Union were in so much peril, or when the feelings of the people were so much alienated as at this hour. Certainly, if the aspect of affairs at Washington is in the slightest degree indicative of the feeling elsewhere, this statement is mourn-
fully true.

The danger springs from the character and pur-
poses of a political organization in this country called the Republican party. I do not think that we yet fully realize in Kentucky the aims of this party, what it intends, and the probable con-
sequences of its success in the United States; nor do I think that the masses of the Northern people at all realize the consequences which will be sure to follow any attempt to execute its proclaimed purposes. At first, it seemed to limit its aims to the exclusion of slavery from the Territories; but, like all aggressive organizations, its course has been continually onward. The rear rank of the Republican army marches up and encamps on the ground occupied by the advance guard months before, while the advance guard has been march-
ing steadily forward.

We claim only those rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution, which is the bond of the Ame-
rican Union. Among the clearest of them are the right to the return of fugitives from labor, and their relatives, and to the protection of American citizens within domestic institutions, after the manner of our fathers; and it is as clear a violation of the Constitution to refuse these rights as if the instrument were torn into fragments. It is the purpose of the Republican party to abolish slavery in the United States. I know that many men of worth and ability in its ranks do not propose to press the issue to this conclusion. But they cannot control the party, and soon they must fall into the ranks and imbibe its spirit or sever their connection with it forever.

To show the spirit and purposes of this organiza-
tion, I present to you a few proofs from many thousands of a kindred character.

The first is a portion of the Republican plat-
form, adopted three years ago, but beyond which they have now far advanced:—

"Resolved, That, with our Republican fathers, we
hold it to be a self-evident truth that all men are en-
dowed with the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that the primary object and ultimate design of our Federal Government were to secure these great blessings to all mankind. This is a true distinction between the Territories of the United States by positive legislation, prohibiting its existence or extension therein."

A careful scrutiny of this resolution will reveal the fact that the Republican party make the doctrine of negro equality a portion of their political creed—and intend to develop this idea wherever the Federal Government has exclusive jurisdiction—and by a forced construction of the Constitution they claim jurisdiction far beyond the point we can consent to allow it. Accordingly, as soon as they obtain power, they will not only prohibit slavery in the Territories, but will abolish it in the District of Columbia, and in the forts, arsenals, and dock-yards throughout the Southern States—and will put an end to the coastwise and internal trade, while they already announce that no other slave State, in any latitude, shall ever be added to the Union. I give you these facts without comment, and only beg to be assured that in my opinion they are far short of the ultimate purposes of the controlling spirits of that organization. Again, I read from the same platform:

"Resolved, That the Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign power over the Territories of the United States for their government, and that the exercise of this power, it is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories these twin relics of barbarism—polygamy and Slavery." Is this the spirit of our revolutionary ancestors? Is it the spirit of the Constitution? Did our forefathers, fresh from the Revolution, and all glowing with their sublime efforts in the noblest contest ever waged by man, unite to form a bond of union which recognized, and in many respects protected in most of the then existing States, "a relic of barbarism?" Are fifteen States of the Union, in the opinion of the rest, defiled by a crime fit to be classed with polygamy? Yet this is the insult put upon us, and upon the memory of our ancestors and theirs by the rampant and spurious philanthropists of these later times. If it be a relic of barbarism, spreading over half the body politic, can these worthy gentlemen do less, in justice to their own consciences, than labor to extirpate it?

The party with this platform, carried a large majority of the non-slaveholding States, at the last Presidential election. Nor is this all. I could produce to you the declarations of its representative men in all parts of the Northern States, going infinitely further than anything I have read. To show the ultimate purposes of the Republican party, I quote its policy, as shadowed forth by its most eminent leader. Do not weary of a few extracts, for these utterances are the rallying cries of millions of men. I hold in my hand a speech delivered only last year at Rochester, by Mr. Seward, a Senator from New York, who is to-day the most influential public man in the Union, on whose words millions hang, and by whose directions millions move. That distinguished gentleman uttered the following language:

"Our country is a theatre, which exhibits in full operation two radically different political systems—the one resting on the basis of servile or slave labor, the other on the basis of voluntary labor of free men."

"The two systems are at once perceived to be incongruous. But they are more than incongruous. They are incompatible. They never have permanently existed together in one country, and they never can."

"Hitherto the two systems have existed in different States, but side by side within the American Union. This has happened because the Union is a Confederation of States. But in another aspect the United States constitute only one nation. Increase of population, which is filling the States out to their very borders, together with a new and extended network of railroads and other avenues of commerce, which daily becomes more intimate, is rapidly bringing the States into a higher and more perfect social unity or consolidation. Thus these antagonistic systems are continually coming into closer contact, and collision ensues."

Yes, "collision ensues," and his prophecy was fulfilled in less than twelve months after it was made.

"Shall I tell you what this collision means?" «It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States, as a nation, are about to be presented with an entirely a slave-holding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation. Either the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina, and the sugar plantations of Louisiana, will ultimately be tilled by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans become marts for legitimate merchandise alone, or else the cotton and rice fields and sugar plantations of South Carolina and New York will again be surrendered by their farmers to the slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York become once more markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men. It is the failure to apprehend this great truth that induces so many unsuccessful attempts at final compromisefor the better of a slave and free States, and it is the existence of this great fact that renders all such pretended compromises, when made, vain and ephemeral."

At a later period, in the Senate of the United States, the same Senator uttered the following language (I well remember the occasion and the speech):

"A free Republican Government like this, notwithstanding all its constitutional checks, cannot long resist and counteract the progress of society."

"Free labor has at last apprehended its rights and its destiny, and is organizing itself to assume the government of the Republic. It will henceforth meet you boldly and resolutely here (Washington); it will meet you everywhere, in the Territories and out of them, wherever you may go to extend slavery. It has driven you back in California and in Kansas; it will invade you soon in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Missouri, and Texas. It will meet you in Arizona, in Central America, and even in Cuba."

"You may, indeed, get a start under or near the tropics, and seem safe for a time, but it will be only a short time. Even there you will find States only for free labor to maintain and occupy. The interest of the white race demands the ultimate emancipation of all men. Whether that consumption shall be allowed to take effect, with needful and wise precautions against evil change and disaster, or be hurried on by violence, is all that remains for you to decide."

"The white man needs this continent to labor upon. His head is clear, his arm is strong, and his necessities are fixed."

"It is for yourselves, and not for us, to decide how long and through what further mortifications and disasters the contest shall be protracted, before freedom shall enjoy her already assured triumph."

"You may refuse to yield it now, and for a short period, but your refusal will only animate the friends
of freedom with the courage and the resolution, and produce the union among them, which alone is necessary on their part, to attain the position itself, simultaneously with the impending overthrow of the existing Federal Administration and the constitution of a new and more independent Congress."

Gentlemen, is this the Constitution, this the Union your fathers founded? Remember that these principles are not peculiar to Mr. Seward; with some marked exceptions, they are the principles of the Senators and Representatives of that party in Congress—of the body of its press, and of the great mass of the people who compose the organization. Upon what times are we rapidly driving! Could such principles have been sustained at the epoch of the Revolution—at the epoch of the Constitution? Did not the Constitution languish in the convention, until stipulations were inserted to guard and protect our rights? Were they not put in that instrument by the great and good men who framed it, and ratified by the States, for themselves and for posterity? And are not the citizens of all the States bound to respect the stipulations by which the organization, and the Southern States peace in this Union? Was it not formed for the peaceful pursuit of common interests, and for the protection of persons and property? How do you receive the announcement that an irrepressible conflict is raging between the States which shall result in the emancipation of the Southern slaves, leaving you only the alternative to surrender at discretion, or to yield to violence? It is idle to shut our eyes to the nature of the issue offered by this party. It is folly to attempt to turf over a volcano. It is vain to cry peace, peace, when there is no peace!

As a further proof of the spirit and character of the Republican party, I hold in my hand a book which is of little consequence, as the expression of the opinions of its author, but becomes of immense significance, indorsed as it is by the eminent Senator from whose speeches I have read, and by some sixty-eight Republicans of the House of Representatives, who represent a constituency of seven millions of people. It is a book called "The Impending Crisis of the South," its reputed author being a person named Helper, who professes to be a North Carolinian. As a sample of its contents, hear the following:

"The slave-holding oligarchy say we cannot abolish slavery without infringing on the right of property. Again we tell them, we do not recognize property in men."

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For the services of the blacks from the 20th August, 1860, up to the 4th of July, 1869, an interval of precisely two hundred and forty-eight years, ten months and fourteen days, the masters, if unwilling, ought, in our judgment, to be compelled to grant them their freedom, and to pay each and every one of them at least sixty dollars cash in hand."

The sum necessary to carry out this notable scheme, amounting to several hundred millions of dollars, it is proposed to raise by confiscating two crops of Southern cotton. The whole book is atrocious and incendiary in the highest degree; yet it has received the written indorsement of the Representatives of seven millions of American citizens, and among them the gentleman who is the candidate of the whole Republican party for Speaker of the House! It is true that some of his friends say he endorsed it without having read it. But if this be true, I am informed that he has refused, again and again when called on, to disavow these sentiments on the floor of the House; and yet with this significant silence he continues to receive the unbroken vote of his party.

The nature of the issue we must finally meet is further shown by the non-action and the action of many States. What can be clearer to an unperverted mind than the duty of every State to prevent its people from trespassing on the rights and property of the citizens of a sister State? The comity of nations would require this between alien communities, and surely the bonds of our Constitutional brotherhood should not be weaker than the comity of nations. Yet few or none of the Northern States have adopted measures to prevent the spoliation of our slave property, and to enter them at most points to reclaim this description of property is an unwelcome and dangerous errand. Nor is this all. About one-half of the Northern States (all Republican States, I think) have passed laws making it a criminal offence for their citizens to give any assistance in the rendition of fugitive slaves. This is not the case in regard to any other property; but they hate slavery, and will trample on so much of the Constitution as recognizes and guards it.

The natural result of all these things is alienation, discord, and finally hostile collisions. Gradually we approach the crisis, until at last the more advanced disciples begin the "irrepressible conflict" in a logical way, and "collision ensues." The ignorant and fanatical, throwing off even the forms of social and political duty, invade with violence a Southern State; and, though I am far from asserting that the great mass of the Republican party contemplated the late atrocious proceedings in Virginia, yet I assert, with a profound conviction of its truth, my belief that the horrible tragedy is but the forerunner of a blazing border war, unless the spirit they are fomenting in this land can be arrested by a general outbreak of conservative opinion. The very manner in which their leaders and the organs of public opinion, with the marked exceptions I have referred to, commented on the act, is enough to startle every friend of his country. They regret it, they deplore it, they condemn it, because it was against law, and they stand for the law. These are the honeyed and qualified phrases with which they characterize the most atrocious act of treason, murder, and rapine combined that ever polluted the soil of Virginia; and then, as if afraid that their rebukes were too severe, they immediately proceed to eulogize the man and his motives.

The proofs might be accumulated to the bulk of a volume, but I forbear. You need not be told that I have not presented them in a spirit of disloyalty to the Constitution and I love both as devotedly as any man who hears me. But the time has come for the true friends of the Union to look impending dangers in the face, and he best serves his country who honestly proclaims the peril that menace it. And now, under the impression that the facts will be submitted to me, and by the warrant of the proofs I have presented, and of many others which are easily accessible, I charge that the present and ulterior purposes of the Republican party are:

To introduce the doctrine of negro equality into American politics, and to make it the ground of positive legislation hostile to the Southern States;

To exclude the slave property of the South from all territory now in the Union, or which may hereafter be acquired;

To prevent the admission, in any latitude, of another slave holding State;

To repeal the Fugitive Slave Law, and practi-
cally refuse to obey the Constitution on that subject:
To refuse to prevent or punish, by State action, the spoliation of slave property; but, on the contrary, to make it a criminal offence in their citizens to purchase or trade in the production of the soil so far as they protect property in African slaves;
To abolish slavery in the District of Columbia;
To abolish it in the forts, arsenals, dock-yards, and other places in the South where Congress has exclusive jurisdiction;
To abolish the internal and coastwise trade;
To limit, harass, and frown upon the institution in every mode of political action, and by every form of public opinion.
And, finally, by the Executive, by Congress, by the postal service, the press, and all other accessible modes, to aggravate without ceasing, until the Southern States without sympathy or brotherhood in the Union, worn down by the unequal struggle, shall be compelled to surrender ignominiously, and emancipate their slaves.
Hence, I repeat that the spirit and purposes of the party are utterly at war with the Constitution and the great objects for which it was formed. If that instrument is allowed to remain permanently violated in any of its vital provisions, what hope have we for our institutions and liberties? Broken in one important part, it must soon fall to pieces. The triumph of these principles would subvert Southern society, and desolate one of the fairest regions of America; while, in the end, it would be equally disastrous to all parts of the Union. The Republican masses do not realize the actual condition of things, nor the convulsions that may ensue. Perhaps even the leaders do not, for their sights deride at our turmoils in the dust of a mere party.
And yet these aggressions cannot be consummated. Some members of the Confederacy may contemplate it in the form of a separate political organization. Kentucky, while a single ray of hope penetrates the thick darkness, will resist under the Constitution and within the Union. Resistance, I repeat, is certain. O! that the millions of our Northern brethren could know this truth, and know also that it springs, not from an insulting or arrogant spirit, but from the simple instinct of self-defence. It is idle to suppose that we will surrender our dearest interests without a struggle, from the apprehension of failure. Those who think so have read history to little purpose. There is no example in any age of a spirited people who have been deterred from defending their vital rights upon such ignoble grounds. I remember, when a boy, reading the oration of Demosthenes for the crown, on an occasion when his accuser, going behind the forms of the proceedings, arraigned him as the author of the public misfortunes, because he had aroused the Greeks to a last struggle for their country against Philip of Macedon. The result had been fatal to Athens. He defended himself by the memory of those who died at Plate, at Marathon, at Salamis, and of all their heroes who reposed in the public monuments. He stirred their souls by a recital of their glories, and then—in what though we failed, we did our duty; we acted in the spirit and character of our ancestors. The result is such as God gives to each." Re-animated by an appeal so noble and so true, the dead body of Athenian liberty for an instant sprang upon its feet, and although the man accused was the enemy of their master, Alexander, those degenerate Greeks, touched with some portion of their ancestral courage, rose out of the depths of their national abasement and crowned the world's great orator as a public benefactor.
We cannot delude ourselves with the thought that the dangers that menace us are far off, nor should others delude themselves with the thought that there will be no resistance. Constitutional resistance we contemplate to the latest moment, even against unconstitutional attacks. But when the subject of contest reaches the homes and firesides of a people, who is wise enough to predict or control the progress of events?
I have seen the growing evidences for the last few years, culminating recently into proof, of the determination of the Republicans to take possession, if possible, of the government for the purposes I have described. And I have seen in the representatives of the lower Southern States a most resolute and determined spirit of resistance.
In the meantime I perceive a sensible loss of that spirit of brotherhood—that feeling of love for a common country—that flavor of loyalty—which are at last the surest cement of the Union; so that, in the present unhappy condition of affairs, I was almost tempted to exclaim that we are dissolving, week by week, and month by month. The threads are gradually fretting themselves asunder; and a stranger, visiting Washington, might imagine that the Executive of the United States was the President of two hostile republics. Our wisest and best men observe this growing feeling of alienation, and it has become with them the subject of anxious thought and conversation. They are alarmed, but it is not craven terror; it is the noble fear that patriots feel for an imperilled country.
Perhaps the most imminent danger springs from the possible action of certain members of the confederacy. The representatives from South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, not to mention other Southern States, say that they represent their constituents—nay, that they scarcely go so far as their constituents—and most of them declare that they are ready at any moment for a separate organization. Some of the Southern legislatures have passed resolves of this character—and we may safely assume that is the true feeling of the people. God forbid that such an event should occur!—God forbid that the step shall ever be taken! We have other, and I hope adequate remedies. But do you not perceive that in such an event the difficulties that surround us would be fearfully augmented? Do you not remember when South Carolina, in 1832, arrayed herself against the General Government upon a question of policy connected with the collection of taxes, the issue shook the Union to its centre? What were the circumstances of that day? Andrew Jackson was President of the United States, and he was a native of South Carolina; the question at issue was not nearly so vital as those that now convulse the country; few of the other States sympathized with the movement of that little State; Henry Clay was alive, and with Calhoun, and Webster, and other very eminent statesmen, long before the new twenty years had passed; and yet the issue then made imperilled the Union of the States, in the judgment of the wisest and best men. How much more alarming is the aspect of affairs today,—wide-spread disaffection through the South—an unrelenting feeling, growing daily stronger in the North. Clay, Calhoun, and Webster dead, and none, alas! to fill their places. Now is it not clear to the dullest comprehension, with the Go-
verment in the possession of a hostile and aggres-
sive majority, if several of the Southern States
take steps towards separation, the whole system
would be in imminent peril! Speculate
as we may, such is the nature of our system that
it is in the power of two or three States to put a
stop to the harmonious and regular action of the
Government. I will not enlarge on the difficul-
ties which would then surround us. They occur
to and appal every thoughtful mind. When
the sad day comes in which that step shall be taken,
no earthly vision will be wise and keen enough to
look through the darkness and discern a port of
safety.

These are some of the facts it becomes the peo-
ple of Kentucky to observe and ponder well. I
have thus, fellow-citizens, in simple and temper-
ate language, purposely avoiding ornaments of
rhetoric and epithets of passion, attempted to ex-
pose the character and purposes of the Republi-
can party, and have alluded to the immediate
dangers that threaten the country. A political
party expects soon to take possession of the Gov-
ernment, whose animating principle is hostility
to the institutions of fifteen States. What it in-
tends to do, I have tried to show; that it will be
resisted, is as certain as that a brave people never
submitted to have a great federal bond insultingly
broken, and their essential rights taken from them
without a struggle. The power of two or three
States, indeed of one State, to precipitate the
issue, invests the subject with greater danger.
We stand, not in the presence of spectres and
shadows, but of great and terrible realities. I
see on one side, an unrelenting purpose of ag-
gression, and on the other, a dauntless determi-
nation to resist it with the best means at our
command. The healthful feeling which, I believe, yet
slumbers in the great heart of the people, can be
awakened, one or more States may force a dread-
ful issue. In all this, Kentucky has an interest
superior to any other State. She is not only a
border State, but an interior border State, locked
up in the heart of the confederacy, without an
ocean or other outlet. She would continue a
border State, no matter into what form the dis-
severed and bleeding fragments of the Union
might be thrown. Hence the country has the
highest guarantee that whatever she does or ad-
vises will be in a spirit of loyalty, both to the
Constitution and the Union. She can see no hope
after they shall be destroyed. We have read his-
tory to little purpose if we have not observed the
effects of the disruption of amicable relations be-
tween confederated States. We need only look
back to the sad history of Greece, to see how that
gallant, but misguided people, prepared them-
steps:- themselves by the Peloponnesian war to sink exhausted
into the lap of despotism. In all probability the
same fate would befall us. At first, on account of
the friendly relations we sustain to the States
that touch us on the North, we might be exempt
from hostile collision. But it could not continue.
War, inevitable war, would come upon us—and
such a war as humanity would shudder to behold!
At length we might be driven to the last degra-
dation that could befall American commonwealths
—foreign alliances to protect us from one another;
and the humiliating spectacle would be presented
of America flagging back under the control of Eu-
rope, and this continent parcelled out among the
powers of the old world. Could we ever hope for
a re-construction of Government on a better basis
than this our fathers gave us? Will not our pos-
terity be men of like passions with ourselves?

Would it not be impious to hope that Providence
would ever exert its omnipotent power to create
and sustain a confederation of fifteen States under
circumstances more auspicious than those which
have marked our origin and history? No, fel-
citizens, we must hold with a deathless grasp to
our rights and to the Constitution. That we
will do this, let our conduct prove on every past
occasion of danger and alarm. When I remember
the history of this glorious State, I am proud to
be her son. And when questioned, I will say in
your name: Kentucky will act in a manner an-
swerable to her character and history; she will
cling to the Constitution while a shred of it re-
 mains—and if unhappily, madness, and folly, and
wicked counsels succeed to destroy the fairest
fabric ever erected to liberty among men, she will
conduct herself with so much firmness, modera-
tion, and wisdom, as to stand justified before
the tribunal of history and in the eye of heaven for
the part she will unwillingly play in the most
disastrous drama ever enacted on the theatre of
the world.

What can be done to arrest impending dangers?
I will bring these remarks, already too extended,
to a close, by suggesting what seems to me to be
the duty of every patriot.

The Republican party must be overthrown. The
people of the free States must be made to realize
that its policy and purposes are incompatible with
the equality of the States, destructive to the peace,
and dangerous to the existence of the Union. The
masses of the people in that part of the Union
have no interests at war with those of the South—
no motives to promote the schemes of ambitious
leaders of national factions. Our immediate duty
therefore than have not believed in the existence
of danger. Recent events have contributed to
dispel the delusion, and to show the real tendency
of things. If a reaction does not take place in
the public mind, very soon some act of aggres-
sion, or some movement towards a separation,
will shock the Union, and bring the Government
to a stop. Then would be seen collisions between
the Federal Government and the States, which, if
not arrested, would destroy our political system.
A proposition might be made for a convention of
all the States to secure new guarantees, or to
have a more explicit understanding as to those
which now exist. But this movement would be
fraught with danger, and be of doubtful result.
Besides, the Constitution is now clear and explicit,
and the South should only ask for a fair execu-
tion of it. Alligation and politics are but the
means of securing and maintaining the rights of
our immediate duty, as I think, is to unite as far as possible all
men, and make a solemn appeal to the country
against an organization which we know to be un-
friendly to its peace and even its existence.

But before we make this appeal, shall we not
perform our whole duty? May I venture in a
deferential and loyal spirit to say that when we
appeal to the Constitution and the laws, we also
should obey the Constitution and the laws. Let
the South then obey the law which prohibits the
foreign slave trade. It rests not with those who
violate the law to denounce it in others. I am
happy that Kentucky is guiltless in this respect,
and nor do I believe that any Southern State has taken
steps to nullify this law. It will give us just re-
pute in the confederacy and to the violation of
individuals shall be promptly punished by South-
ern juries. Let us also frown upon and punish all
illegal expeditions fitted out within our borders
to invade feeble neighboring States. One of the
highest duties of a government is to restrain its
citizens from hostile descents upon nations in amity with it. When it fails to do this, it ceases to be respectable. These expeditions are a stain on the character of the Union. When we extend our territory, let us do it with the majesty that becomes a great people, and under the flag of the republic.

Then, having placed herself in an invulnerable attitude, the South thoroughly united, will be in a condition to make a solemn and final appeal to all the better elements in the Union. The largest friendly organization in the free States is the Northern Democracy. How different is their language from the bitter rallying cries of the Republican party. We hear no declarations of hostility and hate from Northern Democrats—no denunciations of Southern institutions on Democratic lips or in Democratic presses. We can continue in peace with our political associates in the North. If they composed a decided majority in the free States, the South would have no fear of collision, or serious aggression. Too many of them have been cut down, because they nobly refused to join the crusade against you. The names of hundreds are familiar to you, who having defended your rights with unfauling firmness, have returned to their constituents to fail with manly courage beneath the blows of panders to sectional passion. A large portion of the Northern Democracy differ from the Democracy of the South on one or two well known questions of legislative action, but they unite thoroughly on all the other vital questions that convulse the country, and on the determination of which its peaceful existence may hang. The first duty of all who love their country is to overthrow the Republican party; and with this conviction I should be untrue to Kentucky if I did not plead for the union of all opposed to that dangerous organization—and to fall to pieces on questions of less magnitude than its defeat, is to surrender to its domination, and all the fatal consequences that may ensue.

There is another element at the North, not large, but noble and true. It consists of the scattered cohorts of the old Whig party, of men like Everett, Choate, and their associates whose conservatism, culture, and patriotism rebelled against the Republican alliance. Besides these are many thousands in the Northern States, who seldom attend the polls, and whose voices have not been heard amid the clamors that surround them. To all these let us appeal; let us solemnly demand a general revolt of the virtue and loyalty of the country against the pernicious principles that threaten its safety, and when all the forces are arrayed in their proper ranks, we shall be able to see what remains to hope or fear.

For myself I cherish a buoyant hope in the destiny of our common country. It is not well to doubt that the good Providence which has protected us in the past will take care of us in the future, and out of these commotions will lead us to an era of tranquillity and peace.

And now, fellow citizens, I have only to repeat my grateful acknowledgments to the General Assembly for the confidence it has extended to me, and for the high trust it has conferred. Born and reared on the soil of Kentucky, trusted and sustained by her beyond my merits, her interests and honor are dear to my heart as the warm currents that give it life; and in the sphere to which you have devoted me, I publicly pledge myself to serve my native State with the uncalculating devotion of a man who loves her green mountains and her smiling plains, her clear running streams, her generous people; aye, who loves her very infirmities with the warm affection of a son.

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