

SPEECH

OF

HON. JOHN SHERMAN, OF OHIO.

AT THE

COOPER INSTITUTE, IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

APRIL 13, 1860.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I accepted the invitation of the Young Men's Republican Union of the city of New York to deliver one of a series of political addresses at this place, with some hesitation. I knew I would have to speak to those familiar with all the political topics of the day, and that my public duties would allow me but little time for preparation. Could I have foreseen this spectacle, this crowded array of ladies and gentlemen, could I have anticipated so generous and hearty a reception, I would have been deterred from the, to me, novel effort of transferring a political speech from the stump or the hall of legislation to the lecture room. Trusting, however, to your indulgence, I will attempt only a simple statement of the issues dividing the two great political organizations of the day.

The President of the United States, in his last annual message to Congress, declares that it has been established that every citizen owning slaves may take them into the Territories of the United States, and there hold them as slaves, and that his right to do so must be protected by the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of the Government. He further declares that neither Congress, nor any Territorial Legislature, nor the people of a Territory, nor any human power, has any authority to annul or impair this vested right. In a former message he says that slaves are regarded by the Constitution of the United States as property—the same as horses or cattle—and may be carried into any of the Territories of the United States, and there held as slaves, not only without local or Congressional law, but in defiance of both. The Democratic party adopts these propositions as part of its political creed. I fairly state them as among the recognised principles of that party—I mean of the controlling majority which guides its councils, and not the exceptional fragments that hang upon its outskirts.

The Republican party denies these propositions, and insists that slavery is the creature of local law, dependent entirely upon the law of the State in which it exists, limited to the jurisdiction of the State; excepting only, that if the slave escape, he may be recaptured. And the Republican party affirms that slavery is a social, moral, and political evil, and that it is the right and duty of Congress and of the people to prevent its extension into free territory. [Loud cheers.]

Upon this issue, mainly, the Republican and Democratic parties are about to enter into a contest for the administration of the Government for four years, and, perhaps, for a generation.

You and our fellow citizens, from Maine to California, are to be the arbiters. This contest is no factious strife. It is a constitutional trial between opposing ideas, to be conducted in the mode prescribed by law before the great jury of the American people. Before that supreme tribunal the Republican party is willing to discuss its case upon its merits, and to its verdict, whatever it may be, it is pledged in advance to yield a cheerful submission. The Democratic party, however, enters the contest in a different spirit. We are met at the outset with the distinct and oft-repeated threat, made by Democratic Governors, Senators, and Representatives, that if the Republican party should, in the regular constitutional way, by the votes of the majority of the electoral college and of the people, elect a Republican as President of the United States, they will dissolve the Government, break up this fair fabric of liberty, and divide into hostile fragments the union of these States. As either a Democrat or a Republican must, in all human probability, be elected, the substance of these threats is, that unless a Democrat be elected, there shall be no President of the United States.

They will sink the ship that has thus far borne us as a nation on a voyage so prosperous that the history of man does not present its parallel. They tell us that if the slaveholders of this country are not allowed to carry their slaves into free territory, and there hold them as slaves, they will commit an overt act of treason. They tell us that if a Republican President is elected, they will resist his inauguration with armed force. These extraordinary threats are made by men in high positions in the Democratic party—by the men who usually control that party. The Republican party is compelled, at the outset, to consider whether it will yield its political organization, surrender all its deeply-cherished principles, and all the power and patronage of the Government, to the menace of such adversaries. This is a question of manhood as well as of principle. [Loud applause.] When they assume to be our governors, it is high time to test the virtue of their claim. The natural effect of such menaces is to excite the Anglo-Saxon spirit of us all. When the gauntlet is thus thrown at our feet, we will take it up. As their equals and peers, we will insist that the majority shall exercise its right, in conformity with the Constitution and laws, to select the agents of the Government; and if we succeed in electing a Republican President, we shall see that be

shall exercise the functions of the office. [Loud cheers.] We will defend him in the exercise of his lawful functions, and I have no doubt there are patriotic men enough in every State to punish all who attempt to execute such threats.

But while it is our duty not to be moved by these threats, it is equally our duty fairly to examine the claims of these opposing parties, and to test them by a practical contrast of their public measures and policy.

The Republican party is only six years old, but its principles are as old as the Government. Its cardinal doctrine was first formally announced in July, 1787, by the Congress of the Confederation, which prohibited slavery in all the then existing Territories of the United States, by an ordinance declared to be irrevocable.

The National Convention, then in session, and composed in part of the same persons, engrafted in the Constitution a provision that 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.

The First Congress approved, ratified, and confirmed the ordinance of 1787 against slavery. Since that time, Congress has repeatedly exercised its plenary power over the Territories, by prohibiting the importation of slaves into them.

In 1810, the Supreme Court of the United States (see Peters, 6; Cranch, 336) affirmed this power as follows:

"The power of governing and legislating for a Territory is the inevitable consequence of the right to acquire and hold territory. Could this position be contested, the Constitution declares that '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.' Accordingly, we find Congress possessing and exercising the absolute and undisputed power of governing and legislating for the Territory of Orleans."

In 1820, after a full debate on the act admitting Missouri, Congress enacted—

"That in all the territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of 36 deg. 30 min. of north latitude, not included within the limits of the State contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than as the punishment of crimes, shall be, and is hereby, forever prohibited."

This prohibition received the unanimous sanction of President Monroe and his Cabinet, of which Mr. Calhoun and Mr. J. Q. Adams were leading members.

In 1828, in *Canter's case*, (1 Peters's Reports, 511,) the Supreme Court of the United States again held as follows:

"In the mean time, Florida continues to be a Territory of the United States, governed by that clause in the Constitution which empowers Congress 'to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.' * * * The right to govern may be the inevitable consequence of the right to acquire territory. Whichever may be the source whence the power may be derived, the possession of it is unquestioned. * * * In legislating for the Territories, Congress exercises the combined powers of the General and of a State Government."

When the Territory of Oregon was organized, Congress again prohibited slavery, in the words of the ordinance of 1787.

In 1850, Utah and New Mexico were organized as Territories, when the power of Congress was first seriously disputed. It was not then exercised, chiefly because it was believed slavery was sufficiently prohibited by the local Mexican laws and the supposed effect of climate.

The controlling idea upon which the compromise measures of 1850 were based is thus stated

by Mr. Webster, in his celebrated speech of the 7th of March, 1850:

"And now I say, sir, as the proposition upon which I stand this day, that there is not at this moment within the United States, or any Territory of the United States, a single foot of land the character of which, in regard to its being free-soil territory or slave territory, is not fixed by some law, and some unrepeatable law, beyond the power of the Government."

What would Mr. Webster have said, if he could have foreseen the repeal of one of these unrepeatable laws within five years? What would he have said, could he have foreseen the Dred Scott decision, and the slave code of New Mexico? Again, he said:

"Sir, whenever there is a foot of land to be staid back from becoming slave territory, I am ready to assert the principle of the exclusion of slavery. I am pledged to it from the year 1837. I have been pledged to it again and again, and I will perform these pledges." [Applause.]

I have thus shown, by well-known political events, that the power of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories was recognised and acted upon. The distinction between States and Territories—that in States Congress could not interfere with slavery, but that it could in Territories—was recognised by every department of the Government, and had been so exercised, that, in the opinion of our greatest statesmen, the slavery question was settled for a generation at least. The Republican party has never proposed to exercise this power further than to keep slavery out of the territory covered by the Missouri restriction, and out of that acquired as free territory. Their great purpose is to maintain that territory free, for free labor and free men. Let us see the origin of the present controversy:

In the contest of 1852, the old Whig and Democratic parties had united substantially upon the same platform. Both acquiesced in the compromise measures of 1850. Military grants and pre-emption laws had, for the time, disposed of the land question. The distinctions between a revenue tariff, with incidental protection, and a protective tariff, had become so nice and refined, that the popular mind would not draw them. Men voted with their party rather from habit than from choice, and with a general indifference as to results. The Democratic party succeeded in the contest; sectional strife was soothed by deceitful promises of the finality of the compromises. But there was a great controlling interest—an interest above parties—keen to discern, and prompt to seize upon the opportunity to extend its power. It extorted from the ambitious politicians at Washington the repeal of the Missouri restriction, by the aid, as I verily believe, of a scandalous abuse of Executive patronage. So unexpected was this act of bad faith, that the country only awoke from its slumbers to find that it had already been consummated. I will not examine the pretences upon which it was founded, for the delusive cry of popular sovereignty is now rejected by every organ of the Democratic party. The declaration of the President, the decision of the Supreme Court, the vetoes of the Governors of Kansas and Nebraska, the action of the Senate and House, all show that it was a cheat and a sham. Its true purpose was, by removing a legislative restriction, to allow slavery to extend into Kansas, and thence over all the Territories.

Must we submit to it? Must negro slavery be established where it was agreed free labor should

exist? If not, how were we to prevent it? These were the questions Northern men were compelled to answer. The Southern wing of the Whig party was too timid to resist the repeal of the Missouri restriction, or any other measure in the interest of slavery. We could hope but little aid from them, and there was no other political organization of sufficient power and influence to resist it. But the outraged and indignant public sentiment of the free States speedily found an embodiment in a new organization. All who were opposed to this measure—designed, as we believed, to extend slavery, founded in dishonor, carried by corruption, and bearing deception on its face—rallied around the Republican standard. They consisted of three classes, who had for years been arrayed in hostile parties. There was the great body of mechanics and business men, who believed in the industrial policy of the Whig party; there was a portion of the Democrats at the North, who were not willing to sustain their party in its abandonment of the settled policy of the Government, and in converting their organization into a mere instrument to extend slavery; and there were the earnest anti-slavery men, who fought against slavery as a great social enormity. These men, disregarding mere party names and old political ties, formed themselves into the Republican party, with a determined resolve, never to be yielded, that the institution of slavery should derive no practical advantage from this violation of a time-honored compromise.

What sentiment united these conflicting elements? Was it sectional animosity? Was it merely dislike to slavery as an existing institution in the Southern States? Any man who thinks so, takes a very superficial view of the motives of a great political movement. The very sentiment that led the great mass of our people to acquiesce in the compromise of 1850—the desire for quiet; the wish to avoid the agitation of the slavery question—this it was that led thousands and tens of thousands of our best citizens to join in this movement.

The political interest of slavery was active, ceaseless; it would allow no quiet. It would make new demands, then compromise, then agitate. We felt there was no way to meet this ever-disturbing element of American politics, except firmly to say to its advocates: "You shall not extend slavery into the free Territories of the United States."

This was the immediate purpose and aim of the Republican organization, and every measure adopted by it has contributed to that end. It has now other purposes in view, connected with other interests of the Government, yet it still adheres to its original and principal object; and although it has the control of but one branch of the Federal Legislature, it has thus far been able to accomplish a great deal. It has approved itself in the estimation of all candid men, not only in the rectitude of its principles, but in its ability to maintain them. What other power would have sustained the people of Kansas in their resistance to the invasion from Missouri in 1855? I speak of what I know, when I say that nothing could have prevented the final conquest of Kansas in the interest of slavery but the moral and material aid rendered by the Republican party to her early settlers in 1855 and 1856. Then it was denounced as a miserable faction of "Black Republicans," thrown upon the surface

by a wave of popular feeling. I have lived to hear it called by these same men the great Republican party—able to force a combination of all other parties and factions, and to beat them, too—winning by its unity and discipline, by its firm adherence to principles, the admiration of friends and foes. It has been able to attain its present position only from the deliberate conviction of its adherents, that its success was necessary to keep the Government true to the old landmarks of our fathers. [Cheers.]

Let us contrast these two parties in the Thirty-fourth Congress, when, for the first time, they met each other face to face. The President and Senate were Democratic. A Republican plurality in the House succeeded, after a long contest, in electing a Speaker. In the mean time, a civil war was raging in Kansas. The Free-State settlers had been worried by Democratic officials, mobs, and invaders, until they were driven to exasperation, and were engaging in acts of lawless retaliation. It was the time when such Jacobin Democrats as Atchison, Stringfellow, Jones, Shannon, and others of that stamp, were ruling in unbounded license; when an arbitrary, disgraceful code was enforced by drunken rowdies, and officers of the army were compelled to do police duty at the heels of vagabond constables. In this contest, the Democratic party exhausted its powers to establish slavery in Kansas. The very men who now, day by day, mourn over the recent lawless invasion of Virginia by seventeen white men and five negroes, led by a fanatic, smiled complacently at a foray of thousands of Missourians upon the prairies of Kansas. Republicans may and do denounce both these lawless attempts upon the peace and order of society; but how can Northern or Southern Democrats, who sneered at "Kansas shriekers," consistently clamor at the silly or crazy attempt of John Brown, when they excused their partisans, armed with United States muskets, taken by violence from a United States armory, driving quiet settlers from the polls, and depriving them of every civil right by a cunning combination of force and fraud? When I recall these scenes, brought vividly before me by a legislative examination of over three hundred witnesses, by knowing the men engaged in them, and by being compelled as an eye-witness to see a portion of them, I am not surprised that the people of Kansas are this day more determined in their hostility to the Democratic party than any other portion of the people of the United States.

During this early struggle, I am glad to say the Republicans in Congress made no mistake. They established, by the clearest testimony, the truth of their allegations. They then proposed to admit Kansas as a State under the Topeka Constitution, to withdraw all outside agencies, and to leave the people "perfectly free to form and regulate their own institutions in their own way." When this proposition was rejected, every Republican in Congress voted to settle the whole controversy by what is known as "Dunn's bill." It removed all the controverted enactments of the Legislative Assembly, and restored the Missouri restriction, but it carefully guarded whatever rights slaveholders might have in the Territory. It was a liberal measure—so much so, that it formed the chief electioneering cry of Northern Democrats, that the Republicans had

voted to consign unborn children, and their children's children, to everlasting slavery. But it was rejected, because the men who controlled the Democratic party at that time believed that Kansas was secured to the interest of slavery, and they would yield to no compromise. [Applause.]

Such was the position of affairs when the Republican party entered into its first great contest. It was without a common organization, without acknowledged leaders, and was required to measure strength with an old organization, in possession of all the powers and patronage of the Government, with an army of trained officials, who wanted nothing but the password and plunder to bring them into line. This dominant party had yielded so far to the popular feeling as to put aside its active agents in the recent contest, and take for its Presidential nominee a gentleman who had been absent for years at a foreign Court. It also fortified itself by pledges to respect popular sovereignty, both in the States and Territories.

Yet, gentlemen, with all these odds and agencies against it, the Republican party would have succeeded, but for the presence in some of the middle free States of a third party, composed of men who agreed with it in most, if not all, practical measures. I am glad they did not, for they had not gristle enough to face the battle which is now to be fought. They were timid men—men who did not like some speech or some phrase that some Republican had uttered at some time or other. They were easily frightened by a clamor or party cry. They were such men as are found in every contest, when rival ideas meet face to face. They did not understand republican ideas; but I hope they will do better next time. Professing to follow the teachings of the great Whig leader, they contributed, by their votes for a third candidate, to perpetuate the ascendancy of a party whose latest act was the abrogation of a compromise rendered doubly sacred by its historic connection with the hallowed name of Henry Clay—a name that is garlanded with fresh flowers in the hearts of millions of his countrymen—a name that is the emulation of youth, and of manhood the standard of all that is manly and noble. [Applause.] And if old Harry Clay had lived, Stephen A. Douglas would never have dared to touch one word of the Missouri compromise.

Mr. Buchanan was elected President, and, soon after, the attempt to force slavery upon Kansas was renewed with fresh energy. Democratic officials engaged in forging and swearing to returns of the election of delegates to the Lecompton Constitutional Convention. The men so declared elected gravely met and framed a Constitution, in which they declared that property in slaves was higher than and above all law. That instrument was sent to a Democratic President and Cabinet for approval, and it was approved. It was followed by remonstrance, by the condemnation of a popular vote in Kansas, by the clearest evidence that it was a fraud, consummated by the wholesale commission of the meanest crimes known to the criminal code. [Applause.] Yet, having been approved by a Democratic President and Cabinet, it received the further sanction of a Democratic Senate, and would have been invested with all the power and force of an act of Congress, but for the sturdy opposition of the

Republican party. And I am glad to say that in this controversy the Republicans were aided by the Senators and Representatives of that middle class of men who defeated them in the Presidential contest, and also by some Democrats now known as anti-Lecompton Democrats. Even those nervous gentlemen who look upon this Union as a consumptive, dyspeptic patient, in danger of speedy dissolution, must have enjoyed a temporary relief when Crittenden, Bell, Davis, Douglas, Marshall, Gilmer—all on the "national side of the line"—[applause]—joined the Republicans in their opposition to the chief measure of this Administration. They regarded the whole measure with indignation and scorn.

Another significant circumstance connected with this memorable controversy is, that the principal element of strength of one of the prominent Democratic candidates for the Presidential nomination, consists in the fact that throughout the struggle he acted with the Republicans. If the controlling interest in the Democratic party shall allow Mr. Douglas to be nominated at Charleston, it will be because they believed he acquired Northern strength by acting with the Republicans on this great question. But you may rest assured that if this is done, slavery will demand indemnity for the past and security for the future. Some new act of fealty, some new pledge of submission, will be exacted as the condition of his nomination. Whatever may be his fate, I will do him the justice to say that his temporary rebellion was of the highest service to the Republican cause, let him be friend or foe. [Applause.]

Well, gentlemen, Lecompton was defeated; but the Democratic party covered its defeat by the contrivance known as the English bill. I will not stop to discuss this bill, for its offers, its promises, its bribes, were rejected by an overwhelming majority of the people of Kansas. They now come with a Constitution of their own making, and demand admission into the Union. They have fairly won the honors of State sovereignty by a struggle as glorious as the Revolutionary struggle of our fathers. [Applause.] They form the right wing of the army of free labor, and are ready to shake hands in the friendly competition of peaceful development with their neighbors and friends in Western Texas. Their prairies are the pathway of the onward advancing tide of sturdy settlers, who, I trust, will forever prevent slaves from occupying another foot of our Western territory. Yet, at this time, a Democratic President and a Democratic Senate stand in the way of their admission as a State. Two years ago, Kansas had enough population to be admitted under the Lecompton Constitution; but it is doubtful, very doubtful, without a very special count, whether she has enough now to entitle her to admission under a Constitution confessedly approved by her people.

My fellow-citizens, the same narrow, sectional interest—which can see nothing but slaves and slave labor; that estimates the value of but one production of industry, raw cotton; that cannot, or will not, study a census table, to learn its growing weakness; that will not read the lesson taught by this great city; by such a State as Ohio; by the development of the whole Northern country—it is that narrow interest, brooding like a nightmare over the Democratic party, that forbids the prompt admission of Kansas. But, not-

withstanding these factions delays, the Republican party may confidently claim, as the result of its policy, that Kansas will soon come in as a free State. [Applause.]

I have dwelt thus at length upon the history of the Kansas controversy, because in that controversy have been developed the purposes and aims of the slavery interest which controls the Democratic party, and through it the Executive, and the upper branch of the legislative department of the Government. If we extend our inquiry to the judicial department, we discover that its influence is no less potent and controlling there than in the other co-ordinate branches. In a remote room of the Capitol at Washington you will find sitting a court of grave and reverend gentlemen in black gowns. Tread softly, for everything about this room has a funereal aspect. It is the tribunal which prescribes the platforms and writes out the doctrines of the Democratic party. [Applause and laughter.] Since the last Presidential election, it has declared that a man with any negro blood in his veins has not sufficient humanity to entitle him to sue in the courts of the United States. This it had a right to say, because such a man had sued in that court, and it was a question properly before the court, whether he had power to sue. But, seizing the occasion presented by the suit of this negro, they announced, for the first time by a court, the doctrine that slaves are held, not simply under the laws of the different States, but that slavery is recognised by the Constitution of the United States, and that "persons held to service," as the Constitution describes slaves, are in precisely the same condition as horses, cattle, and other chattel property. ["Shame!"]

The opinion universally held by the framers of the Constitution was, that slavery was a mere municipal regulation, protected by usage or positive law in certain States, but condemned by the conscience of the people of all the States, and endured only until it could be safely removed. The only right which the Federal Government denies to the owners of slaves outside of a slave State arises from that provision in the Constitution which declares that—

"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, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

If a slave escapes, he may be recaptured. If he is found anywhere beyond the range of the municipal law, under circumstances which do not constitute an escape, he is free; and there is no power in the Government that can make him a slave again. Whenever alluded to in the Constitution, it is as a person—as such he is represented in Congress. More than twenty gentlemen, who make some of the bad talk there, which disgraces the country, now hold their seats in the House of Representatives by slave representation. The Constitution contemplates persons alone, and not property, as the basis of representation; as a person owing service, he may be recaptured when he escapes; as a person, he is the basis of taxation; as a person, he is spoken of in the clause which allows the prohibition of the slave trade after 1808. He is nowhere in the Constitution referred to as property; and we have the authority of many distinguished men, who aided in framing the Constitution, that this idea that man could hold property in man was carefully

excluded in that instrument. Madison declared, in the Convention—

"I think it was wrong to admit the idea in the Constitution that there can be property in man."

Roger Sherman, in the same Convention, said: "I am opposed to a tax on slaves, because it implies they are property."

There was no difference among these men; and in all the political writings and judicial opinions of the time, not only of the courts of the United States, but of the State courts, North and South, slavery was regarded as a condition like minority or alienage, which, once removed, could never be restored, except for crime. The language was strong, and breathed the generous and manly spirit of liberty. But a few years since, in the case of *Prigg vs. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, the Supreme Court of the United States declared that the "state of slavery is deemed to be a mere municipal regulation, founded upon and limited to the range of the Territorial law."

It was not until the interest of slavery became political, until it moulded a party to suit its purposes, that the State courts in the slave States changed their rulings. One by one, the various departments of the General Government fell under the power of this institution, until now the majority of the Supreme Court, prepared by its peculiar organization, have departed from judicial propriety, and carried to the ranks of a political party the weight of their official position; a mere municipal institution, offensive alike from its origin, its nature, its name, and its effects upon free labor, is elevated into a national institution, above the power of Congress and the people, and coextensive with all the Territories of the United States.

Gentlemen, it is not my purpose to discuss this decision further. It is only important as it states the political opinion of the Democratic party, never heretofore noted for its love of courts or law. It was a political necessity yielded to the Democratic party, and I have no doubt will, in due time, take its place in that multitudinous array of overruled cases familiar to lawyers. In the mean time, it has neither the form nor force of law, except as it affected the fate of *Dred Scott*.

But gentlemen sometimes tell us they are opposed to the agitation of the slavery question. Well, how will you avoid it? Will it be by submission?—by constantly yielding to new demands? [Cries of "No, no. You have got to do it, if you stick to the Democratic party."] I have been in Congress five years, and I have scarcely known the subject introduced, except when forced upon Northern men either by measures proposed, or speeches made, in the interest of slavery. You may purchase peace by yielding up the Territories, and Mexico and Cuba, and all the powers of the Government; and even then you do not know how soon you will be called upon to sanction the piracy of the slave trade, and the presence of slaves among you, legalized by *Lemmon cases*, or some second edition of the *Dred Scott case*. The only way you can have peace, is to show your political adversaries that you can command one. As long as the South will insist upon abrogating compromises, upon Missouri raids and *Lecompton Constitutions*, or, worse yet, upon converting our highest judicial tribunal into a party caucus for platform-making; so long as they insist that their local peculiar institution shall become national, coextensive with the Territories of the United States, you and

they must expect agitation and the discussion of the slavery question. When they are willing to let the two systems of free and slave labor work out their own development, without perverting the powers of the Government to extend their institution of slavery over free territory, all agitation in the free States will cease, and not before. [Loud applause.]

We have heard a good deal of complaint that we have circulated a book, [tremendous applause,] written by a native and citizen of a slave State, against Slavery. I have recently read that book for the first time, and my astonishment is almost equal to the contempt with which I have always regarded the clamor about the book. [Applause, and cries of "Good."] It is chiefly made up of statistical information, showing the relative value of free and slave labor, and the opinions of eminent men from the North and the South, of this and foreign countries, as to the social, moral, and political influence of slavery. So far as this information goes, it is eminently proper for circulation. Such portions could be read with profit by the very men who have made the most clamor about the book. It is a book that I believe any intelligent man could read, condemning what is wrong in it, and yet obtaining from it useful suggestions. That portion of the book written by the author which is addressed to his fellow non-slaveholders of the Southern States evinces a bitterness that has its parallel in the speeches and denunciations made by men in the interest of slavery on the floor of Congress. [Applause.] I have listened, over and over again, to the same character of harangue, to the same violent, rude, and exciting language, with the simple difference that the subjects of denunciation were "Black Republicans," instead of slaveholders.

The author has evidently caught the spirit that pervades his book in a climate different from ours. The advice of Helper to his fellow non-slaveholders, that they could abolish a system that bears heavily upon them by non-intercourse, by social proscription, by severing all the ties of church fellowship, of family, and of social connection, is the advice of a heated enthusiast, which, however vindictive, is harmless, because of its utter impracticability; and yet his ideas are the same, differently applied, that form the staple of many Democratic speeches. Books are written and speeches made in the interests of slavery, and they will be written and made against slavery, and they will be circulated. If they are false in theory or unfounded in fact, they will be overthrown by reason and argument; but in no other way. The very means taken to denounce a book will give it wider circulation. Thousands who would never have heard of Helper's book but for the outcry against it, have heard of and will read it; and permit me to add, gentlemen, that no institution or system can or ought to stand, in a free Government like ours, that is afraid to meet, and unable to answer by fact and argument, any book that can be written. [Great applause.]

None knew better how groundless was the clamor against this book than the very men who made it; none knew better my opinions than they did; and, in the frankness of private intercourse, I never knew one of them who did not respect the honest conviction of the Northern people against slavery. But the clamor was to

deter the Southern opposition from acting with the Republicans, to mislead the Southern people as to our principles, and to give a few Northern men, elected by Republican votes, a pretext for violating their engagements. [Applause.]

Perhaps it is well to repeat what the Republicans will not do. They will not interfere, directly or indirectly, with slavery in the slave States; not because they think slavery less an evil in a State than in a Territory, but because, under our system of Government, we of the free States have no constitutional power to interfere with slavery in the States. It is not because we like the system, for we do not. It is scarcely possible for a man born and bred in a free State to regard with favor a system under which men, women, and children, are the absolute property of others, liable to be separated at the caprice or necessity of their masters; a system by which men, I care not of what color or how low in the scale of intelligence they may be, are reduced to the level of brutes, and deprived of every distinctive right of humanity. The very fact that four millions of human beings are held in this condition in a Republic like ours, and that such servitude does not exist to anything like the same extent elsewhere, will always be a disturbing element in American politics. While we admit we have no power over the institution in Southern States, and will not attempt to exercise any, we will, in common with the civilized world, entertain the hope that by the voluntary action of the States where the institution exists, the condition of the slaves will be gradually ameliorated and changed, until the great principle, that every man has a right to the proceeds of his own labor, may be recognised from one end of the land to the other. [Great applause.]

And now, as to what the Republican party will do, if you take us at our word, and help us elect a Republican President. I will tell you. We will promptly admit Kansas as a State into this Union, and put an end at once to that controversy. [Applause.] We will settle with the Mormons in accordance with the Philadelphia platform. [Applause.] We will prevent the planting of slavery in New Mexico. [Applause.] We will adopt the homestead and pre-emption policy in the settlement of the public lands. [Cheers and applause.] We will invite any man, who is willing to work, and has a wife and children to support, and no better means of livelihood, to aid in the development of the resources of our country by establishing a new homestead in the West. And, my friends, you need not fear that this will be a sectional measure, for as many thousands of poor white men in the Southern States will avail themselves of this law as there will be from the Northern States. I leave it to you to say whether, removed from the shadow of a great plantation, where settlements are sparse, where schools are difficult of access, they will not be as happy and prosperous when transplanted into a rapidly-growing settlement of free farmers. You ask me, what will become of the proceeds of the public lands? Why, gentlemen, they now go to an army of receivers, registers, land clerks, &c., &c.; and the land becomes the capital stock of railroad corporations and the property of non-resident proprietors, speculators, and land-sharks. Under the present system, thousands of acres of timber land, without a cabin or "deadening," and millions of acres of unbroken prairies held by

Speculators, block and retard the progress of settlement. The great tide of emigration is turned from its course, leaving uncultivated deserts in its pathway.

You do not feel the evil of the present system as we of the West do. I confess, gentlemen, I prefer a liberal extension of the pre-emption principle to a free homestead. The hardy settlers who seek homes in the West are always willing to pay for their lands a sum at least sufficient to survey and locate them. But they cannot and ought not to be compelled, by their labor and improvements, to add to the value of the lands of non-residents, who do no good, and only keep neighbors away. The true way of dealing with the public lands is to keep the surveys but little in advance of the settlement, and to survey in small bodies. Let it then be kept ten years for actual settlers, under well-guarded pre-emption laws, and at a price barely sufficient to pay for survey and entry, so that for ten years there shall be no proprietors but the settlers and the Government. This would secure a rapid development of our Western country, and, by making new homes, new customers, and starting new markets in the West, add directly to the trade of this great city and the prosperity of the whole country.

The homestead policy now proposed by the Republican party will unquestionably aid in securing the Territories for free labor. Slaves and slave labor require plantations of thousands of acres to waste; free labor requires but a quarter section of one hundred and sixty acres to cultivate. When the public land is open for homesteads of limited quantities, there is little danger but that farms will exclude plantations, and free labor exclude slave labor. Apart from these considerations, I ask you if it is not a noble policy for a free Government to say to her sons who are poor and out of employment, yet willing to labor, "Go to the West; select your homes; the free air of heaven is above you; a virgin soil is below you, made ready for the plough by the hand of God; work, and be independent!" [Applause.]

We will then solve the great problem of the age—a Pacific railway, [applause] with its outskirts of mail routes and settlements; not on some devious course, through deserts along the Mexican boundary, but on that line, in whatever latitude it may be, that the skill of engineers may select as the best. Give the universal Yankee nation a fair chance, and a free selection of routes, and the iron horse will soon be steaming away up those magnificent slopes, stretching from the eastern border of Kansas to the Rocky Mountains; thence through one of the numerous passes of that great backbone of the continent to the waters of the Pacific.

A VOICE. I presume you will use American iron. [Laughter.]

MR. SHERMAN. Certainly we will. If I had my way, I wouldn't use any other. [Applause.] Short as human life is, some us will live to see that grand idea consummated. But we know very well, by the actual experiment of the Butterfield mail route, that if the intense sectionalism of the Democratic party prevails, private enterprise will not be left free to choose, but will be bent southward, over arid plains, in aid of some sectional purpose.

Composed as the Republican party is, of Whigs and Democrats, and holding somewhat opposite creeds on the question of the tariff, it will be prepared to consider, without party bias, and in a spirit of moderation, how duties on imports may be imposed sufficient to meet the necessary expenses of the Government, and yet so as to be least burdensome upon the people and most serviceable to the industrial interests of the country.

And the Republicans, moreover, will be prepared to consider the great question, discussed before you by the Hon. Frank P. Blair, of Missouri, whether the gradual colonization of the negro population of the United States in the Central American States can be promoted, and whether this population, which is now kept down by the feeling of caste and by the prejudices of education, may not be made useful and independent citizens of flourishing States in another latitude, free from the domination of our race.

Our relations with Mexico now present questions of great difficulty. From our geographical position, we are sensibly affected by the troubles of that country. We are liable at any moment to be involved in a quasi war, by causes beyond our control. We have, in common with her, a border stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific coast. Much of it is occupied by wandering tribes of Indians, who have been emboldened by their frequent successful incursions upon Mexican settlements, to rob our acquired "fellow-citizens" of New Mexico. A good many of them are pretty hard cases, I imagine. [Laughter.] The recent difficulties made by Cortinas on the Rio Grande, threatened at one time to provoke an invasion of Tamaulipas by General Houston. Many of our citizens are engaged in trade in Mexico, and are liable to be, and are, frequently involved in the civil broils of that unhappy country. While it is divided by factions, unable to defend itself from even the border Indian tribes, a prey to civil and religious strife, our own settlements are rapidly approaching its borders; our adventurous citizens are acquiring interests in her soil, so that, whether we wish or not, we may be compelled, sooner or later, to intervene, and

either establish a protectorate, or take side with one of the factions, and sustain it with material aid, or admit Mexico, or parts of it, into our own system of States or Territories. Whether we have peace or war, a protectorate or a conquest, I ask you, fellow-citizens, whether it is not better to intrust these questions to the conservative elements of the Republican party, rather than to the lawless turbulence of the Democratic party. [Applause.] Why, gentlemen, that party would at once pervert all the powers of the Government to establish, by custom or positive law, slavery in the new conquest, and we shall again have a fierce sectional strife. The only difference is, that we would establish slavery in that country in lieu of their unhappy discords; but it would be far better that their discords should continue, rather than that slavery, which is worse than any evil they can suffer—as much as one thing can be worse than another—should be established there.

We will be prepared also to consider whether the nests of greedy office-holders, now gathered in our post offices, may not be routed, and their duties performed by private enterprise, organized under Government control. [Loud applause.]

These and numerous other questions demand all the skill, all the intellect and energy of our people; and I am glad to say all of them are now receiving in the House of Representatives—the only branch of Government not controlled by the Democratic party—the attention they merit.

On the other hand, I ask you what practical measures do the Democratic party propose? If you go to the Senate, you will find the leaders of that party discussing resolutions declaring that it is the duty of Congress, of the Courts, and of the Executive, to protect slavery in all the Territories. Recently, a distinguished Senator, in a carefully-prepared speech, proposed to revive the principle of the old sedition law—in effect, to suppress the discussion of slavery in the pulpit, in the press, and on the stump—under color of preventing combinations against slavery in the States. No political measure can receive the sanction of that body, unless it promotes the interests of slavery. That is now the only test of Democracy; toleration is allowed on every other subject. A Democrat may separate from his party friends on the homestead, tariff, polygamy—on all other questions—but he must be true to slavery, or be ostracized.

Go to the Executive departments, and look through all the bureaus and offices, and you will find that no man can hold any office of trust or profit unless he believes in the new doctrines in regard to slavery. One holding your opinions or mine is as effectually proscribed and excluded as if he was a Russian serf or an Austrian subject. You will find the Walpole system of corruption permeating every branch of the public service. Jobs, contracts, money, take the place of reason, justice, and honor. Sinecure agencies are established to reward party services, and the profits carefully parcelled out among party favorites. An infamous party organ, hired to libel political adversaries, is paid out of the public treasury. The honors of the Republic are bestowed as the reward for treachery to constituents. Men who utter incipient treason are the chosen counsellors of the President, and now represent us at foreign Governments; and when the Chief Executive is called to an account by the representatives of the people, he claims exemption from inquiry. Under the name of Democracy, you have established at Washington an unrestrained tyranny, supported by corruption. [Loud applause.]

Go to the House of Representatives, where the popular will has left the Democratic party in the minority, and listen to the burden of Democratic speeches there—threats of disunion in case the people of the United States intrust their adversaries with the administration of the Government. A proposition to pay one hundred and twenty millions of dollars for Cuba, the only place in the civilized Christian world outside the Southern States, and perhaps of Brazil, where African slavery is approved and sanctioned. You will hear from them no proposition to develop the internal resources of our great country. There is a constitutional objection always to that. The black shadow of slavery mingles with darkness, and controls every measure they propose, even to a mail route or a private bill. As Hooke, made immortal by the eloquence of Patrick Henry, had his cry of beef, beef, beef, so the Democratic party has his cry of slaves, slaves, slaves. [Applause.]

What affinities, my friends, have you, the commercial and laboring men of New York, with these ideas? What tie can bind you to such a party? Is it that you still associate with it the names of Jefferson and Jackson? Why, a modern Democrat dare not endorse Jefferson's Notes on Virginia. [Laughter.] The worst part of the Helper book is an extract from that. The chief event in the political life of General Jackson was his successful contest with the Supreme Court of the United States, as to the constitutionality of the United States Bank, and yet the Democratic party now look to this court as the framers of its political opinions, as the infallible expounders of party dogmas and creeds. The writings of those great men, if read now in a Democratic meeting, would be denounced as Black Republicanism of the worst type. They would be mistaken, as the Declaration of Independence once was, as a Black Republican lie. You may tear from

your political records the Philadelphia platform; you may erase every word written by Seward, Chase, Lincoln, or any other Republican, since the organization of that party in 1855, and yet you will find the Republican platform in the writings of Jefferson, Randolph, Mason, and Clay; [applause;] but you will look in vain in anything they said or did to justify the last or the present Administration. Think of Henry Clay striking from the statute book the healing measure of 1821! Think of Jefferson, the author of slavery prohibition, leading hordes of excited men to force upon an infant Territory the institution of slavery! Think of Jefferson, or Jackson, or Clay, aiding John Calhoun in forging or uttering forged election returns, building a fraudulent Government upon them, and then using all the powers of the Government to induce Congress to sanction the fraud! Think of such men carefully dividing out among party favorites the profits of coal agencies, live-oak contracts, and the stealings of your navy yards! Think of them pleading "gray hairs"—[oh! oh! laughter, and loud applause]—as an exemption against legislative inquiry! The Democratic party has gone down, step by step, until now it represents nothing but what is bad.

And now, gentlemen, I ask you to look back over the record I have presented, and tell me what act of aggression has been attempted or proposed by the Republican party. I do not ask you whether Republicans have not made speeches marked with undue temper and violence; I do not ask you to approve all that has been said by Republicans. If you were compelled to listen, as I am, to the ordinary language of our adversaries, you would give us a ready absolution from all such sins. But I again ask you, what wrong measures have Republicans voted for, and what right measures have they resisted, during all the fierce contentions of the past five years? That is the true test. [Applause.] They tell us that we are sectionalists; and yet, when have we infringed upon any right of any Southern citizen or any Southern State? Our whole warfare has been in defence of the freedom of the Territories, part of which was made free by a solemn compact, and part of which was acquired by conquest from Mexico, as free territory; and which, by your help, we "Black Republicans" intend to keep forever free for the labor of white men from the North and South, from the East and the West, and to do so to the bitter end. [Applause.] Is it probable that a party that has been so moderate and conservative when engaged in a continuous struggle, will be less moderate and conservative when it shall be charged with the administration of all the powers of the Government? Is there not danger even that it will forget the sentiment that elevated it?

The North is naturally conservative and national; the South is necessarily sectional; and this difference is an inevitable result of the difference between the social and industrial peculiarities of the two sections. In the slave States, one single interest is paramount to all others, because it is part and parcel of all. The whole industrial system is based upon slave labor. The whole social system conforms to the requirements of the peculiar institution with which it is intertwined. Even the products of the generous soil and the sunny climate depend entirely upon the labor of slaves. The amount invested in human chattels forms a vast item in the sum total of Southern wealth, and is thus an important financial element. Slaves, moreover, form the basis of representation in Congress, and in this capacity they have passively wielded a political power which has contributed more than all other agencies to give to Southern counsels the ascendancy in the direction of the Government. In these and other ways the slavery interest is linked with every other Southern interest, and all are parts of a connected chain by which the Southern people are bound together as a unit. As a unit only can they act on all questions affecting in the remotest degree the system that underlies their whole social, political, and industrial fabric.

There can be no conservatism where such a state of things exists, unless that be called conservatism which would sacrifice for slavery all other interests, both of its own and of other sections.

In the free States, a remarkable contrast is presented. Here a vast variety of productions, and an almost endless diversity of pursuits, create a wholesome variety of interests, and mutually restrain dangerous excesses of opinion in any one direction. The agricultural development of the great West, the manufacturing enterprise of New England and the Middle States, the commercial interests of the Lake and Atlantic seaboard, operate as friendly aids to each other, and as healthy checks upon any policy that would exact the one to the injury of the other. The relations of trade, moreover, existing between the manufacturing and commercial States and the Southern sections of the Confederacy, have also contributed much to the cultivation of a liberal spirit of concession and forbearance. The aggregate political opinion, the deliberate political action of vast communities of men thus educated in different pursuits, entertaining individually different ideas, and aiming at different objects in life, can never swerve far from the average line of right; for these opposing forces of thought, like the antagonistic forces of gravitation, will keep that opinion in its true and natural orbit. Men who, from boyhood, have been taught to respect the constitutional rights of every section, and to regard the

preservation of the union of these States as a sacred duty, can never, in the presence of an all-controlling interest like that which overshadows the slave States, be induced to infringe upon the one or to endanger the other. Therefore it is that conservatism—true conservatism, which looks beyond a single section, and surveys the broader field of the whole country—is the natural outgrowth of the social and industrial systems of the free States. This conservative sentiment has, on more than one occasion, degenerated into timidity, and it is even now securely relied upon as an element of strength for the South in the coming contest.

In the North, opinion is free; and wherever opinion is free, the right is more than a match for the wrong. Here any one may extol the beauties of slavery, polygamy, Mahometanism—of anything and everything. He may write about it, talk about it, preach about it. Here we are not afraid of a tract, a book, or a speech. Freedom of discussion always begets difference of opinion. In the South, opinion upon the slave question is not free; the most moderate opinions against slavery cannot there be uttered safely. The mails are opened and robbed; Northern men are watched as enemies; books are burned, as Bibles have been in times past. There is no open channel through which the Southern mind can be reached upon the subject of slavery. It was considered a remarkable fact, that Cassius M. Clay—[tremendous applause, continued for some minutes.] I am glad (continued Mr. Sherman) that you have thus greeted the noble name of Cassius M. Clay. [Applause.] Such men as these will rise from every hill, every mountain, and every valley, throughout the slave States, to take their stand against the iniquity of slavery. Let us not interfere in the struggle, and the right will yet conquer, [applause;] a native of Kentucky should deliver a Republican speech in the Capitol of his native State.

How, then, can the Republican party establish a foothold in any Southern State? Only when, having possession of the Government, it may, by a wise and moderate policy, give the lie to the slanders of its adversaries, and when it can dispel the fears of the timid, conquer the prejudices of the ignorant, and convince the reason of the intelligent. Sir, there is no middle ground; we must either yield to the intense sectionalism of the Democratic party, or we must crush it out through the agency and by the triumph of the Republican party. [Great applause.]

The Republican party is prepared for the contest. It but awaits the action of the Chicago Convention to designate its leader. Let it name any one of the great men who are identified with its principles, with or without a platform—[three cheers for William H. Seward were here proposed and given with great force and unanimity]—be its name and its history its true platform—and then let it, as the representative of freemen, appeal to the intelligence of the people.

Let us not be diverted by the third party, scarcely heard of since 1856, now rising under the drill of well-paid sergeants of the Democratic party. [Laughter.] The times are too earnest for such movements. I have before me the address of the National Union Committee, in Washington, to the people of the United States. It is signed by many gentlemen for whom I have high respect, and with whom I have acted often. I can pledge them that every Republican is as earnest in his devotion to the Union and the Constitution as they are; and as this is the staple of their party cry, I hope they will share it with us, as we are willing to share with them, against the only men who threaten the Union, or who seek to subvert the Constitution. In acting together, no surrender of principle is required of us or of them. So far at least as Republicans are concerned, I know of no reason why they cannot co-operate with those who aided them in defeating the Lecompton Constitution, and who are willing to stand upon the principles avowed by Henry Clay, who declared that, coming as he did from a slave State, it was his solemn, deliberate, and well-matured determination, that no power—no earthly power—should compel him to vote for the introduction of slavery either north or south of the Missouri line. [Loud applause.] In a great contest like that now waging, it is idle to stand aloof upon a third party organization. Give us a fair field with the Democratic party. [Applause.] Those who are inclined to do so, can scarcely ask a great party on the tide of success to yield up its flag and its organization. We cannot and we will not do it. [Applause.] And I trust, fellow-citizens of New York, your own experience has taught you that it is far better that the Democratic party should elect our open adversaries, rather than that you should elect men from whom you have to ask pledges and guaranties. An open defeat is far preferable to humiliation by treachery after the victory has been nominally achieved. You have found, as your fellow Republicans did in the recent contest in Congress, that those who are not with us are practically against us. Let us be moderate, conciliating, but self-reliant, and firm as the rock of truth upon which we stand. [Applause.] The Republican party will then not only hold in check the now dominant oligarchy of negro slavery, but will show by its firm, patriotic, and constitutional administration of the Government, that neither the wrongs nor insults of the past and the present can induce it to impair or invade in the least the rights of any State or section of our common country.