

P7401

THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

SPEECH OF HON. A. G. JENKINS,
OF VIRGINIA,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 26, 1860.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. JENKINS said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have heretofore invariably confined my remarks to existing subjects of legislation legitimately before this body for legislative action. And even now, sir, I do not propose to avail myself of the latitude of debate allowed in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, to discuss irrelevant matters, as is often done by members of this House; for, sir, the *state of the Union* is the very subject upon which I propose to speak, definitely and pertinently, if I can.

We have all seen the time, sir, when the state of the Union, so far at least as affected the question of its perpetuity, did not occasion a single perturbed thought to any one individual within the limits of the Republic. But now, sir, we know it to furnish a subject of serious and anxious contemplation for millions, whose apprehensions for its integrity and preservation I trust may not be too well founded.

There is no denying the fact, Mr. Chairman, that we are rapidly approaching a crisis in the history of the Republic; a crisis which must culminate for weal or woe in a few brief months; for within that time, it must be decided into whose hands the control of the Federal Government will pass for the next four years, and upon what principles it will be administered. We, of the South, believe that, should the Republican party be successful in obtaining control of this Government, including the Chief Executive office, such a state of things would seriously impair our rights and threaten the permanency of our institutions. On the other hand, the Republicans affect to believe that the prolonged ascendancy of the Democratic party would inflict just such calamities upon the people, and their institutions, of the North.

It will then be in the most natural order of the subject to consider—

1. Would the triumph of the Republican party in the next presidential contest furnish the South with ground for serious apprehension and alarm?

2. Would the continued ascendancy of the Democratic party furnish the North with just ground for similar apprehension?

In considering the former of these propositions, we must first notice the fact that the North is in a majority in this Government. Having a majority of States, there is necessarily a majority of northern Senators in the other wing of the Capitol; and having a majority of representative population, there is a consequent northern majority of Representatives upon this floor. And when, as in the case supposed, you shall elect a Republican President, it will almost inevitably follow that the same manifestation of popular sentiment will convert the present northern majority in this body into a purely Republican majority; and it is but fair to presume that it will finally accomplish the same result in the Senate. Indeed, this is the avowed object of the Republican party. Then, sir, with a Republican President, a Republican Senate, and a Republican House, we will witness the administration of the Government upon the principles of the Republican party. And what are they? Without stopping at this time to enunciate them in the full and exact phraseology of the various editions of its platforms, and without meaning to be so illiberal as to make the extreme views of some of the Republican party the common standard of measurement for all the members of your organization, yet your whole creed, and all your principles may be comprised in a nut-shell—*antagonism to the institution of negro slavery.*

This is the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end. Upon this principle of hostility to the institutions of one section of the Confederacy, the other section proposes to administer the Government. Sir, this proposition of itself is so startling, so alarming, that

any specification of its foreboding evils seems almost unnecessary, in order to stamp it in the minds of fair men and good citizens with the seal of condemnation.

One of the first, most direct, and immediate evils which the South would be called upon to endure, would be the loss of millions of her property. Her slaves could cross the borders by thousands and hundreds of thousands with impunity. How many of them, do you suppose, would be returned, under the operations of the fugitive slave law, when your Federal Executive, whose duty it would be to see it faithfully executed, and his marshals and deputy marshals, hold it as part of their political faith that the law itself is unconstitutional, null, and void? This idea needs no elaboration. It is certain that vast multitudes of slaves would flock across the borders when the news and excitement of the election of a Republican President should reach them.

Mr. KILGORE. Does not the condition of facts referred to by the gentleman result from the charges of southern men that the Republicans and the southern Opposition are disposed to favor the emancipation of all the slaves?

Mr. JENKINS. Nobody in my country was ever so stupid as to make that charge against the southern Opposition. The fact that the Republican party, or a large portion of it, is friendly to the emancipation of the slave population, either by force or persuasion brought to bear on their owners, is well known to the slaves themselves. Nor will I deny that our speeches and conversations, which our slaves have chanced to overhear, may have been partially the means of disseminating the knowledge of that fact among them. It is absurd to expect that we could keep a fact of that nature a profound secret among *eight million people*.

Mr. KILGORE. Were not southern men and the southern press the only source of information to the slave population?

Mr. JENKINS. They were not. One great source of information of that character to our slaves was that of the emissaries sent among them by a portion of the Republican party. I have been an eye-witness to that fact, for I have seen more than one of those fanatics incarcerated in our jails for tampering with the slave population.

Mr. ASHMORE. With the permission of the gentleman from Virginia, I will suggest to the gentleman from Indiana that some of our slaves can read and write. I hope he will bear that in mind.

Mr. KILGORE. However that may be, it is impossible for information to reach the slaves through the post offices; because post-

masters are vigilant, South, to see that nothing of that kind takes place.

Mr. JENKINS. If it does not reach them in this way, it is not for want of effort on the part of some of the party of the gentleman from Indiana to convey information through this channel.

Mr. ASHMORE. The retort of my friend from Virginia makes it unnecessary for me to reply to the observation of the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. JENKINS. I repeat, Mr. Chairman, that with the idea which the slaves of the South have of the Republican party, followed up by the known triumph of that party in a Presidential contest; believing, and properly so, that to set foot in a free State would then be practical emancipation, who can say, sir, what multitudes would not escape, of whom, in all human probability, not one would ever be returned under the operation of the fugitive slave act. Sir, to intrust the execution of this law to a Republican President would be practically moving the border of Canada down to Mason and Dixon's line. So far as this single evil goes, disunion itself could hardly be worse; for in the Union we would be onerously taxed to support a Government which would give us no protection; while out of the Union the same taxes would furnish us with a border line of forts, troops, and sentries, which, together with the regulation of our commerce and intercourse with the North, would do much to prevent the escape of our slaves.

But great as would be the intrinsic loss of property which the South would have to endure, in case the administration of this Government should pass into the hands of the Republican party, its collateral results would inflict a still more deadly and fatal blow upon the institution of slavery in the border States; for it is apparent that when the loss of any considerable number in these States should demonstrate the insecurity of slave property in the border States, that species of property would at once be taken where it would be more secure. In other words, sir, those slaves who did not run away would be taken further South to prevent their doing so in future. And thus, Virginia, now the largest slaveholding State in the Union, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, would soon be divested of the institution of slavery. And this, too, would be a result much more rapid in its accomplishment than we might at first suppose. There might, indeed, remain, in the geographical centers of these States, or in some other localities, which, from peculiar causes, would be difficult of egress for the absconding slave population, some vestige of

the institution, but it would be scarcely worthy of the name.

I shall now proceed to consider still another calamity which the success of the Republican party would bring upon the South.

I mean, sir, that which would grow out of the distribution of the patronage of this Government throughout the South by a Republican President. It is manifest, sir, that then, more than ever heretofore, though much the case with all parties, this patronage would be distributed so as to tend to foster and strengthen the party which dispensed it. Under a Republican President, then, every office in the South to be filled by Executive appointment, would be bestowed upon those professing the same political faith with the party conferring it. Every newly-appointed Federal judge, every district attorney, every United States marshal, and their deputies, every custom-house officer, every postmaster, every officer of every description, with the long retinue of their employes—all would be Republicans. I trust I shall not be met, at this point, in the mind of any honest, unsuspecting southern heart, with the suggestion that Republicans enough could not be had in the South to fill all these offices. Sir, you would there, as you would all the world over, find plenty of those who are willing to receive the thirty pieces of silver. You might not, indeed, find them in the shape and guise of Republicans at first, but you would find plenty of the *materiel*, which the magic influence of patronage would easily convert into any form you might desire. You would find in the South, as everywhere else, human nature in its best and its worst forms, and in every intermediate degree; and unless the people of the South are radically different from the great brotherhood of humanity, you would find there poverty not always accompanied with the virtue to resist temptation; wealth not always free from cupidity; prodigality not always furnished with the means to gratify its propensities; and, last of all, you would find ambition and ability not always governed by principle.

Who will say that, from these fruitful seeds, tended and fostered with care, and enriched with the patronage of millions, there would not spring up the germ of a Republican party in the very heart of the South; armed with the forms of law and the administration of the Federal Government; sowing dissensions in our very midst; dividing our people; distracting our counsels, and paralyzing our energies, until it would be too late for resistance? Is this a fancy sketch? If it be not literally true to the life, then does the history of the human race, from its primal period to this hour, belie itself; then does the rela-

tion of cause and effect cease to exist. If the events of the future, in case the Republican party predominates, do not verify this result, why, then, you had as well abandon negro slavery, at all events; for you may be sure the Ethiopian will change his skin, and the leopard his spots.

But, sir, I must pass to another point. The next extremity to which the South would be reduced would be to witness the whole moral weight of this Government at home and abroad throughout the world thrown into the scale against the institution of southern slavery. Every organ and mouth-piece of the Government abroad, from ministers plenipotentiary down to the humblest consul, whose salary is his "*fees*," would be giving forth a constant utterance of denunciations against slavery, and styling it, in the language of your last presidential platform, "slavery, like polygamy, twin relic of barbarism;" and a southern gentleman making his appearance at a European court would be received by your Republican minister very much as he would receive the patriarch of Utah.

Sir, I have not time to consider this point as I could wish, and to show in detail what the institution of slavery would suffer from having the whole moral weight of the Government throughout the civilized world pressing down upon it. The evils which would eventually follow in its wake will be obvious to all, upon reflection.

I come now, sir, to speak of still another alarming danger which the success of the Republican party forebodes. I mean, sir, that the legislative power of this Government would be turned, with all its batteries—not only open, but masked—against southern slavery. One of these, sir, is the Republican doctrine of prohibiting slavery in all the Territories of the Union, present and prospective, by Congressional legislation, even though the people of the Territories might desire to have the institution. Another is, the admission of no more slave States. I take it that no Republican on this floor, in good standing and "*full communion*" with his party, will deny either of these propositions to be Republican doctrine.

I have not time to dwell on these two propositions; and, indeed, it is the more unnecessary, because the same ground has been traveled over so often heretofore in discussions upon the question of slavery; and also, because their effects would not be so immediate as those which would flow from other parts of Republican policy. But I only give expression to the universal sentiment of the South on this subject when I say that we would regard the enforcement of this doctrine

against the South as leading ultimately to her certain destruction.

Now, sir, in case of the supposed success of the Republican party, what refuge has the South from the ills which such a state of things would bring upon her? Will she find security behind the bulwark of the judiciary—in the decisions the Supreme Court of the United States? Why, sir, we forget that one of the dogmas of the Republican party is to “reform the judiciary.” What is fully meant by that expression we shall, perhaps, never know until we are called upon to witness the infamy of its consummation. But this much we do know: that it means, at the very least, that the judiciary shall not stand in the way of the complete and entire establishment of so-called Republican principles in the administration of this Government. *Reform the judiciary!* Sir, what a spectacle we should behold! To see the chief of a sectional organization, backed by his minions, enter the very sanctuary of justice, and, with the rude and sacrilegious grasp of a partisan, hold with partial hand the scale which should only vibrate to the touch of right!

Such, sir, is the protection which the South is to expect from a reformed judiciary.

What other hope would we have of averting the misfortunes which a Republican triumph would bring upon us?

There is one, oft talked of, and by some believed in; and therefore I wish to call attention to it; for I believe it to be deceptive and illusory to the last degree. It is the idea, sir, that even a Republican Administration, when once installed in power, would become conservative upon the subject of slavery. Sir, when did tyranny first become conservative of the rights of others? I mean, sir, when did it ever, after accession to power, yield up any pretensions it had previously advanced?

Does not all history, on the other hand, teach us that the constant tendency of every form of despotism, whether in the shape of an individual tyrant or in that more terrible form, a numerical majority, is to increase, not mitigate, its pretensions? Yet, we are told that a Republican President would become conservative—less radical and less hostile in his pretensions against the institutions of the South? Sir, as often as I have heard this proposition advanced, I have never yet heard a man give a philosophical reason for it. They only say it always has been so; and then they will give you instances of anti-slavery men who, while President, became comparatively conservative and sound upon the question of slavery. I grant that; but so far from substantiating their proposition, it substantiates just the reverse. Let us look at this point rationally, and inquire *why* did these former

Presidents become *conservative* on the question of slavery? Manifestly because the party was so to which they owed their official existence, and upon whom they depended for aid in administering the Government. Take the case of Mr. Fillmore, so often cited. All know his anti-slavery sentiments when he was nominated for Vice President, and southern Whigs, having a southern man on their ticket for President, were willing to take Mr. Fillmore for Vice President, for the sake of giving availability to their ticket in some parts of the North; and believing that, as the mere president of the Senate, his anti-slavery sentiments could do no harm. Well, sir, when, upon the death of General Taylor, he became President, I am free to say that he administered the duties of his office quite as much to the satisfaction of the South as General Taylor himself would have done. Mr. Fillmore became *conservative* on the question of slavery for the reason just assigned, namely: because the political organization to which he belonged, which had made him what he was, and upon whose continued support his future depended, was conservative, and much of it pro-slavery, extending over and embracing, as it did, the whole South; having a majority in some of the southern States and a formidable and contesting minority in the rest. He could not, under the circumstances, become otherwise than conservative on the question of slavery. But, sir, will a parity of reasoning prove that Mr. SEWARD, or any other Republican, supported and elected alone by the Republican party, would become alike conservative? On the contrary, sir, would not the same process of reasoning prove the very reverse? Receiving in the canvass, in all human probability, not as many votes south of Mason and Dixon's line as there are people in the small town in which he lives; elected by exclusively northern votes, and not even receiving the conservative vote there—the Democratic and the American and the old-line Whig vote—what, sir, should render his Administration conservative? Nay, sir, when we remember that the main element of his party—the Abolition element—which gives vitality and energy to the whole Republican organization, lighting up with its zeal and enthusiasm the party camp-fires, is more radical even than the supposed future Republican President would be; when we remember that he would be at the head of the great radical party whose fanaticism he dare not affront, and whose very prejudices he would fear to offend, we may conclude that he might become more radical in his hostility to slavery, but *could not* become more conservative. Suppose, for illustration, sir, that such a President was inclined to manifest his conservatism—though I cannot

imagine what should so incline him—by carrying out the provisions of the fugitive slave law in Ohio, and returning to slavery a negro from the middle of the Western Reserve; would he do so—I will not say at the hazard—but with the certainty of thereby offending the whole Republican voting population of that locality, which would inevitably destroy the ascendancy of the Republican party in the State? No, sir; it would be idle to expect it. The leaders of a powerful party must travel in the same direction with the great army behind. They must also move quite as fast, must press on, must run on, or be run over. They never dare stand still, much less turn back, without forfeiting their leadership.

Having seen then, sir, that neither the judiciary nor this idea of a Republican President becoming conservative upon the question of slavery, furnishes the South with any hope of refuge from the evils of Republican ascendancy, let us inquire what other remote prospect is there of their alleviation. Will it be found in a fair and candid survey of the future? Sir, if in the election of a Republican President, the present should fill us with alarm and apprehension, the future should strike us with despair. Once in power, and with the patronage of this Government at its disposal, think not that the Republican party would not find means to perpetuate its ascendancy. Sir, there is one point to be noticed under this head that puts the question beyond all doubt. I mean, sir, by the admission of new States into the Union, from the immense territorial domain, already having considerable population, and provided with organized governments—some of them, too, claiming now to be admitted into the Union—it is plain that the Republican party, once in possession of the Federal Government, would carve out as many new States as party expediency might demand, and, by the adjustment of their boundaries and the dispensation of patronage, determine their politics. And, sir, it need not stop at this point. We should soon be, if possible, still more completely at the mercy of the North; for as it requires only an ordinary legislative majority to admit new States, and the same majority, with the consent of the State itself, to divide an old State and convert it into two, it is plain that the North could, in less than one term of one Administration, number three-fourths of the States of the whole Union; and then, sir, then the bulwarks of the Constitution would be gone indeed; for the North would then have the power, without the aid from the South, *constitutionally*, to change the Constitution. And then, sir, those fanatics who rave so madly for an anti-slavery Constitu-

tion, an anti-slavery Bible, and an anti-slavery God, could have the first of these three fashioned after their own heart; though I think it would perhaps be some time longer before they could experience a similar gratification with relation to the latter two.

Sir, what a miserable appendage would the South be to this Republic; how completely bereft of the capacity for legitimate resistance; how would her institutions depend upon the very breath of northern fanaticism, when, against the wishes of every southern State, and in spite of all they could do, the Federal Constitution could be converted, from a bulwark of safety, into a battery of destruction in the hands of her enemies.

Mr. Chairman, I do not deem it necessary to pursue the investigation of this branch of my subject further. I think that all fair men who will look at it from our stand-point of view, must see that, in the triumph of the Republican party, the South would be furnished with ground for apprehensions of the most serious character, which would certainly threaten the existence of our confederate Union, and which, if they did not terminate in that common disaster, would be owing to a forbearance on our part which you have no right to expect. Let us briefly consider the second division of my subject, and inquire:

Whether the success of the Democracy, the party with which the South co-operates, would entail similar apprehensions on the part of the North?

It is not my purpose, sir, to go over the ground of what is called southern aggressions, and refute the accusations of that character in detail; partly because this has been often and well done heretofore, but principally because, in treating the subject in this style, we at once come to issues which depend for their proper decision upon the construction to be given for acts done, and which the North—I mean the Republican North—will construe in one way, and the South in another. I desire to treat the subject philosophically, if I can; to show from those facts, which do not depend for their force upon any construction to be given them—to show that, *from the very nature of things*, the North need not be, and indeed cannot be, possessed of the slightest alarm or apprehensions from the success of the party which predominates in the South.

And first, under this head, we must advert to the fact that the great question affected by the triumph of the one or the other parties is the question of property—four million slaves, at a low estimate worth \$3,000,000,000; and that the security or insecurity, the existence or destruction, of this vast amount of property, as affected by the ascendancy of

the respective political parties, wholly concerns the South, and cannot, in this, its most important aspect, concern you at all. In this desperate game, which you force us to play, we have to put up all the stake. You can lose nothing; we can gain nothing, but may lose all.

Let us now look at another aspect of this subject; let us inquire into the manner in which the ascendancy of the Democratic party may affect the North socially and politically. In other words, let us inquire whether such a state of things would cause the institution of slavery to make the same encroachments upon northern soil that anti-slavery would make in the South in the event of Republican ascendancy. And first, as to the territories. We have seen that the Republican party proposes to prohibit slave labor in all the common territories of the Union—those which we now have as well as those we may hereafter acquire. The Democratic party does not propose such a prohibition of free labor; but to let both free and slave labor have an equal enjoyment and protection.

Then, sir, the Republicans propose, as we have seen, to admit no more slave States into the Union. The Democratic party does not advocate the converse of the proposition, by saying that no more free States shall be admitted into the Union, which we might do much more logically, and with much more propriety; for you must observe, sir, that in what are called free States, slave labor is effectually inhibited, while in the slave States there is nothing incompatible with the free-labor system. The admission of a free State at once accomplishes the entire and irrevocable exclusion of the institutions of the South from any share or participation in its benefits thereafter; while the admission of a slave State, instead of effecting a similar exclusion of any part of your system of labor, not only tolerates, but actually protects and fosters it. It is manifest, then, sir, however gentlemen may be startled by its enunciation, when we have the courage to meet the question boldly, and follow out indisputable premises to their last logical conclusions, that a proposition on the part of the South to admit no more free States, has a greater foundation in justice, in equality, and in all the fraternal requirements of the Federal Constitution, than the doctrine of the Republican party, which advocates the admission of no more slave States. Yet, sir, who ever heard of the South acting upon such a proposition, though she has often possessed the power to put it into practical operation? Sir, such a proposition, though less narrow, less bigoted, less sectional, than the dogma of the Republican

party, would find no room for contemplation in the hearts of the southern people.

And now let us see if, in the northern States themselves, you would have aught to fear from what you call the encroachments of slavery, in case the Democratic party should retain the control of the Government, and what truth there is in the assertion of the great "embodiment" of your party, that the States must become all free States or all slave States; and how much you have to fear lest "Boston become a slave mart." Sir, history answers this question; history, which tells us that the whole free North was once slaveholding. Now, sir, if, with the institution of slavery once planted in their midst, protected by law, sanctioned by custom, and adapted, by use, to the wants of the people, it could not maintain its footing, is it to be supposed that now, divested of those powerful aids, it can regain the ground it then lost? No, sir; not until we can repeal those irrevocable laws of soil and climate, which are as eternal as the planet upon which they operate.

But, sir, there are two additional reasons which to my mind are, if possible, still more final and conclusive upon this subject, and which cover not only the ground of the encroachments of slavery, as affecting the Territories, the States to be carved out of them, add the present free States of the North, but which equally apply to any and all other apprehensions of the northern people, from the continued ascendancy of the Democratic party. The first of these reasons, sir, is to be found in the fact that a large element of the Democratic organization is to be found in the North; not in a few localities only, but in every northern State, and extending throughout every county and every town. It is plain, sir, that as the South is in a minority, the Democratic party can carry out no one measure without the co-operation of this element of northern Democracy as represented in the Government. And as this element comprises every class of your population, and embraces every interest, you cannot have the least shadow of an apprehension from the ascendancy of the Democratic party, unless the universal law of self-interest should for the first time cease to operate. Still another reason, if it is not superfluous to assign another, is to be found in the fact that the North, having the political power, can, at any election, take control of the Federal Government, and right itself.

Having now, sir, considered my subject in its two divisions, as fully as my time will permit; having seen that the triumph of the Republican party would justly fill the southern mind with the most dreadful forebodings,

but that the success of the Democratic party cannot entail upon the North even the shadow of an apprehension; let us briefly inquire whether the former state of facts would perit the existence of our confederate Union. I have already said, sir, that I believe it would. Let it not be supposed that, in saying this, I am unappreciative of the blessings which have heretofore flowed from our Federal Government. In the geographical locality which I represent will be found a sufficient reason to disabuse the mind of any gentleman upon that point. Sir, I am one of the Representatives of a border State. What is more, sir, I represent a border district of this border State. What is still more, sir, it is a commercial border, having its centre of trade in a northern city, its commercial intercourse interwoven, root and branch, with the North. Its interests in this respect are as much commingled with those of the North as are the very waters of our rivers, which unite and flow in a common channel. Such, sir, is the district of the people whom I have the honor to represent. For my own part, sir, I am personally appreciative of these considerations, for I live, sir, upon the very border of this border district. From my window I can look out and see the blue hills of Ohio, separated from us only by a gentle river, so narrow that the setting sun spans it with the shadows of its own forests, and a pebble dropped into its quiet bosom parts a wave on either side that reaches either shore.

Such, sir, is our proximity to a free State that we can hear the songs of her husbands, and see the bright gleam of their blades as they gather the golden harvests. Our nearest neighbors frequently live upon the other bank of the river. They are often our kindred; children nursed at the same breast, and reared around a common domestic altar; for you must observe, sir, that Virginia has peopled almost the entire border. Think you not then, sir, that we do not appreciate the advantages—I may almost say the necessities—of a common Federal Government, administered upon constitutional principles; or that we are blind to the catastrophes which would accompany its destruction?—catastrophes, sir, from which no part of this vast Republic would be exempt—commerce paralyzed; agriculture insecure; manufactures prostrated; mechanical arts abandoned; public and private credit involved in a common ruin; war raging—civil war, whose intensity and continuance you can best estimate by remembering the valor of those who would wage it, and the lists of the slain, in which would often be but a list of parricides and fratricides; a war, sir, beside whose bloody records the red annals of the internecine strifes of

Rome would pale in comparison? Sir, we could not then better describe our unhappy land than by saying, with Malcolm:

“Alas, poor country;
Almost afraid to know itself; it cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave; where
Nothing, but who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air,
Are made, *not marked*; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy. The dead man’s knell
Is there scarce asked—for whom? And good men’s lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps.”

Who, Mr. Chairman, can contemplate unmoved such a future, so pregnant with sorrow to the Republic; such countless woes, unimagined and unimaginable, which only the pen of history, transmitted from age to age, could record in all their horrible details?

Yet, Mr. Chairman, impressed as I am with all the terrible consequences which would flow from a dissolution of our Federal Union, I say that I believe the ascendancy of the Republican party in this Government would bring about that result. For if the South should remain in the Union, we have already seen to what an extremity she would be reduced: the loss of millions of her property in slaves; the almost total destruction of the institution in the border States, by being forced, through the insecurity of slave property, to remove those who were not stolen away; the creation, by the dispensation of the honors and emoluments of Federal patronage by a Republican Executive, of an anti-slavery party in the very bosom and throughout the entire limits of the South; the casting the whole moral weight of the Government at home and throughout the civilized world against our institutions, thereby rather inviting than repelling aggressions from abroad; the so-called “reform of the judiciary,” which would destroy the main bulwark of the Constitution; in short, the use of all the powers of the Government—executive, legislative, and judicial,—to circumscribe the institution of slavery, until, “like a scorpion surrounded by a wall of fire, it shall sting itself to death.”

Who can say, sir, what course the South will pursue, when forced to such dread alternatives—whether she will remain in the Union and submit to the inexorable rule of a party hostile to her institutions, or, in her despair, burst asunder at every hazard the bonds which unite us? Sir, the South is the weaker section. You of the North have the political power; but will you use it in such a way as to compel us to make such a choice? Sir, time was when Virginia made the cause of the North her cause. Can she not find, anywhere throughout the North, a sentiment which will respond when she calls upon you now, in this the hour of her need?

