

# KEOWEE COURIER.

"—TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE, AND IT MUST FOLLOW, AS THE NIGHT THE DAY, THOU CANST NOT THEN BE FALSE TO ANY MAN."

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## SPEECH OF THE HON. JAMES L. ORR, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

On the slavery Question, delivered in the House of Representatives, May 8, 1850.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the Union, on the President's Message transmitting the Constitution of California—

Mr. Orr said:  
Mr. Chairman: I propose, in the brief hour allotted to me, to examine and present what I conceive to be Northern sentiment upon the subject of slavery, and the inevitable results of that sentiment.

I believe, Sir, there is much misunderstanding, both at the North and the South, as to the extent and character of that feeling. I know the misapprehension that exists in that part of the country which I have the honor to represent, and I desire to lay before my constituents and the people of the South the result of my observation since I have been a member of this House, so that they may be prepared to judge of the proper means of meeting, countering and repelling that sentiment.

The first evidence of abolition sentiment in the Northern States to which I refer, is to be found in the numerous abolition societies organized in every part of that section of the Union, composed of large numbers of all classes and sexes.—These societies meet at stated periods, for the avowed purpose of advancing their political and moral tenets; they appoint their emissaries, who traverse the country, and who, by their slanders, poison the minds of the masses of the people as to the true character of the institution of slavery.—They have established newspapers and periodicals, which are circulated in great profusion, not only in the non-slave holding States, but are thrown broadcast over the South, through the mails, for the purpose of planting the thorn of discontent in the bosoms of our now happy slaves, and inciting them to the perpetration of the bloody scenes of St. Domingo. These auxiliaries of the American Anti-slavery Society, not content with a general combinatio against the institutions of the South, form a component part of the American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society, in which they unite with the zealots of foreign countries in an unjust crusade against their brethren of the South. Most of the avowed abolitionists have, however, the merit of frankness at least. They seek to emancipate our slaves, it is true, but concede that it cannot be done consistently with the Constitution; they therefore declare an uncompromising war against the Constitution and the Union; while others, who intend to effect the same end, have not the candor to own it, and hypocritically profess an attachment to the Constitution which they are really seeking to destroy.

Another evidence of the extent of abolition sentiment in the Northern States is, the promotion of certain gentlemen to seats in the other wing of this Capitol. I allude, Sir, first to the election of Wm. H. Seward. It might be that this 'faction,' as the abolitionists have been denominated, could, through their societies and conventions, create some attention, and excite the contempt of sensible moderate men, for their fanaticism; but I would inquire, how comes it to pass that, insignificant as it is said to be, it is enabled to elect from the great State of New York—the Empire State—a man to represent it in the Senate of the United States, whose greatest distinction has been his untiring advocacy of the doctrines of abolition? Does it not show that the major part of the people of that State sympathize deeply with their Senator in his nefarious principles? Look at the recent election by the Legislature of Ohio—a State in numbers second only to New York—of S. P. Chase, to represent that State in the Senate of the United States. He has been amongst the most zealous of his infatuated compomers; even Wm. H. Seward was not more so, in the advocacy of radical abolition, and the Legislature of Ohio, knowing his sentiments, and representing the people of that State, have honored him with one of the highest official stations on earth. Others, too, have been elected to that body, who owe their promotion to pledges given their constituents, that they would oppose the admission of any more slave States or slave territory into the Union, and favor the application of the Wilmot Proviso—that true scion from an abolition stock—to the territories acquired from Mexico. One would suppose that when a Senator avowed that, acting as a Senator, he recognized a higher obligation than his oath to support the Constitution of the United States—an obligation which requires him to violate and set aside the provisions of that sacred instrument—the Legislature of his State, then in session would have promptly branded such a declaration with the infamy it deserves. Such a declaration, it is known to the country, was recently made in the Senate by the Senator from New York to whom I have alluded—but the Legislature of that State adopted no resolutions condemnatory of this sentiment.

They did, however, pass resolutions, with great unanimity, sustaining fully the ultra positions of their distinguished—no, their notorious senator. Resolutions have been adopted in every non-slaveholding State; instructing their senators and requesting their Representatives in Congress to vote in favor of the adoption of the Wilmot Proviso, and in opposition, in many cases, to the admission of any other slave States.

Mr. McLanahan asked if the gentleman from South Carolina had observed that the Legislature of Pennsylvania had recently laid upon the table resolutions in favor of the Wilmot Proviso?

Mr. Orr: I have; and I honor the patriotism of your constituents in coming to the rescue of the Constitution in these perilous times. Instructions, such as I have spoken of, did pass this Legislature of Pennsylvania two years ago. I repeat the assertion, that every non-slaveholding State has passed resolutions of an unmistakable abolition character. Yet the unceasing efforts of the press here, and newspaper correspondents are directed to induce the people of the South to believe that this hostility to our institutions is confined to a few fanatics, and that abolition is not the general sentiment of the country.

Another evidence of the progress of abolition sentiment is the legislation of the non-slaveholding States obstructing the delivering up of fugitive slaves. What is the constitutional provision upon that subject? '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.' Some of the Northern States have passed laws imposing heavy penalties on any State officer who may aid the owner in recovering his runaway slave. The State officers of all the States swear to support the Constitution of the United States as well as the constitution of the State in which the officer resides. Now, if the Constitution of the United States requires that a person held to service shall be delivered up, and a State officer refuses to obey that provision, does he prove faithful to his oath? And is not the penalty imposed by the particular State a compulsion upon the officer to commit perjury? This legislation reflects truly the feeling of the Northern States upon this subject. When a slave escapes, friends receive him with open arms, and clandestinely convey him beyond the reach of his lawful owner. If the slave, perchance, is overtaken, or hunted out of his secret hiding place, the owner perils his life; through the lawless violence of the mob, reclaiming his property, and in asserting rights solemnly guaranteed to him by the Constitution. The laws and popular tumults against the master, to which I have adverted, clearly indicate the settled, deliberate purpose of the Northern States to deprive us of our rights in that species of property.

Northern sentiment on the subject of abolition speaks trumpet-tongued in the political privileges conferred on free negroes in some of the Northern States. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and all extend the right of suffrage to the African. At the last State election in New York the free negroes held the balance of power between the two political parties. Representatives upon this floor receive the votes of this degraded class, and the success of republican institutions is made to depend upon the judgment and intelligence of free negro sovereigns. The aim of the abolitionists looks first to the emancipation of our slaves throughout the South, and then is to follow their elevation to all the social and political privileges of the white man. The thick-lipped African is to vote at same ballotbox, eat at the same table, and sit in the same parlor with the white man. This, the abolitionists would say, 'is a consummation devoutly to be wished for.'

Another evidence, Sir, of the progress and intolerance of this sentiment is to be found in the separation of two of the most numerous and respectable Christian denominations in this country, (the Baptist and the Methodist.) They assembled in convention and conference, year after year, to advance that holy cause in which they had mutually embarked. But, Sir, the demon of fanatical discord stalked into their associations. Christian charity and brotherly love were impotent in resisting its encroachment upon their peace and union; Northern members demanded that their southern brethren should surrender and eschew the institutions of the country in which they lived—that they should become traitors to the State to which their allegiance was due, and prove recreant to their obligations to their obligations to the community in which they resided. They were too holy to commune at the same altar with their southern brethren, until the latter should pronounce slavery a sin, and agree to enlist in an effort for its extinction. The terms were too ignominious for Christians or patriots. With a manly independence, the southern wings of both denominations rejected the offer, and the separation of their churches ensued. These two Sir, were heavy blows against our political union, from the shocks of which we have not yet recovered.

Another evidence of the extent of this sentiment is exhibited in the popularity, the universal popularity, of the doctrine of free soil—the legitimate scion, as I before remarked, of the abolition stock. The popularity of that doctrine is not to be judged by independent free-soil party organization. Those who candidly avow the opinion are few in number; they refuse to co-operate with either of the other parties, and hence a separate organization; but the mass of the Northern people comprising the two great political parties, sympathize in sentiment and feeling with the free-soilers. It is idle to disguise the fact. The speeches delivered by Northern Representatives since the commencement of this discussion is a thorough vindication of the truth of this assertion. They may be well arranged into two classes; one of which broadly asserts that the North has been guilty of no aggressions upon the South—that the South has no just cause of complaint against them—that our demand to share equally in the common property of all the States is an aggression upon the North—that our fugitive slaves are always promptly surrendered upon the demand of the owner. This is the language addressed by them by Northern constituents.

They do not appeal to them to quiet this infamous agitation—they do not remind them of their constitutional obligations; and thus their course can have no other effect than to fan the flames of fanaticism until they shall burn out the vitals of the Constitution and the Union.

The other class show equally, in their speeches, their attachment to the doctrines of free soil. Every Northern man of this class who has addressed the committee on this subject, except my friend from Indiana, (Mr. Gorman,) and my friend from Pennsylvania, (Mr. Ross) is in the same category. Their speeches open generally, with a violent philippic against the South. They charge us with arrogance, and some of them are in hot haste in volunteering their services to march troops into our midst to force us to continue in the Union, if we should choose to secede from it. They tell us they are in favor of non-intervention. What does this non-intervention amount to? If it were a bona fide non-interference with our rights, it would be all that the South could ask—all that she has a right to demand under the constitution. But this much she does demand; and depend upon it, she will be appeased by nothing less. Some of the Northern non-interventionists deny that Congress has the power to pass the Wilmot Proviso; others maintain the position that Congress has the power, but should not exercise it, and straightway offer the excuse to their constituents that it is not necessary to pass it—that the Mexican laws are in force, and they exclude slavery.

This is the opinion entertained by Gen. Cass and all the non-intervention Northern Democrats in this House. Is not this a heavy tribute which non-intervention pays to free-soil? It is tantamount to saying, we are in favor of the end which the proviso aims to accomplish, viz: the exclusion of the slave States from all the territory acquired from Mexico—we oppose its adoption only because we regard it as unnecessary, and because we believe the course we propose to pursue will most effectually subvert the end without giving offence and producing irritation in the South. I repeat it, Sir, such non-intervention pays a heavy tribute to abolitionism.

Another, and perhaps, Mr. Chairman, the most pregnant indication of the progress of Abolition sentiment, is the remarkable condition of things that now exists throughout the country in relation to the admission of California into the Union. I venture to say that never in the history of this Government has any important question been presented for the consideration of Congress where party lines were all broken down as they have been on this question. It is an Administration measure—one which certainly reflects but little credit upon its wisdom or patriotism. Parties have but recently emerged from the heat of a presidential struggle, and upon all other questions, save this alone, which have been introduced into this House at the present session, partisan gladiators have waged as fierce a contest as in days of yore. Irregular and objectionable as all the California proceedings have been, but one solitary Representative (I refer again to my friend Mr. Ross) from the free States has avowed himself opposed to its admission into the Union; parties are broken down—the North is making it a sectional question. Northern Whigs and Northern Democrats, Whig Free-soilers and Democratic Free-soilers all rally upon this common platform, and the emulation between them is great who shall be foremost in introducing this embryo State into the Union. Some of the objections to its admission into the Union I will briefly notice. No census had been taken either by the authority of the pretended State or by the authority of Congress. We have no official information which would authorize us to determine whether the population was ten thousand or one hundred thousand. The number of votes said to have been polled in the ratification of the constitution was about thirteen thousand. This number of voters, where the population is an average one, would indicate a population of seventy thousand souls. The proportion of the adult male population in California is greater far than in the States, comparatively few women or children having emigrated thither. If the number of votes polled be adopted as the criterion by which the population is to be adjudged, it could not have exceeded, at the date of the ratification of the constitution, forty thousand; and, with these facts, Congress is impudently to admit California with two Representatives, with a less population of American citizens than each member on this floor represents.

Then as to its boundaries, they contain sufficient territory to make five large States, and embrace a sea-coast of more than eight hundred miles.

The convention which framed the constitution was not called by authority of Congress, but by a military officer, who, by virtue of the commission he held under the Government of the United States, exercised the functions of a civil governor. His ukase directed that the convention should consist of thirty-seven members. After the convention was elected, it assembled, and by a vote for which it had no authority, not even from the military dictator, it increased the number of delegates from thirty-seven to seventy-nine, and allowed the additional number, without referring it to the people, to take their seats, they being the defeated candidates at the election. In my judgement it was the duty of the President to have censured the officer who thus exercised the high prerogative of military dictator. If the President had desired to carry out the will of Congress according to his pledges, that officer could not have escaped punishment, for Congress at its last session positively refused to allow the people of California to do that which the military governor, by a military order or proclamation, bearing striking analogies to an order, instructed them to do.

Who are the people of California? A world in miniature—the four quarters of the globe are represented there. No naturalization laws having been passed, there was no legal impediment to their exercising the right of suffrage. The whole proceeding—not having the consent of Congress, the rightful legislature of the territory—was illegal and revolutionary. I repeat Mr. Chairman, that with all these irregularities we find every party in Congress from the Northern States in favor of the admission of California into the Union—and why? For no other reason than that slavery has been excluded by her

constitution. If her people had assembled under lawful authority, with an ascertained population equal to the present ratio of representation, they alone would have had the power to determine the question whether slavery should or should not exist within her limits. If that decision had been to exclude slavery, no murmur of complaint would have been heard from any Southern man; but I undertake to say here, if slavery had been tolerated, we should have found just as unanimous a sentiment in the Northern States against her admission into the Union as we now find in favor of that proposition; and I do not make this assertion without good foundation. When Florida applied for admission into the Union, a large majority in Congress voted against it, when every initiatory step had been regular, on the isolated ground that she was a slaveholding State.

I have other evidences, Mr. Chairman, of Northern sentiment upon the subject of slavery. The speech recently delivered by the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. Webster) and the action of the House in laying upon the table the resolution of the gentleman from Ohio, in the early part of the session, has induced the belief in the South that a sense of justice had returned to their Northern brethren. These appearances are deceptive. It is an illusion which I deeply deplore. The Senator from Massachusetts made a truly patriotic speech; but what did he propose? All that he offered was, to give to the South her clearly-defined constitutional rights. This gratified us. It gratified us to know that a distinguished Northern man would frankly and ingeniously concede our rights, and enforce their execution by his vote and voice. How has that speech been received in the State of Massachusetts, of which he is the proudest ornament? Her legislature was in session; and fearing lest that speech might contain the balm to heal the divisions of the country, straightway new poison was poured into the wound. Resolutions were passed, taking the strongest and most offensive ground. They did not instruct him, it is true for the dominant party do not assume the right to instruct; but that Senator has not been sustained by his immediate constituents, but a large majority of the people and of the press of Massachusetts have condemned him. He has not been more fortunate here—one after another of the Massachusetts delegation has addressed the committee, all assuming positions adverse to those taken by Mr. Webster. The only hope of aid in this House took its departure to-day, when the honorable gentleman who preceded me (Mr. Winthrop) announced himself in favor of General Taylor's unstatesmanlike plan of settling the existing difficulties. Daniel Webster once spoke and could speak for New England. The waves of fanaticism have broken over the land of the Pilgrim Fathers, and are sweeping off the influence and power of her best and brightest men. When his genius has proved itself impotent to stay this onward wave in the minds of those whose service he has so much honored, upon what ground can the South rest her hopes on peace and safety in this Government?

The action of the House in laying Root's resolution upon the table promised fruit which will never be gathered. If the proviso is not pressed at the present session it will not be because the North have abated one title in their devotion to it. The advocates of that measure are satisfied they will accomplish their purpose quite as effectually, and much more adroitly, in another way.

But, Sir, there is still further evidence of Northern sentiment. We have been told by one gentleman, in this debate, "that the only way in which the abolition of slavery in the States can be constitutionally effected, is to confine it within its present limits;" another said, "that no more slave States or slave territory should come into this Union—sooner civil war," &c.; another, "the Wilmot Proviso was an abiding principle in the hearts of the people of the free States;" and still another, who is a moderate Northern man "that slavery was a national shame and a national disgrace." I quote these sentiments that they may be contrasted with the oft-reiterated assertion, that it is not the purpose of the Northern States to abolish slavery where it now exists. They tell us plainly that they can effect abolition in the States, through the legislation of this Government, without violating the Constitution; and they admit, further, that they will do it by indirect means, but their constitutional scruples forbid direct legislation in abolishing slavery.

Now, Sir, I have a great contempt for the morality or honesty of that sort of reasoning which would make an act unconstitutional if executed directly, but satisfies the conscience that it is constitutional if done indirectly.

The institution of slavery being a "national shame and a national disgrace" in the opinion of the North, and having the power to abolish it by indirect means, the legislation of this Government (for the North have the majority) is to be hostile to our institutions. We then present this anomaly, that a Government established by wise and patriotic men for the security and safety of the persons and property of all its parts—a Government which derives its sustenance by taxation upon all its parts, is to depart so far from the purposes of its creation as to destroy, by its hostile legislation, the property of one-half of the States composing that Government; and that, too, when the States thus threatened are in such a hopeless minority in Congress that they are unable to protect themselves against that hostile, unconstitutional legislation. The value of our slave property is some sixteen hundred millions of dollars: this is to be destroyed through a majority.

The rule for constructing the Constitution, which is fast being established, is, that the majority have the right to rule, and whatever construction they give is the true construction. Such, Mr. Chairman, is not our reading or construction of that instrument. The Constitution is to protect the rights of minorities; majorities have always the ability to protect themselves. If they have the absolute right of making and constructing, then there is no necessity for a written Constitution. If the will of the majority is absolute it is the strong against the weak; the law of force which existed between individuals before Governments were instituted. If the power now claimed for the Northern States is persevered in it requires no spirit of prophecy to foresee that it must end in disunion. The institution of slavery is so intimately interwoven with society, and is so indispensable to our social, political and national prosperity, that it will not be surrendered so long as there is a Southern hand to strike in its defence. We intend to preserve and perpetuate it. We have another demand, and that is, that we shall be allowed to enjoy our property in peace, quiet and security. I tell Northern gentlemen to-day, that five years will not elapse before they will be required to make their choice between non-intervention and non-agitation thro' Congress on the one hand, and a dissolution of this Government on the other; and I tell Southern people, if this agitation is continued during that time, their peace and personal security will require them to choose between secession and negro emancipation. Sir, I do no desire to be considered an alarmist; but if gentlemen will recur to the history of the country, they will learn that the anti-slavery party was contemptible and insignificant, but it has now grown to be a great colossal power overshadowing almost the entire North, and has enlisted under its banner all the political parties there. If its progress is as rapid in the next five years as for the last ten, you will find no Northern Representative who will so far outrage the sentiment of his constituents as to oppose even the abolition of slavery in the States.

(Concluded next week.)

Capt. Schenck, of the steam ship Ohio, on his arrival at Havana from New Orleans on the 18th inst., was not allowed to come to an anchor at a place which he considered unsafe for his ship. He wrote to Gen. Campbell, our Consul, protesting against his being compelled to come to an anchor and remain in so insecure a spot, and that he should hold the Spanish Government responsible for loss or damage which his ship might sustain. This protest was communicated by the Consul to the Governor of Havana, who directed his Secretary, in acknowledging the receipt of Gen. Campbell's communication to say, "If the Captain finds that that place does not offer to his vessel all safety, he can go to sea, as no one compels him to remain here. The government of the island has nothing to do with the responsibility attached to said Captain for the preservation of his steamer."—*Courier*.

The fate of Genius.—There is in this city an old man of sixty, who graduated at the University of Dublin, Ireland, at the age of twenty-two years was admitted as a surgeon in the British army, and in that capacity visited this country with the English, was present at the destruction of the public buildings, stores, etc., at Washing City; has been in India with the British army, has been present, doing his services as a surgeon, at over four thousand amputations, and fifteen severe battles; was shot twice, performed surgical operations on three hundred wounded generals, seven colonels, twenty captains, and over eleven thousand officers of smaller grade, privates, etc. Has dined with two kings, one empress, one emperor, the sultan, a pope, innumerable great generals, etc. Has held the largest diamond in his hand known in the world, except one. Has had the British crown in his hand. Has been married three times, father to eleven children, all of whom he has survived. Broken down by disease, he could no longer practice his profession, too poor to live without employment, and too proud to become a pauper, he sailed in an emigrant ship to this country three years ago; and this man of remarkable adventures, classic education, master of four languages, sixty years of age, poor, old, and decaying, is now peddling oranges and apples in the streets of this city! "We know what we are, verily we know not what we may be!"

From an experiment recently made at the Patent Office, it is found that a rod of good wrought iron, one inch square, will support 30 tons without breaking.