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A Great Speech.

SPEECH

Hon. JOHN L. DAWSON,
At the Great Democratic Mass Meeting,
GREENE COUNTY, AUGUST 21, 1856.

FELLOW CITIZENS:

Never on any occasion have I arisen before an assembly of my fellow-countrymen so impressed with the importance of the contest which draws us together. The crisis so long portended by the progress of events has at length actually arrived. The continued expression of unfriendly sentiments, and the continued repetition of unfriendly acts, by one section of our common country in relation to the institutions of another, has at length brought about that unhappy condition in our domestic relations which our true statesmen have long predicted, and which the patriot has always feared. In inquiring by what causes and agencies this condition of affairs has been produced, it is not my purpose to condemn indiscriminately the motives of any class or political division of my fellow citizens. I am willing to allow much for honesty of intention, where I must at the same time condemn the wisdom of the conduct, and while I have cause, broad and summary, for those who have been the guilty leaders to deplorable results, I admit that the inquiry of transcendent importance is how we may escape from the results, and how retrieve that former position of glorious security and fraternal harmony, in which we were wont to feel a common pride and a common felicity?

To the sober reason of reflecting men, there is, indeed, nothing more amazing and confounding than that unaccountable madness, which, for a time, seems to run through a whole community—by which the general mind is lifted from its peace, and made to see things through a distorted medium. It is not without much artifice and persevering labor on the part of those who have assumed the offices of popular leaders, that they have thus been able to warp the public mind from its propriety, and to infuse into it that subtle poison which is now displaying itself in efforts of irregular and convulsive excitement, and a singular forgetfulness of paramount obligations.

Could the causes of the internal distraction, which at this time afflicts these States, be communicated for the first time to one unaffected by any prejudice of feeling or judgment in regard to them, I apprehend that in view of such an one there could be no instance more flagrant of national folly. Could we evoke from the glorious slumber in which they repose, the spirits of the great men who presided at the origin of the government—could we call up Hancock and Warren—and Lee and Rutledge—and Henry and Washington—what would they feel and say and opine in view of a contest waged upon such principles as this? Would they not blush and hide their noble heads for shame for the degeneracy of their descendants, which could peril on a question like that of negro slavery the existence of a State which is the proudest boast of all time!

The nature of the present contest is, indeed, unparalleled. No precedent is found in all our past political history for any tactics which shall be applicable now. Ever heretofore, we have all aimed, by whatever different systems of policy, and struggle, and procedure, and without sectional distinctions, for the greatness and prosperity of a common country with which we have felt our own, and the happiness of our descendants to be identified. The efforts made by a few disinterested and reckless politicians in different parts of the country to rear a sectional banner, were always met by the indignant contempt of an insulted community. Ever heretofore, if the question was whether the financial affairs of the nation should be managed through a National Bank, or an Independent Treasury, whether the currency of the country were better constituted of paper or the precious metals; whether revenue should be raised by the imposition of duties upon imports or by direct taxes—whether the protection of domestic manufactures, and the prosecution of internal improvements fall within the legitimate powers of the general government, or whether these should more wisely be left to the inventive genius, and enterprising spirit of the people, and the resources of the separate States—upon whichever of these issues the politics of the country were made for the time to hinge, the strife was still for the welfare, the prosperity, and happiness of the whole country. No schisms and insidious distinctions of North and South—no recognition of a line of policy for one section which was not adapted to another, is to be found in any of these issues; and no public man who represented any considerable portion of the public sentiment, dared, either in the Capitol or before the people, coolly to discuss the value of the Union, or give utterance to a single expression in its disparagement.

But alas the change! Is then the race of patriots and sages passed away? Has there been any change in the relations of the various parts of the confederacy, which releases in any degree, the present generation from its obligations for the preservation of the Union? Has there been any change to authorize any abatement of those sentiments of veneration for the Union and its founders, which we cherished with our earliest teachings? Is the Union really less valuable now than it has been at any time heretofore? Can the two great sections of which it is composed in fact subsist without it, and is it better for each to have separate nationalities? Can two great republics flourish in immediate contiguity upon the American Continent, and are we indeed reconciled to the hazardous experiment? The men of '76 flattered themselves they were accomplishing a work, which should inure to the benefit of their descendants for a time to which they were unwilling to admit a limit, not even that of the popular governments of Greece and Rome.

WILLIAM LEWIS,

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Editor and Proprietor.

NO. 13.

They hoped rather that the admirable system which they left for their successors should endure for all time. They were men whom the world have agreed to praise for their unparalleled wisdom and disinterested patriotism. But, alas, for our independence if its noblest fruit—the Federal Constitution—is to be openly violated and trampled in the dust! Has it then come to this? Have the glories of the American Union culminated so soon? Have those illustrious lights indeed grown dim and feeble in the overpowering radiance of more recent luminaries? Have we at length the patriotic fathers were mistaken? Have we discovered that their wisdom was but folly—that the Constitution is a failure—that it is the legal sanction of injustice—and that there is a law above its letter and spirit, which authorizes us to regard its written injunctions and prohibitions, as no more than the counsels of well meaning dupes? And if we are sure of all this, are we also sure that we shall be able to control that fiery and capricious spirit of Revolution whose incipient and reckless steps we discern in these sectional movements? How far do we propose to go? Where shall we stop!—and can we stop there? Will the change stop with the disruption of the Union in two republics, or will it fall into other hands than those of political schemers, who started it for the accomplishment of a selfish and temporary purpose—into those of military chiefs, who will avail themselves of the opportunity to perpetuate their power; and will thus the republic be frittered down into miserable and petty despotism?

These are the truly momentous issues which you are called upon to decide in this contest. The restoration of the Missouri Compromise, which is now the rallying cry, is a mere excuse. Did the parties who demand it agitate any the less while it existed, and would they agitate the less were it restored to-morrow? In 1848, after the acquisition of California and our Mexican territories, it was proposed in Congress for the sake of peace and quiet, to extend the line of 36° 30' to the Pacific Ocean, but at the mention of which the howl of the Giddingses and Hales went forth from the Capitol in tones so terrible as to "make night hideous."

With the principles upon which that agitation proceeds who of us can, upon deliberate conviction, entertain any sympathy? What is its aim, if any definite aim it has? If any such it can have, it is neither more or less than the emancipation of the entire black race, and its exaltation to an equality with the whites in all social and political rights and privileges. Is there anything in such a scheme of policy worthy the name of statesmanship? And are the distinctions impressed by the hands of the Creator himself so easily wiped away? The idea of amalgamation is indeed too absurd and repulsive to be dwelt upon. That four millions of a colored population can be in any way incorporated with, and insensibly lost in the white race, is inconsistent with those prejudices implanted by nature for wise purposes, and could it be accomplished, would end in the permanent deterioration of the white race. We are bound, therefore, upon every principle of common reason, to suppose that such cannot be the object of this agitation. In what other way do they propose to benefit that race? We have never yet heard of any project on the part of these especial friends of the black man, for his restoration to Africa. On the contrary, they have done all in their power, by paralyzing in a very great degree, the beneficent plans of colonization—to discourage the idea of such a restoration.

But it will be pretended that this agitation does not proceed upon the idea of a superior regard for the black race, but rather on that of preserving or securing our unoccupied territory, from the institutions of slavery.—This, which is no doubt the view of the greater part of the supporters of anti-slavery, or opponents of Democratic measures, brings us to that system of legislation, which is but recent, and which is admitted to be identified with the policy which we uphold. The defence of the Kansas-Nebraska bill is to be found in its entire accordance with the theory of a Democratic republic. We maintain that the idea that the interests of slavery gain anything by such an arrangement is a mere illusion. It overlooks entirely the great determining elements in all such cases of the adaptation of soil, climate, and other favorable circumstances of condition, as well as the relative productiveness of free and slave labor. These conditions constitute a law of nature, imposed with far more rigor and certainty than any geographical line or Missouri restriction.

The principle of the Nebraska-Kansas bill, which is the recognition of the right of the people to form their own government according to the will of the majority, is a principle which lies at the basis of all our institutions. It is the same which built us up from feeble colonies into wealthy and important provinces, and which occasioned our resistance to British tyranny and led to the establishment of American Nationality. By virtue of that principle it is that the States of the Union and the confederacy every where exhibit laws framed upon principles of equality and justice, and administered by tribunals characterized by intelligence and virtue; that the productive energies of the nation have produced such fruits in agriculture, manufactures and commerce; that the works of American invention are sought for their admitted superiority by the most enlightened nations of Europe; that we have an empire stretching across a continent from the great Atlantic where the light of the morning sun is first seen, to the broad waters of the Pacific where his setting rays disappear upon its bosom.—All these and more than I have space to enumerate, are the wonderful results of the principle of popular sovereignty as displayed in our government and institutions, and whose successful working cannot be denied without the assertion that the experiment of a Republic is a failure.

Prior to the passage of the Missouri Compromise, in 1820, the representation of the North and South in Congress was nearly poised, and the history of the events of the

day shows conclusively, that the contest which resulted in the passage of that act, was one for power, political power, entirely regardless of the interest or welfare of the slave. It was the effort to obtain the political direction of the country and the control of its legislation—to shape its policy in the building up of sectional interests by the adoption of measures protective of manufactures, internal improvements, and commerce and navigation, and by the appropriation of the resources of the national treasury—which led to the fierceness of that struggle and seduced Congress into an over-stretch of its powers in order to quiet the tremendous excitement. The question having been put to rest for the time by the acquiescence of the nation in that adjustment, the slave did not, as yet, in his domestic relations attract any special regard from the North, and the efforts of the Southern philanthropists for the amelioration of his condition were ardently continued up to as late as 1852, when the fierceness of the abolition aggression arrested and defeated their progress.

In the third of a century which has elapsed since the law of 1820, State after State north of the line of slavery has been added to the confederacy, each contributing to swell the influence of the free States, and in the aggregate to establish largely their numerical superiority in the popular branch of the national legislature. The question of political power has thus been fully settled, but the excitement which has begun for extensive political objects has since passed into fanaticism and who were abolitionists from over-wrought benevolence have become the prey of demagogues who continue the agitation for their individual benefit in the attainment of power and place—to the prejudice of the country, and at the sacrifice of its peace and the stability of its institution. The progress of time showed in the continuance of the abolition excitement the total inefficiency of the act of 1820, and its unconstitutionality having been almost universally conceded, Congress possessed the clear right which it exercised, in the passage of the Bill for the organization of the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas, to repeal the same and vindicate the constitution by the restoration of the true doctrine and thus to remove the question from their deliberation. We insist, therefore, that the wild excitement which has run through the country upon this subject is a delusion. It has no genuine basis. It cannot be sincere. It has been raised and is supported by such leaders as Sumner, Giddings and others by whom it is used only as a specious decoy, to elevate, or continue in power, its unscrupulous authors.

Besides the Anti-Slavery, Free-Soil and Republican parties, and the Fusion or Black Republican, made up of the two latter, another division of politicians antagonistic to the principles of the Democratic party, is that of the Know Nothings. Their two most important principles are those of hostility to foreigners and to all who profess the Catholic religion. But whence has arisen this idea of a crusade against the civil and religious rights of so large and respectable a portion of our fellow citizens, for it is in vain that we shall scrutinize the writings of the fathers of the confederacy for any sentiment so utterly abhorrent to these principles, which breathe in the Declaration of Independence, and live through every line of the Constitution.

A movement somewhat similar was indeed once attempted soon after the Government went into operation. The celebrated alien act was passed in 1798, in the first year of the administration of John Adams; and though this measure was adopted when the public mind was justly in a high state of excitement against France, for many injuries and indignities, yet this was not sufficient to reconcile the people to the palpable injustice of legislation, which created an oppressive distinction against foreigners. The result was, the unequivocal condemnation of that policy in the signal overthrow of the Federal administration, and the elevation to the vacant dignities, of the Republican party under Mr. Jefferson.

In view of the great services rendered by foreigners in our Revolutionary struggle, the ingratitude of any measure which should contemplate a selfish exclusiveness, was indignantly rejected by the honest patriotism of our ancestors. No odious discrimination against their adopted brethren could be tolerated. In their view, our liberties and institutions were not of that feeble character, that they needed the defense of laws designed to bring into odium any portion of their fellow citizens, to whatever land, unblest by the light of Freedom, they might owe the accident of their birth. The ratio of the favor to the native population could not have been less than now; nor could any imagined dangers from such a source have been less. Notwithstanding this, our fathers deemed the principles of freedom as guaranteed by the inimitable features of our Republican system, of that degree of excellence, that any slight misapprehension of their nature by those not previously accustomed to their enjoyment, would speedily work its own cure. Liberty and equality, under the due regulation of law, with the avenues of social and political position alike open to all, they well knew to be elevating and ennobling principles, and they deemed that the natural impulse which prompts every man to study the welfare of his posterity, would form a safeguard of inestimable value, and one which might be safely trusted, to preserve the political rectitude of the adopted citizen. So our fathers thought, and the result has proven the wisdom of their conclusions.

Another element in the composition of this Know Nothing party, is that which discriminates against a portion of our fellow citizens on account of their religious tenets. It boldly proclaims to the world, and challenges a contest upon that issue, that Roman Catholics are unfit for official position, and are disqualified by their principles from participating in the government of the country. It is pretended that by their principles secretly entertained, though publicly they are permitted to disavow them, they acknowledge a superior allegiance to the Roman See. While we have seen no evidence of this, and while

by the purest and best men of that denomination, such pretensions on behalf of the papal power are entirely disavowed, the characters of certain of the most distinguished coadjutors in the work of our Revolution is an abundant guaranty of their falsity. Is it for a moment to be credited that the mind of a Baltimore, of a Carroll, of a Carrollton, or a Lafayette, could ever have admitted claims so destructive of national independence.—But grant that Roman Catholics may be prejudiced against Protestant institutions—that they may sympathize with every thing Catholic in the old country. Grant that their reverence for papal authority may be of that profound degree as to incline them to a willing obedience to its injunctions, however unfavorable to Republican institutions and government, yet what is their proportion to the mass of their fellow citizens? In 1850 the whole Roman Catholic population in the United States was only 1,200,000, one half of whom, it may reasonably be supposed, are of native origin, born and reared under the influence of freedom, which having thus imbedded the taste will remain with them forever. That is a baptism to which there can be no infidelity. They may recognize their religious duties as Roman Catholics, but they will never accord to the Pope any other than a spiritual authority, and that too in matters within his spiritual province. They will allow him, perhaps, the last decision of a question respecting the immaculate conception; but in a question of governmental forms and institutions, they will assert a right to their own opinions and choice. But allowing a blind and superstitious reverence for the Holy Father may incline his followers to accept in all things, even his wishes as laws, and that these may be sometimes, unfriendly to the interests of freedom, yet what, let me ask, will Roman Catholics ever be able to accomplish, with the avers eyes of more than 25,000,000 of jealous Protestants upon them. During our colonial existence religious persecution was not unknown among us. Persecuted by refugees from persecution in the old world, it is not strange that its fell spirit should follow them to this; and thus in the infancy of our settlements there was little charity of feeling between the Plymouth adventurers or with the Quakers of Philadelphia and the settlers of Jamestown and Saint Mary's; or between the Huguenots of Carolina, and the Catholics of Florida and Louisiana. But the difficult circumstances of the settlers demanding all their energies for the success of their enterprises—constantly menaced by hostile savages, soon diverted the minds of the colonists from the persecution of their fellows. The perception of a common danger and a common interest soon displaced the unnatural irritation, and feelings of mutual respect and attachment gradually succeeded. Thus at the date of the union the fires of religious fanaticism may be said to have died out in the colonies, and the happy period of universal toleration seemed at length to have arrived. But why this retrograde movement again conducted through the agency of secret orders? Do we so soon tire of the kindly offices of fraternal regard; and are we at length driven to discard the hope of human perfectibility, and to settle in the conviction of the satanical philosopher, who declared that "the natural state of mankind is a state of war?"

Is danger still apprehended from the increase of Catholic influence? Look at Rome herself, in age and decrepitude, throne amid ruins, and with decay all around her! Look at the history of the Roman Catholic settlements in Maryland, Florida, Louisiana, and the Canadas! That history illustrates that, whether from their inherent nature or circumstances by which they are surrounded, inertness has been the character of those settlements. They have been circumscribed and paralyzed by the active influences around them, and have presented no appreciable obstruction to the onward march of Protestant intelligence and energy. Shall any of us, after this review, refuse justice to Roman Catholics from dread of their increasing power? The idea of such an extended Catholic influence arising in this country as shall prove destructive of our political institutions, is indeed about as reasonable as that lately promulgated by Miss Murry, maid of Honor to Queen Victoria, who in a work written upon this country, expresses her fears that the Mormon custom of a plurality of wives is in danger of spreading throughout the States.

It is to be esteemed a most fortunate circumstance that the admirable institutions which we enjoy, did not owe their origin to any single religious sect, but that the Carolina and the Roundhead—the disciple of Calvin of Loyola and of Penn—met here upon the simple platform of equal, civil and religious rights, and agreed to sink their peculiarities and prejudices of sect, and to unite on a government which should serve for the common protection of all. In the Revolution the blood of all freely mingled for the establishment of our Independence; and the Federal Constitution was the solemn compact that the demon persecution, should no more unseath her bloody sword, nor re-kill her accursed fires. No Holy Brotherhod, with inquisitorial instruments of torture, was ever more, in this free and happy land, to assemble in dark conclave, and interfere with the rights of conscience in any—the Episcopalian was never more to persecute the Puritan, nor the Puritan the Quaker. Such, I say, was the spirit in which our Government was framed; and when we depart from that spirit by setting up a religious test of qualifications for the exercise of civil rights, we become traitors to the memory of our fathers.

And now, my friends, after this hasty review of the relative position of the Democracy and the opposition forces in regard to the principles at issue between us, let us cast a glance at the magnitude of the interests which are imperiled by the unnatural warfare, which is now waged by the factions opposed to them. How great in all the elements which constitute a prosperous and mighty state is this confederacy! A population for the most part homogeneous, and of the best specimens of the Teutonic and Celtic races—with a Territory of boundless extent, and a variety of soil and climate adapted to

almost every species of production—with lakes, rivers, mountains and plains, all upon the most liberal scale which a beneficent nature has anywhere displayed—with the State governments for the protection of local and domestic interests, and the administration of justice, and a national government with special and limited powers for the care of our relations as States, and those which we bear to other nations—with the wisest distribution of powers, balances and restrictions—the greatest equity in relation to personal rights and the rights of the constituent States, and the best guaranties for the preservation of both. The means for the religious, moral and intellectual training of the common mind, beyond what any people have ever possessed—all circumstances and causes conspire to invite us to a career of virtuous prosperity, such as no nation, however favored, has ever hitherto enjoyed.—The field is vast indeed—vast beyond our capacity to realize, for the exercise of the mighty energies of this restless 19th century, in the peaceful triumphs over the obstacles of nature, and in bringing the life of man into harmony with the physical and moral laws of his being. What is there to interrupt our march toward the consummation of that sublime spectacle, a nation everywhere beloved and respected above all others, for its power, and still more for its justice—leading the age in the wisdom of its political and social institutions, in efforts of commercial enterprise, and in the useful and liberal arts—without a source of complaint on the part of any individual on account of personal oppression or privation of any of his rights—with the full development of the resources of a mighty country contributing in the degree—great indeed, yet in which it was manifestly intended by the creator—to the general comfort and felicity of the world: What but these internal dissensions break up these fraternal relations which should subsist between all the members of the same political community, in order that general happiness may be the result—turning the energies and capacities which should be exercised for the common welfare, to the purpose of mutual annoyance.

This disturbance, if not already at the height, calls aloud for the efforts of every lover of his country to arrest its progress toward that fatal result. Let every such pause before he encourages further, for any selfish design of whatever subtle demagogue—under whatever specious pretexts of philanthropy or excessive regard for his species—the movements of parties formed upon partial principles, which contemplate the advancement of sectional interests only, and which openly counten the provisions of our common bond of union.

It must be plain to every intelligent and honest inquirer after the truth, that the Democratic is at this time the only party which upon this great national issue stands unaffected with any taint of corruption, and is sound to the core. Look to the history of that party. Is there anything almost, which has in an eminent degree conducted to the greatness, the welfare and happiness or the honor of the nation, which has not owed its origin to that party? The charter of our Independence sprang from the pen of Jefferson, and that by which our Republican liberties were established and their preservation secured, was the work of the wise and excellent Madison—both Democrats whom it is ever safe to follow: It has been under Democratic principles and policy that the centralizing tendencies of our federal system have been successfully resisted, and the rights of the States duly preserved—that the General Government has been restricted to the exercise of its legitimate powers, and the dangers of a latitudinarian policy avoided—that the finances of the nation have been rescued from the control of a colossal and irresponsible corporation, and managed through its own agents with safety, cheapness, convenience and satisfaction to the public; that the imposition of duties upon foreign products has been made with reference chiefly to revenue, while within the revenue limit adequate protection has been given to American industry and skill—and that works of Internal Improvement have been wisely relinquished by the General Government, and left to the resources of private capital and State enterprise. It has been under Democratic administrations that our National Territory has come to embrace the Floridas and Louisiana, and the barbarous lands of New Mexico and California and have been brought under the radiance of our National flag. The Democracy have ever contended for a pure and honest administration of the Constitution, regardless of sectional clamor; and faithful to their honorable antecedents, they have sought by the Kansas and Nebraska acts to remove from the Statute Book of the nation, a restriction unjust in itself, and for whose imposition no legal authority existed.

There is one other point of view in which I desire to present this subject, and I have done. We, in these United States, are everywhere communities made up of classes which have all a great personal interest at stake.—Next to the secure enjoyment of the right of personal liberty, which we justly prize above all others, is the secure enjoyment of our private acquisitions made in the regular course of industry subservient to law. Experience and observation alike teach us that there is nothing so conducive to individual and public prosperity and happiness, as the free and unmolested pursuit and secure enjoyment of private property. Yet do we exult or reflect how slow has been the progress of that right to the perfection in which it exists with us? True, it has for centuries constituted one of the principal objects of the Laws of England, as laid down by Blackstone.—True, it was one of the guaranties contained in Magna Charta. True, it was guaranteed by the Petition of Right to which the assent of Charles I. was extorted by the commons; and that it was still further secured by the Declaration of Rights at the Revolution of 1688. But practically, what after all was this security? Was it not the very question which brought Charles I. to the block?—It was the assumption of the British Government of the right to take our property with-

out our consent, which led to the separation of the colonies, and occasioned the erection of our municipal and federal governments with new guaranties for that and all other rights. What is the right of property in other countries of Europe? Do we find, for instance, in France, in Austria, in the States of Italy, that free spirit of enterprise in acquisition, and that security for enjoyment, when acquired, of which as Americans we are so justly proud? France, indeed, may read us a powerful lesson, for she set out, after having got rid, by the summary process of bloody revolution, of all the abuses of her old regal system, and undertook to frame a government which should perfectly secure the citizen in every right which can belong to man in a state of society. But how has she succeeded? From the errors and uncertainties of ill-directed effort we have seen her again and again, seek refuge in the quietude of Imperial chains.

Will not such a glance at existing facts teach us how to prize the privileges which we possess in the superior justice and equality of our institutions and frame of government, and render us anxious for their stability? Will they not instruct us in the danger of parting with the substance in pursuit of the shadow? Shall we not learn, then, how rare a thing is a perfect government, and that if that of these States be not so, we may despair of ever beholding it.

Let me appeal to you, men of commerce!—for whom the steamer ploughs the wave, and the locomotive penetrates the mountain and the valley, who look to the stability of your Government, her laws and institutions, for the success of your ventures, and the continuance of a prosperous exchange. I appeal to you who spin and who weave, who forge and who fabricate a thousand objects of utility and elegance—manufacturers of whatever name!—is it for you to part so readily with the solid advantages which you enjoy by doing naught to endanger, under whatever guise of a superior virtue, an order of things to which you owe so much? I appeal to you, tillers of the soil, among whom honesty, virtue, intelligence, and love of country, make their especial abode—who could as soon dispense with the beautiful succession of the seasons, as with the continuance unimpaired, of a system which showers upon you such daily benefits—which is knit together with your habits of thought and your most ardent affections—are you prepared to disturb the present harmony of our governmental structure, to cast it aside and seek in the crude and interested plans of extreme politicians, the means of imparting to that structure a new efficacy unforeseen by your wise forefathers?

To the great mass of you, my fellow-citizens, it is of little importance which of half a dozen divisions of politicians have the offices of the country, but it does behoove you to look well to it, that you do not, for the paltry purpose of gratifying an unbridled philanthropy and misdirected patriotism, risk the durability of interests which are of incalculable importance to you and your descendants. I pretend to no special gift of prophecy, and presume not to conjecture how far you may go in the deliberate violation of those principles upon which the confederacy was framed, and still its existence may be preserved. It is sufficient for me that safety is found in that party which has always aimed in the first place to preserve the cardinal features of our system free from encroachments from whatever source. Evils or irregularities existing within the Government they are willing to leave to the healing hand of time, confident that with its progress they will slough off, as a disease, with the general invigoration of the system. Thus slavery, in the good time appointed by the Supreme Ruler will be quietly put off without violence, but with a gently detaching hand—just as nature, in the grateful change of the seasons, gradually lays aside the garb of winter, and passes into her glorious array of summer flowers and autumn fruits. And thus the African, now the miserable sport of a mock philanthropy, shall at length, when his true friends shall have been allowed to prosecute unimpeded their designs of benevolence, stand once more upon his native soil, and shall carry with him from his bondage the seeds of a christian civilization which shall ripen into a glorious fruitage beneath those tropical skies.

Passing from the consideration of the principles involved in this contest, it remains for me to add a few words in regard to our candidates. And here, as a Pennsylvanian, I acknowledge, and you will acknowledge with me, the pride and satisfaction inspired by the fact that the choice of the National Democracy has at length fallen upon a distinguished citizen of our glorious old Commonwealth. If we have cause to be proud that our nominee is a son of Pennsylvania, we have not less cause of exultation that that son is James Buchanan—a name which from a union of high personal qualities demands admiration, respect, and confidence. Born and nurtured in the bosom of Pennsylvania, we claim an especial right to an acquaintance with the development of his eminent abilities, and their continued exercise on behalf of the people. Emerging into public life as a member of the Bar, amidst a host of legal luminaries, the superiors of whom no country or time has witnessed—when Sergeant and Hopkins and McKean—and Ross and Baldwin and Addison were still upon the stage—his powers were trained and directed in contact with such minds as theirs. His experience for more than a quarter of a century in the councils of the nation as a Senator, as Secretary of State and Foreign Minister, accredited to the two greatest of the European Powers, in equal conflict with the most skillful diplomatists of the age—has given him that political wisdom which is not always attainable, is yet always to be desired in the Chief Magistrate of the Republic.—On every theatre on which they have been exerted, the lustre of his great talents have been seen and acknowledged wherever the English language is spoken and read. Nor is the purity of his private character inferior to his public reputation.

The country is now about to manifest its gratitude for the distinguished public services which it has received at his hands. It will not forget in this contest the great value of those services in resisting the rise of sectionalism, in direct attacks upon the institution of slavery—or to an inflated paper currency, placing the wages of the laborer at the mercy of its expansions and contractions—his opposition to the bank of the United States, and to the passage of the National Bank Law—and his noble advocacy of the annexation of Texas. The merchants of our seacoast towns will not forget the importance of his labors while the Representative of this country at the Court of St. Petersburg, in securing for them, by the first commercial treaty which we formed with the Court, the trade of the Baltic and Black seas—and his recent maintenance, as Minister to England, of our national rights in the Diplomatic controversies carried on with that power in relation to the Central American and enlistment questions, have secured for him the ardent admiration and approval of his countrymen,