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The Patriot & Union.
MONDAY MORNING, APRIL 1, 1861.

SPEECH OF HON. JOHN J. CRITTENDEN, BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE OF KENTUCKY, Tuesday, 26th March, 1861.

Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:

It is my great honor on this occasion to appear before you upon your joint invitation to address you upon the subject of our national affairs. I thank you, gentlemen, for the great honor you have thus seen fit to confer upon me. I have been long, very long, in the service of my country. The time has come when I am to retire from it; I do it cheerfully and willingly. You and your predecessors have conferred many honors upon me; you have indeed the honor of being elected to the Senate of the United States; I am now a private citizen, and, after all my trials and my attempts in the service of my country, you are pleased to receive me with approbation; I am grateful to you, gentlemen. By these honors and this exhibition of your confidence you endeavor to make the repose of my old days, after a life spent in your service, agreeable, happy and humble; you can confer no greater reward upon me; I can receive none greater. I thank you as much as I can for your partiality as I am to the value of any service I have rendered for these tokens of regard and confidence.

I am invited, Mr. Speaker, to address you and the honored assembly on the subject of our national affairs. It is a gloomy subject, Mr. Speaker. Never in the long history of our country has anything like or at all parallel to the present condition of our country presented itself for our consideration. But a little while ago we were a great, united people, one name was known, and one language was spoken throughout the land. Our power, our greatness was everywhere recognized, and our flag was everywhere considered as the emblem of a great and growing nation. Now sir, what is the condition to which we are reduced. Where is that glorious Union that we promised ourselves should be perpetuated? Where are those ten thousand sentiments offered in toasts and orations that the Union was to be perpetuated? "Let it be perpetuated—*est perpetua*"—was the sentiment expressed on thousands and thousands of public occasions.

What is our condition now, and how has it been brought about? I need not state very particularly the causes which have produced these effects, nor need I recur to the present condition of our nation with a view of telling you what it is. It is a sad story—so sad that it is impressed upon every heart—known to every citizen. I shall not detain you idly by any particular details of causes. It is enough to say that it has all grown—our national calamity—our national misfortune—has all grown out of a controversy between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States, furnishing questions of slavery and questions of anti-slavery—questions about the Territories of the United States.

These agitations have long exasperated, on the one side and on the other, a vast portion of the United States. It has resulted in the formation of sectional parties—a sectional party in the North and a sectional party in the South. The sectional party of the North has finally succeeded in electing a President for the United States, and installing their party in all the offices of the Government. This has excited increased apprehensions in the part of the South as to the safety of their peculiar institutions. They dread that the Northern power will employ itself in destroying one of these institutions, and depriving them of their property.

Under this apprehension, what have they done? They have sought a most violent remedy against this apprehended evil by seceding, as they term it, from the Union of these States, and forming for themselves a separate, distinct and independent Government out of the seven States that have seceded—S. Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas. These States have, in so far as they established the power, broken our Union, and established, or attempted to establish, for themselves an independent Government, and to put that Government into operation. This is the present attitude in which our country stands. While these revolutionary movements were in progress, attempts were made in the Congress of the United States, then in session, for the adoption of such measures as might check them. It was hoped that if these measures could not recall to the mind of the States that had already seceded, they might secure the allegiance and adherence to the Union of the remaining States.

Among many other gentlemen who proposed measures for adjustment and reconciliation, I submitted a series of resolutions, believing that their adoption might pacify our country, put a stop to revolution, and preserve and restore our Union. I need not undertake to occupy your time by reciting those resolutions. They are known to you all and had the honor of being expressly approved by you. This object was mainly to satisfy the claims of the South to remove with their slaves to the Territories of the United States.

On the other hand, this right was denied, upon the ground that the Territories belonged to the United States; that no individual State, nor any of the States separately, had an interest in the Territories, but that they belonged to and were under the absolute control and government of the General Government. Sir, let that be admitted. Admit that the territory is under the absolute control of the General Government; but, sir, does it not follow that that General Government ought to administer this great property, so to exercise its great functions, that every class of States, and every State, shall equally participate in and equally enjoy that which belongs to all?

No matter whether you consider it a property held in trust for the individual States, or as a property held absolutely for the General Government, to be controlled or disposed of by that General Government, it equally follows that that General Government, to be just and to act upon the principles of the Constitution, ought to administer the property that each and every State—every portion of the Union—may have an equal participation in and an equal enjoyment in that which belongs equally to all—the territory of the United States.

It seems to me, therefore, that there is injustice in excluding from that equal and full enjoyment any class of States because of any institution that may exist in them. The Constitution gives to the other States no right to monopolize that territory, and to assume the entire ownership and enjoyment of it. The Constitution accepted them at its foundation. It accepted them as slaveholding States. It accepted them at the time of its adoption as entitled to equal rights, notwithstanding they held slaves. It accepted slaveholding and non-slaveholding States as standing in equal favor with the Constitution, and entitled to equal rights and equal justice from that Constitution.

So regarding it, it seems to me that it would

be unjust for the free States to assume and usurp to themselves the entire control of these Territories, and so control them as in effect to exclude from them portions of the citizens of a certain class of States. I thought, therefore, sir, that the North was in the wrong, and that the South was in the right in respect to this question of property and rights in the Territories of the United States; and one of the objects of the measures which I proposed, one of their chief objects, was to procure, by an amendment to the Constitution, an acknowledgment of this equal right on the part of the South. Upon Constitutional principles this right would extend to all the Territories of the United States, and the Southern States in common with the free States, would have an undivided and equal right in all the Territories of the United States. But, as a common enjoyment would be difficult, it appeared more convenient that there should be for this purpose a sort of partition of the Territories of the United States between the different classes of States, slaveholding and non-slaveholding.

Our fathers—those who have gone before us—in the year 1820, upon the question of the introduction of Missouri into the Union, were interested in this very question of slavery objection. The admission of Missouri was objected to because of its constitution, in view of the fact that slavery existed in the new State and was sanctioned by its constitution. Manifesting at that early period an opposition to the exclusion of slavery, they rejected it in the first instance—they opposed the admission of Missouri. A compromise was then drafted. The line of 36° 30' was made the dividing boundary or line. Upon the north of it slavery was to be prohibited; upon the south of it slavery was not to be prohibited. So the matter rested. It produced peace. Now instead of the common, undivided right to go into all the Territories, the South has an implied promise that she may go there and carry her slaves, if she pleases, into all the territory south of the line of 36° 30'. That compromise applied also to the territory acquired by the Louisiana treaty. What have we done in the present emergency—an emergency presenting the same questions? I proposed that we should again adopt this line of division and apply it to the territory which we had since acquired in our war with Mexico—that we should not seem to the Congress of the United States, and that we should not seem to the Territories either as it regarded the Territories themselves or as it regarded slavery in the Territories. They declined to permit slaves to be carried into the territory south of 36° 30'. In the meantime the revolution proceeded. This revolution has undertaken to form itself into a government distinct and independent. The revolting States have broken the Union which united us heretofore, and they are putting this government into operation, and we stand here to-day astonished at the great event that is occurring around us—astonished at the revolution which is glaring us in the face—and inquiring what is to be done.

There was one solitary circumstance attending these resolutions, however, that is well worthy of notice. Although the discussion of them did not sufficiently recommend them to the Congress of the United States, it struck upon the hearts of the people throughout the United States, and afforded them an opportunity for displaying their fraternal feelings towards us and all the South, and the generous temper and disposition which prompted them to seek reconciliation and adjustment—an amicable settlement of all our differences upon any terms that we might believe to be fair and equitable—just upon the terms offered by the resolutions, or upon any other terms equivalent to them. That would have been reconciliation enough to have saved the Union whatever else might have been lost. As a testimony of the manner in which this adjustment was hoped for hundreds and thousands of persons in the Northern States signed petitions praying for the passage of the measure. Forty thousand voters from the single State of Massachusetts, thousands from Pennsylvania, thousands from all the Northwestern States, breathing a spirit of love and kindness to their fellow-citizens and devotion to the Union, were willing to sacrifice anything and everything for its preservation. This was to me, and it will be to you and to every Union-loving man, the most impressive and acceptable evidence of the temper and disposition of our fellow-citizens elsewhere. It showed me that the argument which has been so often used to dispute us—that the North hates the South, and that the South hates the North—is not true. The Almighty has not made us with hearts of such malignity as to hate whole classes of our countrymen for the sins of a few men. The North does not hate the South. The South does not hate the North. In this matter, gentlemen, I speak so far as my own observation, and my own experience enable me to testify. We have our moments of irritation at times. We have great provocations, and often these provocations have excited unkind feelings—reproaches without number, on the one side and on the other. Crimination and recrimination has existed between us. But this only serves to form a part of that great volume of abuse which political strife and the struggle for party predominance must necessarily produce. They pass by however. The stream is no longer made turbid by this cause, and in purity it runs throughout the land, encircling us in the arms of a common fellowship—a common country. So may God forever preserve us.

We have not been made to hate one another. We do not hate one another. The politicians who tell us that we hate each other are either honestly mistaken or they are seeking ephemeral popularity by professing to be our friends, and showing us by the hatred which they profess for one or the other, that their protecting love for us is over all. But the people will not always be led by politicians. They have risen upon this occasion, and I believe in my heart that there is at this moment a majority of Northern men that would cheerfully vote for any of the resolutions of compromise that were proposed by men of the South in the last Congress. I have assurances of that character given to me by some of the most respectable men, some of the most influential men of Pennsylvania. I have assurances given to me by hundreds of letters from the most intelligent men of that State, to get my resolutions submitted to the people. They came to me from

every Northern State, I believe without a solitary exception, to get my resolutions submitted to the people. "We want," said they, "to preserve the Union. We differ from our representatives in Congress in this matter. They are elected as partisans, on party platforms, and are subjected to the control of their party. They do not feel as we do. They feel and act like partisans, and want to maintain every syllable and every letter of their platform. We wish to preserve our sacred Union. We love our brethren. Put your resolutions before us. They will pass by hundreds and thousands of majorities." Gentlemen, I believe that in Pennsylvania they would have passed by one hundred thousand majorities. If these resolutions have done nothing else, they have at least elicited evidences of affection for us from our Northern brethren. They ought to be considered as having attained something in this light, something important, too, considering the value of the Union. The people were ready to sanction the compromise. The generosity and patriotism of their hearts have not stopped to calculate the consequences to party of the downfall of their platform. They have indulged these feelings as fellow-citizens and fellow-countrymen, and they are willing to give in all you ask and all you want. They would rather give you more than you are entitled to than part with you.

We are not to be outdone in generosity, I trust, by the people of the North. If they are thus anxious to preserve the Union, shall we be more lukewarm in that sacred cause. What we should do is this: Insist upon our rights, but insist upon them in the Union, and depend upon it that the people will grant them to you. This or that Senate, and this or that body or convention may refuse, but mark me, your country has a great, warm heart. The citizens of this Republic will work out the redemption of their country, if we will but combine and cooperate with them to preserve this Union. Let us struggle in the Union, contend in the Union, make the Union the instrument with which we contend, and we shall get all that we ask—all that we can desire—all that reason can warrant us in expecting.

This, my fellow-citizens, is the great fact of the sentiment and opinion of our brethren everywhere. Now, the great question which we are called upon to decide is, what, in this unparalleled, stupendous crisis—what shall we do? Seven States of our common country lately moving in harmony—claiming equal rights than all the fellow-citizens of a common Government—withdraw from this Government, and are now denying their allegiance to it—avowing their determination to form a separate Government, and actually forming that separate Government—as separate from this. They are attempting to ignore all relations to us, and claiming treatment as a foreign power.

What is the wish of us all? It is, and ought to be, by some means or mode to bring back from their present relations of consanguinity and love which unite them with us. Nature has tied these knots. Party difficulties and political troubles can never untie them.

They proclaim themselves independent as a nation. How shall we treat these erring brethren? How shall the General Government act towards them? How shall Kentucky and the other slave States conduct themselves towards these seceding States? The object of all is to bring them back. We wish them well, but we think they have greatly erred—at least done wrong. We think they have done wrong in seceding from the Union, and wrong in all mankind by breaking up that Government whose promises reached humanity in every region in the world—promises that have been indissolubly connected with liberty and political happiness. The wrong to all these interests which they have done proves conclusively to my mind that the Union cannot be broken. It is not yet broken. These States may have seceded—"Seceded"—a word altogether illegitimate, having no origin or foundation in any constitutional right, and all that can be entangled in meaning—that is, willing to apply to a divested State all right and signature; simply a revolution against us—thereas wrongs acknowledged and avowed is war upon the nation against whom that revolution is attempted. Our Union so far as it exists in the sanctum of the Constitution—so far as it exists in the South—if all our laws, all popular opinion and sentiment still exist in theory though disobeyed and disregarded by those who attempt to form another nation, the wish of us all is to bring them back—to be again one and indivisible. How shall it be best done?

What is the policy for the General Government to pursue? Now, Mr. President, without undertaking to say what the exact policy—under circumstances so singular as the present hour presents us with—I will only undertake to say that they ought not to pursue a course of forcible coercion. Not the policy of coercion, I say. Our object and desire is to bring them back into terms of former Union and fellowship. This is the object of our private affections, as well as of our public policy. To attempt by coercion—by arms—to force them back into the Union at the point of the bayonet—to shed their blood—is no way to win their affection. Let them go on in peace with their experiment. This Government is not bound to patronize revolution against herself—therefore, I say, let its policy be the policy of forbearance and peace. Let them make only such experiments under all the advantages that peace can give them. We all hope, for their own good and their own welfare, that their experiment will fail of success—that when the increased expenses of a Government formed of a few States, and the thousand inconveniences that attend its disruption from the great body to which it is a member—like tearing off an arm from the human system—when they have come to experience all the pains and inconveniences—all the troubles and all the pests that attend, and must inevitably attend, this extraordinary movement—they will begin to look back to their great nation of their tribe—the grand Union of this great Republic—they will wish to return to their brethren, no longer to try these hazardous experiments of making Governments separate from this Government. These are truly hazardous experiments. I think they will fail. I hope so only because that will have the effect of bringing them back into this Union. It will have the desirable effect of restoring our lost brethren to us. I am, therefore, for the peace policy. Give them an opportunity of making the experiment. Do not excite them by war or bloodshed. They have been sufficiently punished by other causes. Add to these causes the irritation that the sight of blood will necessarily create, and we can have no possible hope of reconciliation—them to us or we to them.

Let us rather trust to peace. Let us trust to their experience—the inconvenience of their errors. They will come back. We will invite them back—not receive them as offenders or as

criminals; we will receive them as brethren who have fallen into error—who have been deluded, but who, discovering their errors, manfully returned to us, who magnanimously receive them and rejoice over them. I want the General Government to pursue this policy of peace and forbearance. What shall the separate States do? Those slaveholding States still adhering to the Union ought to be more particularly forbearing.

But what shall old Kentucky do? Our affections are all clustered upon her. Her peace, her honor, her glory, her interests, are ours. Her character is ours and a proud heritage it is. I love her with all my heart. I am one of the oldest of her children. I have been one of the most favored of her children, and with heartfelt gratitude do I acknowledge it—with all my heart's devotion do I acknowledge it. I can never repay the obligations which I feel I owe to her. What shall Kentucky do—our country—our magnanimous old State—what shall she do in this great crisis—this trial of our nation's faith? Shall we follow the secessionists—shall we join in the experimental government of the South, or shall we adhere to the tried government of the Union under which we live—and under which our fathers lived and died? I call upon you to bear witness, as candid, truthful men—to do you know of any wrong that the Government has ever done you? Can you name any instance of wrong suffered on account of your connection with the great Union of which you are a part? Kentucky herself came into existence under the Constitution—and under the Union that she still clings to. Under its protection she has grown from a handful of pioneers and a few hunters to the noble State that she now is—in every passage of her history maintaining her honor and her integrity—her devotion to truth, devotion to country—seeking at whatever distance, at whatever sacrifice, every battle field upon which the honor and the interest of her country were to be combated for. That is old Kentucky. Fearing none—feeling herself in influence and power irresistible in the right cause, irresistible in defence of herself, she has gone on and prospered. Where is the man of Kentucky that fears that anybody will come here to take away our rights from us. Our self-possession and character is founded upon this conscious ability to defend ourselves—that there is none so bold as to attack us, we being in the right, they in the wrong.

Now what, I ask again, is Kentucky to do? This is a question upon which many of us, fellow-citizens, differ in opinion. I came not here to-day to reproach any one for his opinion. I came to argue the matter with my fellow-citizens and to present my views of the subject as one of the people of Kentucky. We should counsel together on such occasions. No man should be entirely given up to his opinion in such matters. He should listen with respect to the arguments of all. It is the good of all that is at stake, and the opinions of all should be heard and determined upon calmly and dispassionately. If we differ, it is only about the means of advancing the interests of that country.

What will we gain by going off with this secession movement—this experimental government? Is it not a hazardous experiment? Can seven States well bear all the expense that must arise out of the maintenance of armies, navies, the expenses of a State Government, like our own, with like expenses? They must have a President. They will probably not give him a less salary than we give our President. They must have a Congress. They will not give their Congress less than we give ours. They must have all the retinue, all the different departments of Government, and they will not place them, I think, at a less cost than we can. The army and the navy, the expense of which our legislators frequently complain of without being able to diminish, that they have a Government, you may say, that is a danger to the better one we now enjoy?

The moment we are divided, what are we? Before all the nations of the earth our greatness is given up. Is there any one of you, any one whose heart swells with pride and love of country, that would not mourn over the slightest diminution of the greatness of his country's power. We experienced the haughtiness and superciliousness of a haughty nation's prince when we were but a feeble people, I might say, when we were in respect to our neighbors, we were a people who were respected and feared and loved over sea and over land; it is every where hailed with the profoundest respect. When you are compelled to blow from its folds seven of the stars that now adorn it—when this waning constellation shall show its diminished head—what will become of that respect, founded in fear as well as in love?—What will become of that respect with which it was hailed under a peaceful government?—When you go abroad now, and when to the question as to what you are, you are answered as an American, you may say, that you are a man with more respect than even the proud Englishman. Of all names it is that by which a man would prefer to travel in Europe. It is your country's name that gives you this stamp, this great power. It is that great country whose name never fails to prove a shadow of protection over you. Do you not believe now that foreign nations are triumphing in the division and dismemberment of this great government? They feared its example. They feared its liberty; but now they look to you not with a good government founded on liberty and on principles which they wish to imitate, but with a people. They look to you to cite you as an evidence that all popular government is a delusion. "Men are not capable of governing themselves," they say sneeringly, "and the people of the United States are showing it. They live in a country that reverses power. They had all away and all dominion, yet you see by party controversy and the little exasperations that spring out of it, this great government is in an instant exploded under the madness of party. In six months that proud empire, reaching to the skies—stretching its arms over the world, and then to the ground. They are an evidence that man requires kings and despots to govern him—that he cannot govern himself." You, the proud nation, are now cited as an example of the impotency, the incapability of mankind for self-government—to show that your boasted liberty is nothing but the exhalation of fancies, having no power, no strength, no capacities. These are the consequences that will accrue from a dissolution of the Union.

Let us strive then to bring the seceders back and reform them. Here is a Government formed—all its laws and institutions perfect. The Union is complete and unshaken. Those who have left us have but to step and take possession of the mansion of their fathers. By standing fast by the Union, and showing the seceders that there is no probability that we will unite with them; and if the other loyal slaveholding States will show the same disapprobation of their course, will that not have the effect of checking the career of this revolution? Won't its tendency be to make them think of returning to their brethren who are endeavoring to persuade them back by tokens of love and affection? When they see we will not follow, won't they return to us?

This is our best policy if we want to effect the re-union of the seceded States. It is not our policy to increase the evil by joining them. Will it be more difficult for them to come back alone than if six others joined them? Won't that put farther from us all hopes of re-union? It seems to me that every view, every argument is capable of demonstration that the course of wisdom and policy for us is to stand by the Union. It is better for us for the future, better for the future of the country. By showing to our erring brethren of the South that we will not go with them, by showing them our fixed opinion that their experiment will prove a failure, and that they can expect nothing but encouragement from us—will that not have a tendency to bring them back? I think it will.

Upon an occasion not unlike the present, ten years ago, Mr. Clay stood near the spot which I now occupy. The circumstances of the times were then not altogether unlike what they are now. He stood here in 1850. In 1848 the storm was gathering as it has now gathered. Great apprehensions were entertained in the country that it would terminate in disunion. Mr. Clay went to Congress in 1849. He brought forward a series of compromises in 1850 and had them

new revolutionary Government—and they say that Virginia and other States will follow.—Then they say there will be no war, and then we will be in a better condition to re-construct. This is all a fallacy, from beginning to end. Can we trust our speculation upon causes that are so dependent one upon another—upon contingencies that lie in the future?

Can we come to distant conclusions of that sort? No. The safe way is to do that duty which is nearest you. Do that first. You can see that. We have not the gift of prediction. This argument of speculation, founded upon distant contingencies, founded upon inferences and inferences from inferences as to what may follow from the complication of causes, that is least of all to be relied upon. There is no safe logic in it. Every man can see and understand the duty next to him, and should not attempt to confound his conviction by endeavoring to comprehend objects beyond his reach.

What is our nearest duty? You have been told to maintain the Constitution of the United States. It has never done you wrong, never despoiled you of your property, never taken from you a minute of your freedom or your liberty during your whole lifetime. Are you to abandon that upon a contingency; are you to go abroad for an experiment; is that the next and wisest step to be taken? Is not the most immediate duty to stand fast in your fidelity to that tried Government until some necessity shall force you from it? When that necessity comes it will need no argument. Necessity requires no speculation—no argument. When that great political necessity comes, which alone would justify us in surrendering this glorious Union, it will speak for itself. It will speak for itself in language not to be misunderstood. We will wrangle no more, or quarrel about it. It will tell all with its imperious tongue. It will wave us to obedience. Conform to it we must. Is that the case now? No! Why then be in a hurry to abandon this good Government which has sheltered us so long? Why commit ourselves to the cold and inclement skies of an untried country, an untried winter? Is that wise? Is that the prudence of a great nation? Excitement, animation and impetuosity may prompt us, and some may be lured by the very danger of the experiment, but that is not the part of wisdom—that is not the part of wisdom that ought to govern you and to govern a community—the wisdom which is of a deliberate, reflecting mind. You are to divest yourselves of these passions when you come to decide such a question. Let me ask you, was ever such a question submitted to a people before? Here are thirty millions of people, constituting the greatest, the freest and the most powerful nation on the face of the earth. Is she to fall down in a day? Are we hastily to go off—to fly from all the greatness we have inherited and acquired, and madly, wildly seek in the wilderness an experimental government and substitute it for the better one we now enjoy?

The moment we are divided, what are we? Before all the nations of the earth our greatness is given up. Is there any one of you, any one whose heart swells with pride and love of country, that would not mourn over the slightest diminution of the greatness of his country's power. We experienced the haughtiness and superciliousness of a haughty nation's prince when we were but a feeble people, I might say, when we were in respect to our neighbors, we were a people who were respected and feared and loved over sea and over land; it is every where hailed with the profoundest respect. When you are compelled to blow from its folds seven of the stars that now adorn it—when this waning constellation shall show its diminished head—what will become of that respect, founded in fear as well as in love?—What will become of that respect with which it was hailed under a peaceful government?—When you go abroad now, and when to the question as to what you are, you are answered as an American, you may say, that you are a man with more respect than even the proud Englishman. Of all names it is that by which a man would prefer to travel in Europe. It is your country's name that gives you this stamp, this great power. It is that great country whose name never fails to prove a shadow of protection over you. Do you not believe now that foreign nations are triumphing in the division and dismemberment of this great government? They feared its example. They feared its liberty; but now they look to you not with a good government founded on liberty and on principles which they wish to imitate, but with a people. They look to you to cite you as an evidence that all popular government is a delusion. "Men are not capable of governing themselves," they say sneeringly, "and the people of the United States are showing it. They live in a country that reverses power. They had all away and all dominion, yet you see by party controversy and the little exasperations that spring out of it, this great government is in an instant exploded under the madness of party. In six months that proud empire, reaching to the skies—stretching its arms over the world, and then to the ground. They are an evidence that man requires kings and despots to govern him—that he cannot govern himself." You, the proud nation, are now cited as an example of the impotency, the incapability of mankind for self-government—to show that your boasted liberty is nothing but the exhalation of fancies, having no power, no strength, no capacities. These are the consequences that will accrue from a dissolution of the Union.

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Upon an occasion not unlike the present, ten years ago, Mr. Clay stood near the spot which I now occupy. The circumstances of the times were then not altogether unlike what they are now. He stood here in 1850. In 1848 the storm was gathering as it has now gathered. Great apprehensions were entertained in the country that it would terminate in disunion. Mr. Clay went to Congress in 1849. He brought forward a series of compromises in 1850 and had them

passed. That pacified the country and preserved the Union. In 1850 he came here and in this Legislature he delivered an address.—The storm had then passed, but he spoke to them with a prophet's fire, and with all a patriot's concern of the character of the Constitution of their country and the value of this Union. He said, "I have been asked, When would I consent to give up this Union? I answer, never! never! never! and I warn you, my countrymen, now, if it seems to you that this country should be divided into a Union and a Disunion party, I declare now, no matter who compose that party, declare myself a member of the Union party. Whether it be a Whig or a Democrat that belongs to the party of the Union, there I subscribe my name—there I unite my heart and hand with that party."—How would he answer the question, What shall we do? Shall we quit this Union now and go off upon the experiment of our brethren of the South? What would he answer who then answered as I have stated?

I say then it would be wisdom in us never to consider the question of dissolution. It is not a question to be debated; it is not a question to be settled upon policies or arguments. You know the fruit of that tree is good. Stand under it; feed upon its rich fruits as you have done, until you see a better one at a distance, or until some great necessity is upon us—until a necessity like that by which our parents were driven from Eden shall drive you from it.—Then go; it will be time then, and that necessity will be your justification. There is another authority still more venerable than that of the illustrious man whom I have mentioned—I mean General Grant. What did he tell you of the value of this Union, and of your duty to maintain and uphold it?—not merely argumentative devotion, ready to argue yourselves in or out of it on occasion; he told you to have an immovable attachment to the Union—never to think of abandoning it; stick to it; fight for it; fight in it; if your rights are disturbed maintain them, if that desperate extremity should come; but that desperate extremity is not to be apprehended. It may occur for a short time. Wrong and oppression may be pressed upon you for a time. You may have a mischievous President and an ignorant and injurious Congress. All this may occur, but all in the wisdom of the Constitution is swallowed up in the general good. That same Constitution, which, through the infirmity of human nature, necessarily subjects you to those evils, gives you the power of redressing them at short intervals of time, and he who cannot, for the perpetual good, bear such evils for a short time does not deserve to be a member of a good Government. You have the opportunity of doing this. You have Government by frequent elections of a President and Congress. If you permit a repetition of a maladministration it is your own fault.

Gentlemen, the Government is in a bad and dangerous condition. Whether it shall fall to pieces, and become the scoff of the world, whether our ruins are all that shall remain to tell our story is the question now to be determined. I believe in the people more than I believe in governments. I believe in the people more than I believe in Presidents, in Senators, or in Houses of Representatives. I do not say that to flatter multitudes. I say it because I believe in the intelligence of the people. I believe in the public virtue of the people, whatever may be said to the contrary. Though in many things many people act a little unworthy of the dignity of freemen, still, when I look at the majestic body of the people, I find that there is a wisdom, a generosity, and a public virtue that will not allow this country to be trampled under foot, or to go down to ruins.—They will extend their hands from the North to the South, and from the South to the North, and they will fight upon any cause that yet exists. I believe they will not permit their rulers to maintain any petty platform to destroy a great country. The Chicago platform—a thing no bigger than my hand—to be set up, like an idol of old, and worshipped, and a great country like ours, with all its millions, sacrificed upon its altars—the people will not allow that to be done. They are not platform-makers. Their country and their God is what they are for.—They are our fellow-citizens; and they will save us. This may be a supposition, but I have no doubt. You are a portion of that great body, and will you do your part?

My friends, these remarks are desultory. I have not pretended to sketch the sad history of these events or to relate them in their detail. I have not attempted to discuss all the probable consequences of abandoning or standing by the government of this Union. I have simply satisfied myself by saying that to join the new government would be nothing but a speculation. To stand fast where you are is to perform the duty which is nearest you, and within your clear convictions and that is the answer I have recommended. What have you done?—Are you not pledged to this course? What has old Kentucky's course been? You sent some years ago a piece of Kentucky marble to be wrought up into the structure of that magnificent monument to the Father of his Country, now unfinished, in the city of Washington.—That was your tribute to the patriotism and the great name of that unequalled man. What did you cause to be inscribed upon it? Let me remind you. Upon the stone is engraved these words: "Kentucky was the first State to enter the Union after the adoption of the present Constitution, and she was the last. There is a portion of that great body, and will you do your part?"

Now, Mr. Speaker and gentlemen, when you have examined in every material point of view, in the view of every material interest, this question as to the policy and course Kentucky ought to pursue; when you have judged them all, let me say that I think your judgment will find it satisfactory to remove from the Union. But suppose you did not arrive at that satisfactory conclusion, is there not something in the stability which marks the manhood of old Kentucky? Here she stands upon her own native ground; here she stands by that flag under which she has often fought, and that flag by which she has often sworn to maintain. Is there not a sentiment that you feel in your hearts, that however politicians may reason, policy ought to sway this matter.—There is a great deal even in doing wrong when you do it in pursuance of a sense of fidelity and honor—a sense of patriotism. Which of you if your child is to read the history of this period, is it for he or sad fate that our country now is to perish, and he is left to read only the mournful history of its fall, how would you rather it would stand in that history—that Kentucky in the tumult of this revolution was led away, led away from her colors and her Constitution, and joined in the sad experiment of a Southern Confederacy from the parent Government, which was broken into fragments, and