

# THE SUSQUEHANNA REGISTER.

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 9

MONROE, P. A., THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 1854

WHOLE NUMBER 1516

THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE IS THE LEGITIMATE SOURCE, AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE THE TRUE END OF GOVERNMENT.

## Part a. Count.

### The Path Across the Hills.

When Love and Trust were born,  
To dwell in the wooded hills I came,  
The path across the hills, to me,  
A path of love and trust was shown.  
And Spring and winter bloom'd for me the same,  
The snow-bung in the cloud,  
And the storm winds blew from every side,  
I heard no wail and sigh was none,  
My heart was all in love and joy,  
I went singing all the way,  
In the path across the hills, to my home.

### Burial of the Beautiful.

Where shall the dead and the beautiful sleep?  
In the vale where the willow andypress weep,  
Where the wind of the west breathes its softest sigh,  
Where the silver stream is flowing bright,  
And the pure, clear drops of the rising spray,  
Glitter like gems in the bright moon's ray—  
Where the sun's warm smile may never depart,  
Where the stars of the firmament look down,  
Where the fairest, earliest violets grow,  
Where the sky and the earth are so soft,  
Where the wind of the west breathes its softest sigh,  
Bury her there—bury her there!

## The Nebraska Question.

### SPEECH OF HON. WM. H. SEWARD,

Delivered in the U. S. Senate  
February 17th, 1854.

Mr. President: The United States, at the close of the Revolution, rested southward on the St. Mary's, and westward on the Mississippi, and possessed a broad, unoccupied domain, circumscribed by those rivers, the Alleghany mountains, and the great northern lakes. The Constitution anticipated the division of this domain into States, but it neither provided for nor anticipated any enlargement of the national boundaries. The people, engaged in reorganizing their governments, improving the social systems, and establishing relations of commerce and friendship with other nations, remained many years content within their ample limits. But it was already foreseen, that the free navigation of the Mississippi would soon become an urgent public want.

France, although she had led Canada, in chivalrous battle, on the Heights of Abraham, in 1759, nevertheless, still retained her ancient territories on the western bank of the Mississippi. She had also, just before the breaking out of her own fearful revolution, re-acquired, by a secret treaty, the possessions on the Gulf of Mexico, which, in a recent war, had been wrested from her by Spain. Her first conquest, among these brilliant achievements which proved him the first statesman as well as the first captain of Europe, sagaciously sold the whole of these possessions to the United States, for a liberal sum, and thus replenished his treasury, while he saved from his enemies, and transferred to a friendly power, distant and vast regions, which, for want of adequate naval force, he was unable to defend.

While there was no national power, and no claim of State for national power anywhere to compel involuntary emancipation in the States where slavery existed, the States of the Union, in a very general desire and a strong power to prevent its introduction into those commonwealths to be formed, and into the States yet to be established. Mr. Jefferson proposed, as early as 1784, to exclude it from the national domain which should be constituted by cessions from the States to the United States. He recommended and urged the measure as ancillary, also, to the ultimate policy of emancipation. There seems to have been at first no very deep jealousy between the emancipating and the non-emancipating States; and the policy of admitting new States was not disturbed by questions concerning slavery. Vermont, the first non-slaveholding State was admitted in 1793. Kentucky, a transmontane slaveholding commonwealth, having been detached from Virginia, was admitted, without being questioned, about the same time. So, also, Tennessee, which was a similar community separated from North Carolina, was admitted, in 1796, with a stipulation, that the ordinance which Mr. Jefferson had first proposed, and which had in the mean time been adopted for the territory northwest of the Ohio, should not be held to apply within her limits. The same course was adopted in organizing territorial governments for Mississippi, and Alabama, slaveholding communities which had been detached from South Carolina and Georgia. All these States and Territories were situated southwest of the Ohio river, all were more or less already peopled by slaveholders with their slaves; and to have excluded slavery within their limits would have been a national act, not of preventing the introduction of slavery, but of abolishing slavery. In short, the region southwest of the Ohio river presented a field in which the policy of preventing the introduction of slavery was impracticable. Our forefathers never attempted what was impracticable.

But the same wise object was in fact and broad regions which stretched away from the banks of the Ohio, northward to the lakes, and westward to the Mississippi. It was yet free, or practically free from the presence of slaves, and was nearly unoccupied, and quite unoccupied. There was then, in Baltimore, and Ohio railroad, no Erie railroad, no New York Central railroad, no Boston and Ogdensburg railroad; there was no railway there; Canada; nor, indeed, any road around or across the mountains; no imperial Erie canal, no Welland canal, no lockages around the rapids and the falls of the St. Lawrence, the Mohawk, and the Niagara rivers, and no steam navigation on the lakes, or on the Hudson, or in the Mississippi. There, in that remote and secluded region, the prevention of the introduction of slavery was possible; and there our forefathers, who left no possible national good unattempted, did prevent it. It makes one's heart bound with joy and gratitude, and lift itself up with mingled pride and veneration, to read the history of that great transaction. Discarding the title and common forms of expressing the national will, they did not merely vote, or resolve, or enact, as on other occasions, but they "ordained," in language marked at once with precision, amplification, solemnity, and emphasis, involuntary servitude in the said Territory, otherwise, than in the punishment of crime, whosoever the party shall have been duly convicted. And they further ordained and declared, that this law should be considered a compact, between the original States and the people and States of said Territory, and forever remain unalterable, unless by common consent. The ordinance was agreed to unanimously. Virginia, in reaffirming her cession of the territory, ratified it, and the first Congress held under the Constitution solemnly renewed and confirmed it.

In pursuance of this ordinance, the several territorial governments successively established in the North-west Territory were organized with a prohibition of the introduction of slavery, and in due time, though at successive periods, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, States erected within that Territory, have come into the Union with constitutions in their hands forever prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude, except for the punishment of crime. They are yet young; but, nevertheless, who has ever seen elsewhere such States as they are! There are gathered the young, the vigorous, the active, the enlightened sons of every State in this broad Union; and there the emigrant, for conscience sake, and for freedom's sake, from every land in Europe, from proud and all-conquering Britain, from heart-broken Ireland, from sunny Italy, from beautiful France, from spiritual Germany, from chivalrous Hungary, and from honest and brave old Sweden and Norway. There are already becoming ample supplies of corn and wheat and wine, for the manufacturers of the East, for the planters of the tropics, and even for the artisans and the armies of Europe; and thence will continue to be in long succession, as they have already begun to come, statesmen and legislators for this continent.

States, and now the whole family of States was divided and classified as slaveholding or free States. A rivalry for political ascendancy was soon developed; and beside the motives of interest and philanthropy which had before existed, there was now on each side a desire to increase the number of the candidates for admission into the Union, the number of States in their respective classes, and their political weight and influence in the Federal councils.

The country which had been acquired from France was, in 1804, organized in two Territories, one of which, including New Orleans as its capital, was called Orleans; and the other, having St. Louis for its chief town, was called Louisiana. In 1812, the Territory of Orleans was admitted as a new State, under the name of Louisiana. It had been an old slaveholding colony of France, and the prevention of slavery within it would have been a simple act of abolition. At the same time, the Territory of Louisiana, by authority of Congress, took the name of Missouri; and, in 1819, the portion thereof which now constitutes the State of Arkansas, was detached, and became a Territory, which was then but thinly peopled, and had an inconsiderable number of slaves, applied for admission into the Union, and her application brought the question of extending the policy of the ordinance of 1787, to that State, and to other free States in the region acquired from Louisiana, to a direct issue. The House of Representatives insisted on a prohibition against the further introduction of slavery in the State as a condition of her admission. The Senate disagreed with the House in that demand. The non-slaveholding States sustained the House, and the slaveholding States sustained the Senate. The difference was radical, and tended towards revolution.

One party maintained that the condition demanded was unconstitutional; the other that it was unconstitutional. The public mind became intensely excited and painful apprehensions of disunion and civil war began to prevail in the country. In this crisis, a majority of both Houses agreed upon a plan for the adjustment of the controversy. By this plan, Maine, a non-slaveholding State, was to be admitted; Missouri was to be admitted without submitting to the condition before mentioned; and in all that part of the territory acquired from France, which was north of the line of 36 deg. 30 min. of north latitude, slavery was to be forever prohibited. Louisiana, which was a part of that territory, had been admitted as a slave State eight years before; and now, not only was Missouri to be admitted as a slave State, but Arkansas, which was south of that line, by strong implication, was also to be admitted as a slaveholding State.

It is a question of transcendent importance. The provision of 1820, as being enacted in Nebraska, is the ordinance of the continental Congress of 1787, extended over a new part of the national domain, acquired under the present constitution. It is a question of public faith, and national honor. The ordinance, which, in surrendering the territory, after establishing the ordinance, enjoined it upon posterity, always to remember that the cause of the United States was the cause of human nature. The question involves an issue of public faith, and national honor. It will be a sad day for this Republic, when such a question shall be deemed unworthy of grave discussion and intense interest. Even if it were certain that the prohibition of slavery in the region concerned was unnecessary, and if the question were thus reduced to a mere act of abstention, yet even that abstention would involve the testimony of the United States to the expediency, wisdom, and justice of the system of human bondage, with which this and other portions of the world have been so long afflicted; and it will be a melancholy day for the Republic and for mankind, when her decision on even such an abstraction shall command no respect, and inspire no hope in the hearts of the oppressed. But it is no such abstraction; it was no unnecessary dispute, no mere contest of blind passion, that brought that compromise into being. Slavery and Freedom were active antagonists, then seeking for ascendancy in this Union. Both are more vigorous, active and self-asserting now, than they were then; or ever were before or since that period. The contest between them has been only protracted, not decided. It is a great feature in our national history. So the question of adhering to or abrogating this compromise is no unmeaning issue, and no contest of mere blind passion now.

To adhere to it is to secure the occupation by freedom, with free labor, of a region in the very centre of the continent, capable of sustaining, and in that event destined, though it may be only after a distant period, to sustain, ten, twenty, thirty, forty millions of people; and their successive generations forever. To abrogate it is to resign all that vast region to chances which mortal vision cannot fully foresee; perhaps to the sovereignty of such situated communities as those of which Mexico and South America, and the West India Islands present us, with examples; perhaps to convert that region into the scene of long and desolating conflicts between contending races, but certainly to end like a conflict in Egypt, in a convulsive exodus of the oppressed people; despising their superiors; perhaps like one not dissimilar in Spain, in the forcible expulsion of the inferior race, exhausting the State by the sudden and complete suppression of a great resource of national wealth and labor; perhaps in the disastrous expulsion, even of the superior race itself, by a people too suddenly raised from slavery to liberty, as in St. Domingo. To adhere to it is to secure forever the presence here, after some lapse of time, of two, four, ten, twenty, or more Senators, and Representatives, and a large proportion, to uphold the policy and the interests of the non-slaveholding States, and balance that ever-increasing representation of slaveholding States, which past experience, and the decay of the Spanish American States, admonish us has only just begun; to save what the non-slaveholding States have in mints, navy-yards, the Military Academy, and fortifications, to balance against the capital and federal institutions in the slaveholding States; to save against any danger from adverse or hostile policy, the culture, the manufactures, and the commerce, as well as the just influence and weight of the national principles and sentiments of the slaveholding States. To adhere to it is to secure to the non-slaveholding States, as well as to the slaveholding States, always, and in every event, a right of way, and free communication across the continent, to and with the States on the Pacific coast, and with the rising States on the islands in the South Sea, and with all the eastern nations on the vast continent of Asia.

To abrogate, on the contrary is to commit all these precious interests to the chances and hazards of embarrassment and injury by legislation, under the influence of social, political, and commercial jealousy and rivalry; and in the event of the secession of the slaveholding States, which I so often threaten in their name, but I thank God without their authority, to give to a servile population a Union, at the very sources of the Mississippi, and in the very recesses of the Rocky Mountains.

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