

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY.—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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SPEECH OF HON. R. TOOMBS,

OF GEORGIA,
On the Presidency; delivered in the House of Representatives July 3, 1852.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the deficiency bill—

Mr. TOOMBS said: But I must pass on from this branch of the subject and hasten to a brief examination of the constituent elements and the action of the two late conventions. The Democratic Convention assembled first. The prospect was not favorable to its unity or harmony; the preservation of either was impossible, except upon the principles I have already explained. The political convulsions which raged so violently since its previous session had divided it into three parts. One portion had wandered off to Buffalo, and struggled lustily to bring the great democratic family into disrepute in the North, by charging it with betraying it to the South. Another portion wandered off to Nashville, and battled against it under the pretense that it had betrayed the South to the North. And yet another portion, which embraced the majority of the party in Congress, stood firmly by the compromise measures, and voted for their passage. The two sectional wings of this party stood in extreme opposition—an agreement between them in principle was impossible. The southern wing had denounced every public man North, whig and democratic, as unworthy of southern support. The southern men who supported the compromise measures were equally denounced by them. The northern wing separated themselves from the organization upon what they called great questions of "human liberty." The condition of success was, that human blood should be brought to Dunsinane—this moral miracle must be performed. It was done. The huge magnet of patronage was waived over the disaffected regions, and by its power of attraction Buffalo and Nashville were brought in council together at Baltimore. Free sellers and hunkers, secessionists and Union men, compromise and anti-compromise men—all shades of opinion gathered together under the power of democrats to select a candidate for the presidency. The result of their labors was better than could have been fairly expected. It is true they threw overboard all those statesmen to whom public expectation and the public mind had been directed, and selected a candidate of their own; but the candidate selected is a fair exponent of the compromise element of the convention. From my small knowledge of his history, I take him to be capable, honest, and faithful to the constitution, and an early, consistent, and energetic opponent of anti-slavery fanaticism in all its forms, and a firm and decided friend of the Compromise. His associate on the ticket is entitled to equal commendation.

The resolutions which were adopted by this body were numerous, and not creditable even to them. I took occasion, about four years ago, to review some of the most important of them to which I refer for a fuller understanding of my opinions thereon. But the convention did, fully and fairly, endorse and pledge themselves to abide by and adhere to the adjustment measures. The southern-rights division of the convention surrendered fully, if not gracefully. The alleged reason for the act was that it was done in obedience to the voice of people of the South. The reason was not discreditable, if sincere.—The free-soil division surrendered in sullen silence, and not a blow was struck by either of these divisions in defence of its peculiar tenets.

The compromise resolution which was adopted meets the question fully; the candidates nominated have put themselves fully, and distinctly upon it. Therefore the requisition of the Union party of Georgia is fully complied with, and these candidates are open to the support of the members of that party, without any surrender of their principles.

It is true there were many in that convention who had uniformly opposed the Compromise heretofore, and some who do now oppose it; but this class is neither numerous nor formidable. The compromise division of the party succeeded both in its principles and its candidates. Their triumph was complete, and promise to be enduring.

It is deeply to be regretted that the same result did not happen in the whig convention.—There were but two grand divisions in the latter body—the friends and enemies of the compromise measures. The former were divided between Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Webster, and the latter concentrated on General Scott. The result of their labors was, that the Compromise was adopted, and General Scott was nominated. The free-soil whigs of the North have complete control of the whig organization in all of the non-slaveholding States, and Scott's success will be their triumph, and a triumph fatal to the principles of the Union whigs, both North and South. The whigs who supported General Scott for the nomination were the men who had been most active, by speech and pen, from the beginning of this excitement, in promoting sectional strife and discord.

The men who stood here in 1850 were, from the beginning to the end of this great slavery agitation, opposing the settlement of it, and are to this hour deadly hostile to the principles upon which it was made. In their party conven-

tions at home, throughout the whole North, during the last year, not one of them, to my knowledge, has conformed to those principles. In their elections last year in the two great States of Ohio and Pennsylvania that party ran candidates who were known to be adverse to them in this House, who voted against them in the Baltimore Convention, and who, I believe, is now chairman of the whig general committee of the United States.

Mr. CAMPBELL, of Ohio. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question? I desire to know if the gentleman did not himself vote against a portion of that series of measures?

Mr. TOOMBS. I did. I voted against the bill admitting California into the Union.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Did not the gentleman also vote against that abolishing the slave trade in the District of Columbia?

Mr. TOOMBS. I did not; but I will give the gentleman the full benefit of his question.—I should have voted against that bill if I had been here when it passed the House. I was not here at that time.

[Cries of "Go on!" "Go on!"]

In Pennsylvania, the candidate of that party was a gentleman who was known to be decidedly hostile to these measures. At both conventions which nominated for the presidency, and the candidates had the full benefit of the association. These elections resulted disastrously to the Scott free-soil whigs; and at the opening of this session it was announced to the country that a whig congressional caucus had endorsed the Compromise. It was very soon ascertained, though, that no friend of General Scott could be found among its supporters. The question was soon tested in the House; the test disclosed the Scott whigs where they had always been—against the Compromise; there were but twelve northern whigs who voted for it; and I believe all of them are to be found among the friends of Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Webster—national whigs—who have upon all occasions since their passage avowed their determination to accept these measures as a peace offering, without reference to their votes upon them. This was all we asked.

We do not wish to go behind the passage of these measures for objections to public men.—We were willing that this settlement should stand as a pacification—what we approved, and what we did not approve. We were willing to do it for the sake of giving tranquility, repose, peace to the country and all sections of the country. We were willing that this adjustment should be considered an act of amnesty for past differences of opinion upon the general question of slavery, and to support in good faith any and all who were ready to stand by and maintain it. There are many in this House who voted against some and even all of these measures, but who are still willing to stand upon that ground, and who do stand there; who had opposed them as, in their judgment, injurious to the rights of their own sections of country, but, for the sake of the peace and quiet of the republic, and inasmuch as they were acquiesced in by a large majority of the American people—North and South—they accept and maintain them. I honor them for it. But I find none such among the friends of Gen. Scott.—They have endeavored in every way to stifle those principles when presented, and they endeavored to prevent their affirmation whenever and wherever they could. To prevent their affirmation, both northern and southern supporters of Gen. Scott made speeches on this floor, advocating the policy of going into the next presidency without the enunciation of any principles whatever. Some gentlemen from the South who had been supporters, but, I admit, reluctant supporters, of the Compromise, were willing to accept Gen. Scott without any pledge of his fidelity to these great principles, while they knew his friends were opposed to them. But the voice which came up from the people, even through the imperfect medium of the delegates to their convention, compelled them to pause, to tremble, to yield. They did wisely to heed that voice in demanding the resolutions; but they will bear its thunders again, for not heeding it and giving it true utterance in the selection of the candidate; they will not, they ought not, to submit to have their principles put into the keeping of their enemies. They will demand principles and men, and make that demand effectual at the ballot-box in November.

The friends of the Compromise demanded no sectional candidate. They were content to accept the present Chief Magistrate, whose name and fame have been identified with these measures. They were willing to accept the great New England statesman, notwithstanding their many points of disagreement with him in the past. He had thrown the weight of his mighty intellect into the scales of concord in the darkest and most perilous hour of the conflict; and southern compromise whigs, at least, would have struggled with pride and energy to have seen the greatest intellect of the age preside over and direct the affairs of the great republic in the world. These men were defeated in the convention by the enemies of the compromise measures because they were its friends. This

was the true reason of their exclusion. And it is a sufficient reason for the friends of that measure, North and South, to oppose and defeat this nomination. My actions shall respond to my convictions.

Shall we select between these two candidates? My preference would be for some citizen known to the people for his public services and civil life—some citizen disconnected from these organizations—some citizen devoted to his country, and not to faction—one whose wisdom and virtue have been tested by experience in public affairs. If such a name shall be presented to the American people, without reference to results, I would give him my support.

I will affirm the principle, and maintain the truth, and though I may not be able to succeed against this combination; yet, though all else may be lost in such a contest, honor will be saved, duty will be performed, and a great principle will be asserted. We must leave the rest to time and truth.

But what are the Union whigs to do if that contingency does not happen? This question would not be at all embarrassing if the majority in the convention which nominated General Scott had put him before the country on their own principles. The difficulty arises from the fact that the resolutions passed by that body announce sound principles—principles which we approve. I object to but one resolution in the series, and that one is at least equal to, if not better, than the resolution upon the same subject in the democratic platform. I mean the one relating to internal improvements. The whig resolution asserts the constitutional power in the government to make internal improvements, but restrains it within limits which, if honestly adhered to, would strip off most of the objections to it. The other platform denies the constitutional power to make such improvements in a particular manner, and, in my judgment, in the very way in which it ought to be done.—Therefore, upon the question, I prefer the whig to the democratic resolution, though approving of neither. But while the compromise resolution of the whig party is all I desired, and the other principles announced are in the main sound and republican, I have seen nothing in the past history of the men who offer them to me to afford me any reasonable security that these principles would be honestly maintained. When I look to the record, when I look to their votes, when I look to their individual action, when I look to the struggle through which we recently passed in relation to the most important of these resolutions, I cannot believe these principles will be safe in such hands. They are my principles, and I intend to maintain them now, hereafter, and at all times—here and wherever I may be.

I have already shown that General Scott's friends are not to be trusted with these principles, and has given no assurance that they receive his approval, or will be maintained by him. Both parties having affirmed the Compromise, it is important to examine how the candidates of each stand in relation to it.

The four candidates nominated by the two parties have all answered; and lest I might be charged with being hypocritical, I will give the answers, in relation to the platforms of the parties, of all four. The fact we wish to know is, whether the candidates approve and will maintain the principles declared by their respective parties. Every party has the right to demand this of its candidates, and without it no party man is under the least obligations to sustain his party's nominee.

General Pierce says: "I accept the nomination upon the platform adopted by the convention, not because it is expected of me as a candidate, but because the principles it embraces command the approbation of my judgment."

That is explicit. That is what General Scott ought to have done, especially as he was afraid of disgusting the people by writing anything before his nomination. [Laughter.]

Colonel King replies:

"The platform, as made by the convention, meets my cordial approbation. It is national in all its parts, and I am content not only to stand upon it, but upon all occasions to defend it."

That is fair, open, and honest. These candidates stand pledged to the American people that they approve and will maintain these principles and they are both honorable men. We have from them all the pledges we had a right to expect or demand, and their uniform action and declarations consistent therewith, before as well as after their nomination.

We then come to the whigs. Mr. Graham, the candidate for the vice presidency, says "HE CORDIALLY APPROVES OF THE DECLARATIONS MADE IN THE RESOLUTIONS," and that "should the people of the United States give their sanction to the nominations of the Baltimore Convention, so far as I shall be invested with authority, a faithful adherence to those doctrines may be expected." That is equally full, and explicit, and satisfactory. These men did not intend to conceal their opinions. They did not take counsel of the enemies to their principles, and their language needs no expounding.

But what does Gen. Scott say? He said he wrote no letters to secure the nomination. That

is true. But he declined to write any because it was conformable to the policy, of those who sought to give it to him. [Laughter.] They wanted silence, and he gave it to them. We demanded to know his opinions upon those great questions of public policy which we intended to make paramount to all others in the election.—We could not get them. My friend from Tennessee, [Mr. GENTRY,] and from Florida, [Mr. CABELL,] and, according to Scott's own statement, many others, were clamorous before the nomination, demanding to know what he thought about them—what were his opinions upon them—did he approve them—and would he carry them out in good faith. They heard no voice from him, sir; and it could not be brought out, and there was but one reason why it was not got. We were told that when he should obtain the nomination we should receive it. He would not write letters to secure the nomination, but it would be fair, open sailing when it should be made. How has he answered those questions? "I accept the nomination, with the resolutions annexed." I take it *cum onere*. [Laughter.]—There is not a single line in the whole letter which expresses his approval of the Compromise, or commits him to its faithful maintenance. It does not require much writing for a man to say whether he likes the platform or whether he would carry out its principles or not. But he took a great deal of writing to get around it. He says, I accept it. There is no declaration here that it should be the policy of his administration; but, on the contrary, he says he does not intend "to reduce [his party] by prescription to exact conformity to" his principles, whatever they are.

Mr. CAMPBELL, of Ohio, (interrupting.) I desire to know of the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. Toombs,] inasmuch as he is assailing the letter of General Scott, whether he did not send a telegraphic dispatch to the State of Georgia calling upon his friends there to oppose the nomination before that letter of General Scott appeared?

Mr. TOOMBS. Certainly, sir; I did.—[Laughter.] My dear sir, I would give you my whole history if I had time. [Laughter.] I do not carry my principles in my pocket. I shall slum no question whenever I am asked, and no man has ever to hunt for my position in politics. I deem it to be the high duty of every public man to declare his sentiments, and my rule has been, that whoever is a voter has a right to my opinions, and he can get them whenever it suits his convenience. This is what I understand to be the true principles of representative government, and I would scorn to represent men upon this floor, or in the highest office in the world, by a concealment of my opinions upon questions of public policy.

I did not intend to support General Scott in any event. I think him unfit for the office under any circumstances, and dangerous to the country, in the highest degree, in his present position. I am now offering additional reasons, furnished by himself, why he should not be elected to the office which he seeks. The reluctant members of the convention are told, "You went to Baltimore, and you are bound by the action of the convention." But I wish to show them that this is not a sound principle of party action, and that you have the right to demand of your candidate to stand up to general rules of honor and good faith. Whenever parties declare their principles, they have a right to have a candidate to carry them out. They have a right to know whether the candidate approves of those principles or not. If he says he will not, then nobody is bound by the nomination.—These are my opinions of party nominations.

General Scott has not done it. He has not declared his approbation of these principles in any part of this letter; but, on the contrary, he has declared that principles shall make no difference when it comes to the important business of becoming the almoner of fifty millions of dollars of the public money.

It was very easy for him to say whether or not he agreed with those principles and approved of them, as Pierce, and King, and Graham have done. He is painfully obscure where it was his duty to be plain, but sufficiently certain where obscurity would at least have been prudent. His additions to the platform are certainly not to my taste. He has put two additional planks to it. [Laughter.] That is a little singular, as his friends seemed so much opposed to this kind of political structure. Gen. Scott is for enlarging and making the platform broad enough, not only for you and me, and this country, but also to cover his own past errors, and get himself out of his past commitments. It became necessary to him to re-write a part of his own political history. He had certain commitments to the tenets of an exploded party. His former opinions of our naturalization laws were not agreeable to a large class of our countrymen. He therefore proposes to alter them. He proposes to give "to all foreigners the right of citizenship who shall faithfully serve, in time of war, one year on board of our public ships or our land forces, regular or volunteer, on their receiving an honorable discharge."

I am opposed to that position, and I think he will find the great body of the people are opposed to it. I do not think he cares much about it, and probably if he had not been trammelled by past errors we might probably never have had the suggestion. This new mode of making citizens is liable to many and grave objections. There is a great question lying under it, and I wish I had time to consider it in all its bearings before this House and before the American people. The policy of this government, from its beginning, has been, that the flag of this republic shall be upheld and defended by American citizens—those who are citizens either by birth or naturalization—and none others; and I hope never to see the day when it will become necessary for this mighty nation to have that flag defended by any body else. When you need mercenaries, owing you no allegiance, to fight your battles, you will be ready for a master, and you will soon find one. When you are not willing to defend yourselves, either from internal commotions or foreign aggressions—when you trust that flag to other hands than those of citizens, either native-born or fully adopted—you betray the cause of liberty and your country. I want the flag of my country to be defended only by those who are entitled to demand and receive her protection. They are able to do it, they are willing to do it; and I trust they ever will be both able and willing. Let those who come among us assume the obligations of citizenship voluntarily, according to the constitution and laws; then they have an interest in that flag, and have the right to join in its defence. It is a bad plan, if it agreed with the constitution of your country, which is a matter of more than doubt.

I have but a few moments more, and I shall not be able to review all of this letter of General Scott.

He has another plank in relation to the public lands. Well, this is a vexed question. It is a question I should have been gratified to have seen any great statesman attempt to solve—to present me a system which would solve it wisely and well. But Gen. Scott has not done so.—He has got undertaken to grapple with it. He wants it solved, so as to benefit actual settlers, and injure nobody upon the face of the earth.—That is safe, but it is not definite. I do not know whether I agree with him or not. I cannot tell until he shall have submitted some plan for effecting his object.

There is another clause in General Scott's letter especially offensive to my own and the declared opinions of the great body of the people of Georgia. He says: "I should neither countenance nor tolerate any sedition, disorder, faction, or resistance to the law or the Union, on any pretext, in any part of the land." The State of Georgia has solemnly declared that she holds the Union secondary in importance "to the rights and principles it was designed to perpetuate," and has pointed out certain principles settled by the Compromise, for the reversal of which she "will and ought to resist, even (as a last resort) to a disruption of the Union." Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster both affirm her right in one of those contingencies to resort to those extreme measures. General Scott does not seem to be able to discriminate between lawless mobs, Christiana murders, and the action of the sovereign States of this Union. He seems not to have studied to advantage the republican fathers. These opinions of Gen. Scott make it still more important to know what he thinks of these great principles settled by the Compromise, and whether he will abide by and maintain them.—We can get neither the one nor the other from him. He tells us, "Finally, for my strict adherence to the principles of the whig party, &c., I can offer no other pledge or guarantee than the known incidents of a long life now undergoing the severest examination." [Laughter.] That life has been a long and brilliant one. No man now living on this continent, certainly, has added more to the military reputation of these States than Gen. Scott. I have been very willing to award to him freely this justice. That he is a great general nobody denies, but he has shown no aptitudes for civil life. And we have had too recent experience that a great military genius may be wholly without fitness for civil life, to repeat the experiment. [Laughter.]—Let us be admonished by our late almost fatal experience. General Scott's brilliant military history gives me no clue to his opinions upon these controverted questions of public policy.—His civil history is to be found chiefly in half a dozen letters, and they offer me no satisfactory pledge for his future.

General Scott would have acted wisely and well not to have invited scrutiny into his past opinions on slavery. There are no known incidents in that life which commend itself upon these great questions to the approbation of a southern man. Point to it. He is a faithful soldier and an honorable man, I know. That he will do what he says, I believe. I object that he has not said what we require; that he has not pledged himself to stand by and firmly carry out these great principles, and, therefore, as I believe him to be true to his own principles, and honest in holding them. I will not trust him where it is not clear that they agree with mine.

My hour, I am informed, is near its termination; and I shall, therefore, be compelled to pass by his Canada letter, to which I intended

to make reference. I intended to examine his Atkinson letter, and to show that every one of the incidents of that history to which he has so unwisely invited the scrutiny of the people is against him, and speaks trumpet tongued against his being trusted upon this great question. I do not know of a single sentiment ever uttered by Gen. Scott in relation to the principles settled by the Compromise, or in relation to the subject of slavery in general, that is in unison with his own or the convictions of the slaveholding States of this Union. If I had stood upon these great questions where he ought to have stood, there would have been no need for his friend, the senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] attempting to relieve him by a letter to the public from somewhat of the odium of his alliance. But he did not stand there.—For more than a year Gen. Scott has been the known candidate of the free-soil wing of the whig party. Even his friends in the South co-operated with them to strangle all acknowledgment of the Compromise in Congress or the convention. They finally gave him the nomination; to them he must look for his election; to them he must mainly look, if elected, for aid and advice in carrying on the government.—His election would reopen the sectional strife which we have just terminated, and imperil all that was gained to the country by the Adjustment. Under these circumstances he can never receive my support. Let the compromise men everywhere—Union whigs in the North and the South—rally once more in support of their principles. Let them make an open and manly resistance to the election of General Scott; use all honorable ways and means to defeat him.—If we succeed, we shall have "conquered a peace"—a lasting, enduring peace; and whatever may be the result, we shall have done our duty to ourselves, our principles, and our country.

Nationalities in Politics.

Another protest against the attempt to bring Irishmen as a body into politics, distinctly from the general community of the citizens, is contained in the Democratic Rife, edited by an Irishman:

"There is an effort being made by the leaders of the whig party (says the Democratic Rife) to gain over the support of the Irish democracy. So far as these efforts are made on the ground of principle, we do not object; but we do object to this sycophantic demagoguery practised by the federal leaders towards the Irishmen of the country.

"We have a deep interest in the welfare of the Irishmen and Ireland; we have suffered for our devotion, and feel proud of it; we shall ever defend either when assailed by merciless, heartless politicians; and we ask no further recompense than to see Irishmen united and free. We do not believe that Irishmen are so devoid of natural sense as to be the weathercock for either of the political parties of the day.—Irishmen know full well where their natural rights are best maintained, and we mistake the character of our race if they can be divided in their political support. Some few of the whig papers are lavishing their encomiums upon the Irish character: 'The serpent covers with its slime the object it intends to devour!'

"Let Irishmen select either of the parties, taking principles for their guide, and then show to the world that they know their rights and will exercise them."

Murder.

A shocking outrage occurred at Pittsburg on Monday last, the particulars of which are thus given in the American of that city.

"It seems that David Jewell, jr., and James Cochran had been for some time trying to pick a quarrel with Samuel Mitchell—a peaceable, quiet laboring man, at that time employed as a deck hand on board of one of the steamboats.—Mitchell appears to have been sober, and trying to get out of the way of the other two, who followed him up Water street, about 5 o'clock in the evening, when one of them knocked him down, and Jewell stabbed him with a large knife—striking him three different times to the heart. The poor man, as may be supposed, fell dead—when this demon, Jewell, cut him across the thigh with the knife, nearly severing the flesh.

Jewell, who is a desperate and well known rascal, with Cochran, have been secured, and at this writing undergoing an examination before the Mayor. Mitchell resided in Allegheny City, where he has left a family to mourn his untimely and cruel taking off."

The New York Herald, an independent paper, after noticing the signs of the times relating to the Presidency, says: "It is evident, from these indications of public opinion, both from the newspapers and the assemblies of the people, that the nomination of Gen. Scott has by no means been received, in the different sections of the country, with the same unanimity as the nomination of Gen. Pierce by the Democracy."

A bill authorizing the President of the United States to call into service five hundred Texan Rangers for the protection of the Rio Grande frontier has been reported from the Committee on Military Affairs in the Senate, with a report earnestly pressing the passage of the bill.