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BY GEO. W. HOWMAN.

NEW SERIES.

## Read!!

SPEECH OF SENATOR BIGLER,  
DELIVERED IN THE  
UNITED STATES SENATE, MONDAY, DE-  
CEMBER 24.  
THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

The Senate resumed the consideration of the following order, submitted by Mr. Fitzpatrick on the 23d instant:

Ordered, That the message and accompanying documents be printed, and that fifteen thousand additional copies be printed for the use of the Senate.

Mr. BIGLER.—Mr. President, I had not anticipated the renewal of the slavery question at this early day of the session; indeed, sir, I had hoped that this thread worn topic would be permitted to sleep at least for a short season after the Presidential struggle. Like the Senator from Louisiana, I felt quite happy in this belief; but it is otherwise. The President in his closing message deemed it proper to put his views on the subject of slavery agitation on record, and the Senators on the other side have availed themselves of the occasion to open up the entire field of controversy. I for one have desired to avoid it, and should not have said one word had it not been for the frequent and pointed reference made to the character of the late Presidential canvass in my own State by the Senators from Ohio and Massachusetts. Honorable Senators on the other side, whilst deprecating the course of the President, in discussing the subject, readily concluded to follow his example. Lamenting the use of sentiments on his part which they deem ungenerous, if not unjust towards their party, their principles and the tendencies of their measures, they indulge to a still greater extent in the practice themselves. Condemning what they are pleased to regard as a want of official courtesy to this department of the Government and to a large class of the people, they promptly violate all these rules in the severity of their own criticisms. Even the Senator from Maine, so distinguished for the propriety of his language, has spoken of the President as an unworthy son of a free State; and the Senator from Ohio has been still more severe. But these exhibitions only furnish another evidence of the fallibility of our nature, and show how difficult it is for even the best of us to refrain from the commission of the wrongs of our time.

Such things, however, are not uncommon. Very many teachers in morals, politics, and even religion, utterly fail in the practice of the wise and holy precepts which they lay down for the observance of others.

But, sir, I do not intend to circumscribe myself in what little I have to say by complaints against the course of others. I think the President was right in expressing his views as he did; and, of course, Senators have a right to criticize the act.

But I cannot agree that this act of the President is unprecedented. If I am not mistaken President Jackson discussed the question of a national bank in such a manner as to correct the misrepresentations of the political opponents. President Polk discussed the question of war with Mexico in the same spirit. It is the right and duty of the President to inform Congress of the state of the Union; and entertaining the views he does as to the dangerous tendencies of the doctrines of certain political parties in the country, the obligation on the present Executive to communicate his apprehensions became imperative. Senators may scout and discard the reasoning of that officer, but they should remember that President Washington, even in his early days, felt required to warn the people against the dangerous tendencies of geographical parties in our country, and efforts to array one section of the country against another; and that Thomas Jefferson compared this sectional agitation to the startling alarm of a fire-bell in the night. Nor, sir, will exceptions to the language used by the President serve to break the force of the overwhelming argument in support of what he regards as the true policy of the nation. I agree, sir, that the criticism of the action of a large class of his fellow-citizens by the President, and the condemnation of the tendency of such action, however strongly qualified in protective of the motives of the actors, is a most delicate task, and should only be performed on great occasions; but the President has confined his strictures to partisan leaders—men seeking political power by means that would hazard the peace of the country, and I think that the people will agree that they deserve the rebuke.

But, sir, it is not my purpose to defend the President. This has already been done with more ability than I command. This much I will say, however—now that he is near the end of his term of office, and when my motives cannot be misunderstood—that I believe that time and experience will prove the wisdom of most of his measures, and that the day is not far in the future when the purity and patriotism of his motives will be acknowledged by all.

But, sir, Senators have been endeavoring to determine what questions have been settled by the result of the late election, some taking exception to the definition as given by the President; and on this point I have a word to say. I am quite sure, sir, that one great fact settled by the result is, that James Buchanan is to be President for four years from the 4th of March next, and that John C. Breckinridge will be Vice President for the same period. Another still more potent fact is, that the principles of the Democratic party, as defined at Cincinnati, and expounded by Mr. Buchanan—the most prominent feature being that the people of

the States who go into the Territories, shall enjoy the right to determine the character of their own local institutions in their own way, including that of domestic slavery—are to be in the ascendancy till the year 1861. Another fact, as distinctly settled is, that the modern and mis-called Republican party, against which the Democracy contended, has been found in a minority in twenty-three out of the thirty-one States, and has been rejected in the Union by a popular majority of not less than one million, these hundred and seventy-five thousand, being a minority of more than all the votes cast for either candidate; and in a minority in the northern States alone of near two hundred thousand. Another is, that the modern American or Know Nothing party, with its intolerant dogmas of faith, and against which the Democracy also contended, has been repudiated in thirty out of the thirty-one States, and by a popular majority of over two millions.

But the result seems to be misunderstood even by Senators. The Senator from New Hampshire has evidently not liked the returns of the election well enough to look at them, or he would not claim a large majority for the Republicans in eleven States, when the figures show that they were in a minority in all but eight. He certainly ought to have known that there was a popular majority against Mr. Fremont in New York of over forty-five thousand, and in Ohio of eleven thousand, and in Iowa of one hundred and fifty thousand. He and other Senators seem to be under the impression that their party came very near carrying all the free States. The Senator from Ohio said, the other day, that they would have done so, had the issues been fairly put on the Democratic side. The Senator from Maine said they would have succeeded had the vote been a fair one. Why, sir, the figures indicate differently. Out of 460,000 votes in Pennsylvania their candidate received but 147,447, leaving him in a minority of more than 312,553. He was also in a minority of 43,695 in New Jersey, 46,089 in Indiana, 46,615 in Illinois, and from the returns we have from California, he has not received more than one fourth of the popular vote in that State, claimed to be his own. What ever consolation and encouragement they can draw from such figures I leave them to enjoy. They certainly cannot claim fellowship with the Fillmore vote, for Mr. Fillmore was himself among the first to denounce them as a sectional party, attempting to maintain doctrines and practices that would most certainly dissolve the Union.

But they deny that their party is sectional, and make the charge of sectionalism against the Democracy. Well, Mr. President, I shall not consume much time on this issue, but, sir, if the Republican be not a sectional party, I cannot conceive what characteristics or practices of a sectional party the Republican party lacks. Both of their candidates were from one section of the Union, they were nominated by delegates from the same section, and they received all their votes in that section. In fifteen of the States, differing from the others only as to one local institution, their party made no serious attempt to get votes, but they endeavored to gain power by exciting prejudice and passion in the popular mind in their own section against a local institution of the other. How else could you constitute a sectional party? It is sectional, and it is useless for Senators to deny it. It is just the kind of organization which the greatest and best man who ever lived in our country anticipated with alarm.

But it is far otherwise with the Democracy. One of our candidates was from the North, and the other from the South. They were nominated by delegates from all the States, and were voted for in all the States. The party declared principles and policy acceptable to the whole family of States. Those principles could be expounded alike in the South, and orators from the North and the South met daily on the same platform to do so. A constant theme was the equality of the States, the constitutional rights of all, and the necessity for fraternity of feeling amongst the people of all. How idle and fallacious the charge of sectionalism against such a party!

But, Mr. President, the Senator from Ohio, in the course of the debate the other day, in support of the charge, that the Democracy in the North had not stood up fairly and fully to the issue between the parties, remarked:

"In the State of Pennsylvania, in all the Democratic mass meetings for President that I know anything about, there was inscribed in great letters upon their banners, 'Buchanan, Breckinridge, and free Kansas'; and their orators proceeded to show that Mr. Buchanan was safer upon the subject of freedom in Kansas than any other candidate."

In the same connection, the Senator from Massachusetts stated that, to his personal knowledge:

"Public meetings were called of persons in favor of 'Buchanan, Breckinridge, and free Kansas.' I have read these calls. I have in my possession one of them, which was issued in the State of Pennsylvania. There are others in possession of members of this House and the other. Throughout the whole canvass in these very States the issue was blinled."

Meetings were called in favor of 'Buchanan, Breckinridge, and free Kansas!' and banners were borne in the canvass bearing the inscription, 'Buchanan, Breckinridge, and free Kansas!' Well, Mr. President, this is no very grave charge after all. I see no cause of alarm in it. I must confess, however, to some surprise, at the sweeping statement of the Senator from Ohio, that in all the Democratic meetings in Pennsylvania, of which he had any knowledge, he discovered the peculiar banner of which he had spoken. Such banners may have been numerous—certainly there were some, for the Senator saw them; but I cannot remember to have seen any, though I certainly witnessed quite as much of the canvass in Pennsylvania as he did. His opportunities at Dem-

ocratic meetings, it seems to me, must have been limited. I can hardly imagine how he got to such a meeting, or how he found the opportunity to scrutinize Democratic notices. I am quite certain he was not invited to our meetings, and I know the Senator too well to believe that he would go where he is not welcome. He said he endeavored to enlighten the Democracy on certain points. That was kind on his part; but, doubtless, Mr. President, on the receipt of the election returns the Honorable Senator concluded that he had failed in the task.

Again, and in the same connection, he remarked:

"Thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands of votes were given for the successful candidate on the hypothesis that what was inscribed on their banners, and what fell from the lips of their orators was true."

Why, certainly, Mr. President! Who ever doubted it? Who has impeached the truth of the Democratic speeches and Democratic notices? There is no hypothesis about them. They give expression to great and immutable truths; and it was as the Senator says, through the agency of such means that we achieved success. But, Mr. President, it is evident the Senator, in making his developments about the banners, expected to damage the Democracy of Pennsylvania in the estimation of their brethren in the South; but in this he will fail. The announcement of his own presence at a Democratic meeting, however, is a circumstance far more alarming and ominous. There is no telling what fatal influence it may exercise. I think our Southern friends will agree that it was a more dangerous presence than the banners.

But, Mr. President, suppose all the meetings in Pennsylvania had been called as stated by the Senator from Massachusetts, and the banners been as described by the Senator from Ohio, what of it? What reference should be deducible from such a fact? It would certainly furnish no evidence that the issues between the Democratic and Republican parties had not been fairly met on our part. Indeed, it is very singular that a circumstance of this kind should have ever attracted the attention of Senators. It indicates great want of material for the discussion of their side. I know of but one meeting that was called in the manner stated by the Senator from Massachusetts. That was in Putnam county. The authors of that call doubtless intended to indicate their wish that Kansas should become a free State; but this fact does not warrant the conclusion that they believed Congress possessed the power to control the question, or admitting the existence of the power, that it would be wise to exercise it. I was not present at the meeting, and I am not entirely confident, from the well-known sentiments of the speakers who were present, that they advocated nothing more nor less than the right of the people, the bona fide citizens of the Territory, to settle the question as they pleased, and denying the right and wisdom of Congressional interference.

Mr. Wade. Will the Senator permit me to ask him a question?

Mr. Bigler. Certainly.

Mr. Wade. The Senator seems perfectly familiar with the opinions of Mr. Buchanan on this subject. Now, I want to know whether those banners were inscribed as they were in accordance with the declared will of Mr. Buchanan. Is he favorable to making Kansas a free State?

Mr. Bigler. As to the first proposition, whether those banners were prepared in accordance with the wish of Mr. Buchanan, I cannot answer. The Senator has taken notice, certainly, that I stated distinctly I saw no such banners.

Mr. Wade. I understand the Senator to admit that there was one such banner at some large Democratic meeting. If there was one admitted probably there were more.

Mr. Bigler. It is immaterial how many there were. I do not intend to fall back on that point. As for the views of Mr. Buchanan, they are doubtless just those of the Democratic party, as declared in their platform. We intend that the people who go to the Territories shall decide the question of slavery for themselves; and I have no doubt that, with the most of the Northern people, he would prefer to see Kansas a free State, but denies the right of Congress to interfere.

Mr. Wade. Does Mr. Buchanan believe that the people of a Territory, while in a Territorial State, have the power to exclude slavery?

Mr. Bigler. Does the Senator from Ohio wish to present the constitutional difficulty which has been raised here frequently, in regard to the power of the Legislature of a Territory?

Mr. Wade. I want to know what Mr. Buchanan's opinions are in regard to the constitutional difficulty which has been so often spoken of.

Mr. Bigler. I cannot answer the Senator as to Mr. Buchanan's views of the constitutional question. I can give my own, if the Senator is willing to hear them.

Mr. Wade. Well, let us have your opinion on this subject.

Mr. Bigler. It is no new proposition that the people of a Territory, while in a Territorial State, have the power to exclude slavery. It has been this way, we talked about 'free Kansas' in the here-before, and discussed before; and I have canvassed for President, but I never heard a Democratic speaker suggest that Kansas should not be self-governed. There can be no difference of opinion as to what the Kansas-Nebraska bill means. Its terms are explicit. It concedes to the people of the Territory all the power which Congress possesses with its views on the subject. The Senator under the Constitution. If the authority delegated to the people by the Kansas-Nebraska bill, or did I ever hear a speaker on the bill means. Its terms are explicit. It concedes to the people of the Territory all the power which Congress possesses with its views on the subject. The Senator under the Constitution. 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