THE GREAT QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

SPEECH of the Hon. THOMAS CORWIN of Ohio.

His Views upon the Fugitive Slave Law, Slavery in the Territories and States—Remarks upon Respectable and Decent Men, and Hints about Short-horned Cattle.

From The Cincinnati Gazette, Aug. 24.

On Friday evening last the voters of Lawrence County got together at Ironton to listen to the speeches of Messrs. Dennison and Corwin. There could not have been less than twenty-five hundred persons present at the place where the speaking was had, which was at a large establishment ordinarily used as a foundery. Benches were arranged in the most convenient form for the accommodation of a large crowd, and nearly every seat was occupied. A still larger number of persons would in all probability have been present had there not been some difficulty as to the knowledge of the precise day on which the speaking was to come off, contradictory publications having been made thereabout.

After the organization had been perfected by the appointment of a President and supporting officers, Mr. Dennison spoke, delivering a lengthy and forcible speech.

Mr. Corwin then took the stand. He was presented to the audience by the President, who remarked that was it not "Tom Corwin" that he introduced he should indeed have fears of his ability to interest, after the able speech just concluded.

Mr. Corwin said:

MY FELLOW CITIZENS: If it were a part of my design in visiting this portion of the State to exhibit myself as an orator, I should feel, as my venerable friend would feel for me, after what you have heard. I have no ambition in addressing my fellow-citizens, at all events, in popular assemblies, to discharge any other duty to myself or them, than that, if it may be possible, of communicating some information which shall be useful to them in the discharge of their duties as voters.

My fellow-citizens, you who are intrusted with the exercise of that great office which you have so shamefully and so strangely neglected in all your lifetime—you who come here to understand, it may be, your duties from men that come from a distance of two or three hundred miles, do well; but you who come, some of you, to listen to smart speeches or fine orations, if you come for any purpose of that kind, allow me to say to you in candor, as one interested in the manner in which this duty is to be discharged, that you had better have staid at home; if you have an honorable calling in the world, or honest occupation in life, you should have endeavored to attend to it to-day, instead of coming coming to hear me.

You have heard, in the glowing language of my friend, in the ardor and sincerity of his own spirit, the big roll of offenses—God knows it was a melancholy catalogue of crimes which he has exhibited against the people of the State of Ohio [Laughter], and the United States, for whenever any public man in speaking of the affairs of your republic, shall be able, with truth and in candor, to pronounce the officers of the Government unworthy the trust reposed in them; to have violated their pledges, if it be so, or the duties of the various posts to which they have been assigned; if ever any man, at home or abroad in the old world, can say that of your public men, with truth, then he has pronounced a condemnation upon the whole system of the American Republic, for he has said that men intrusted with the duty of appointing officers do not know how to go about the discharge of their duty, or do not care in what manner they do discharge it. If there be any man whose heart is pained when he hears these things said, with shame and anguish, as my friend says—if there be any man who feels this, I hold it is impossible, in the nature of things, that he will not doubt the propriety of giving universal suffrage to any people.

Now, some of my Democratic brethren will go away and say that I am a Federalist, on account of what I have said here to-day, but I have felt it my duty to say this much everywhere. I have no doubt of the intelligence of the people; I have no doubt of the general integrity and of the honesty, perhaps, of the hearts of the mass of all the parties that ever existed in this Republic, but I assert that I have doubts whether the people of this country are worthy of being intrusted with the power of electing their officers, as they do now, in this country. Why do I say this? Because if you will believe what is said by either of the prevailing parties, for the last thirty years, at any time, the public men that you have had in office have been unworthy of the places which they filled. Whose fault is it that your State of Ohio is inflicted with a heavy debt of $750,000—money wrung from the pockets of the people, by direct taxation; it is gone and you know not where it is? It is your fault. You elected the men to office.

Let me suppose that some monarch, by the form of government under which we live, at Washington City, was invested with the power of appointing and elevating the agents of States to office, to do as he pleased with the government of the States, and that monarch appointed servants as unfaithful to their duties as yours have been. What would you do with him? My life upon it, if there was one drop of the blood that coursed in the veins of your forefathers left alive in your hearts, there would be found some patriotic man to drive the dagger to the heart of that despot. What then is to be done with you, who vote for and elect all these men?

I believe it is now generally conceded everywhere, that the present Chief Magistrate has lamentably disappointed even the men that elected him. He has not disappointed those opposed to him, for they predicted that everything would go wrong under his administration. There is scarcely a man to be found over the land, who is an aspirant for office, that dare avow himself a friend of the President. He can't get any votes from his own party. How came you to elect such a man as that? Had you not sense and sagacity enough to know a man whose life had been before you on your public records for thirty or forty years? Were you so ineffably stupid that you did not investigate that man's life, to know him before you appointed him to that high office? You could have done it, but you did not do it. The great office of electing President and Governor and Legislatures, State and Federal, the great office which you hold, you sadly neglect. I have said already and will venture to affirm, and I will appeal to your own experience, whether the office of President has not been discharged with less fidelity than any public officer has ever exhibited after you elected him. The reason of it was not that you were not intelligent; the reason was not that you were bad men, but because every man had the same interest and power that you had, and that you have said, "Let somebody else do it." You say, "I will not interest myself in this, or I will be "called a politician, the brethren of my church won't "like it; why should I disturb myself about this "thing. I have my own affairs to attend to, and I will "attend to them, and as for this business of regulating "the affairs of the Republic, I will leave that to those "fellows that want office." That is how you think about it; that is how you have acted with it. If you had not acted in that way, I tell you that none of these calamities which you have now to deplore would have occurred; none of these great instances of blundering would have happened. What is the reason you have not done this? I say you will not attend to that business; if you did, if you had done so, then I think it must follow, as a legitimate conclusion, that you don't know how. That is so much for the consideration of my brethren in this private little class meeting of ours [laughter], where we are considering the state of religion in the American Church, and lighting up a candle and putting it into every man's hand that he may search his own bosom.

A WORD TO THE DECENT MEN.

Let those gentlemen who feel themselves quite too respectable and decent to mingle in our elections, remember that God Almighty will hold them responsible for the manner in which they discharge their duty as voters. That right and privilege is not given to them for their benefit, or to be used at their pleasure, but for my benefit, for your benefit, and for the benefit of the thirty millions of people in the United States. If one sees an unworthy man go to the polls and take possession of the government, and he will not prevent it, if there be such a thing as future responsibilities—as we all believe—that man will have something to answer for upon that final day when all of us must account for our acts.

Do you suppose it is well pleasing to God Almighty? Do you suppose that the old men who published that Declaration of Independence which gave birth to your national existence, for the maintenance of which they appealed to the God of nations, approve of this neglect? They felt their own weakness; they, reasoning upon the commonly accepted principles of human reason, felt that they would perish in the conflict in which they were then about to enter; and at last, as poor feeble man always does when he feels he has nothing to lean upon but his own arm, he goes to God Almighty for help in that hour of trouble. They appealed to Him, and He answered well in the day of their trial; and all the struggles they endured, all the blood they shed, all the pains and privations they suffered, were simply to end in just one thing—in communicating to every rational free man the power to govern the nation. That office they communicated to you, the voting people of the country. Did they suppose—could they have believed that the said people of the country, the respectable people of the land, would so scorn the great and priceless estate which they left them, as that they would not attend to appointing the agent to take care of it, but that some mercenary spirit was to take care of them?

Whereas each member of the community, having an interest in a banking institution, or in a joint stock manufacturing company, where their reward is to be but a few paltry dollars per cent on their capital—if a meeting was to be called to appoint a President or an agent of that company—would attend this meeting, to elect this President and Director of the paltry bank or joint stock concern; but when the President and Directors are to be elected to take care of the liberties of the whole country, Oh, these men are too decent, too respectable to attend. It is not respectable to be a politician, they tell us; or they are too careless, or they have half an acre of buckwheat which might not be got in and saved, if they left home on the election day.

That is the way you act with your privileges. I am quite tired of complaining of the men you elect, and of the laws they make. One thing I know to be perfectly certain, the stockholders do not attend to the election of a President and Directors, or if they do, they don't know how to do their duty.

WHO IS TO BE BLAMED.

Don't let us blame poor Buchanan! Don't let us anathematize the men we have elected to these offices of State, too much! Let us abuse the people that elected them. They are to blame for the whole of it. What have the people of the United States done with the offices? If you elect a Judge and he does not attend at Court, and if an innocent man is hung because he was not there to try him, what do you do with him? You take him to Columbus and impeach him. He is removed from office and the brand of disgrace and ignominy is placed on his brow. But you stay home from elections and let unworthy men be elected to office; you don't like some party or other. The judge might say he did not like his associate; he did not like to sit near him—he had not a very sweet breath. [Laughter.] I tell you, Sirs, that is quite as valid as many of the excuses that men make for staying away from elections.

RETROSPECTIVE.

What have you been doing now, to go no further back than the last few years—sixteen or seventeen? All of you of mature age, remember the year 1840 very well. What did all the people of the United States do then? They rose up, with mingled feelings of merriment and indignation—for it was difficult to tell which prevailed that year, the events of the administration of Mr. Van Buren had been so singularly out of the way, nowise conformable to anybody's notions of things, it was difficult to say whether it was looked at with indignation, contempt or merriment; every one of his officers was running away with the people's money—you know how we used to twist his long-legged measures [laughter]—and three quarters of the people started up and declared, we will have no more Democratic government; we will have Whig government. The principles upon which these two parties were contending, then, for your suffrages, were diametrically opposed; upon due deliberation and solemn consideration (for I do hope you sometimes consider these things), it was determined by an unexampled majority of the country, that henceforth Whigs and their principles should be the rule of conduct in the United States. It was so! Your decree, when you make it, is always omnipotent.

Four years pass away—they go by—what happens then? You have again to appoint a President of this great joint stock company of ours. The people have two men presented to them. One has been alluded to by my friend, Mr. Dennison—Mr. Clay of Kentucky—a man who has been spoken of so much that it would be idle to attempt to employ terms adequate to express the feelings with which one who knew him as well as I did regarded the great loss we have sustained by his death; a man of whom the nation was proud, a man who had a European reputation, who was regarded as the great champion of regulated liberty, by men of intelligence all over the world; in addition to this he had endowments which it has pleased God very rarely to give to mortal man; an integrity as pure as the highest integrity of the highest and best of the ancient people who have descended to us as demi-gods. Nobody questioned this in the election at all. It was named and repeated every hour. He did not like the annexation of Texas to the United States; not because he himself had any personal objection to any accumulation of Slave States in the country, but because he believed it would disturb the harmony of the Republic as it then existed. The harmony and prosperity of this land were the idols of his heart. Another man was also presented to the American people—a very ordinary man. (I wish to speak of him in no terms of disparagement.) You all know something of Mr. Polk. He never pretended to be the equal of Mr. Clay. Mr. Polk differed with him on this subject. He desired that that independent Republic, living under the shadow of our wing, should be annexed to the United States. He was a Democrat of the Democrats. I knew him well. You know that I speak truly of his history. As a politician he was opposed to everything now proposed by the Opposition in the Slave States, and by the Republican party in the Free States, as to the proper system of government in this country. Well, Clay proposed to the country to continue the Whig government begun by Mr. Harrison. You had determined four years before that henceforward we should only have Whig principles and Whig rulers. Four years passed by, and with the mighty difference between the two men, you determined by a very large majority you would have no more Whig government, but would have Democratic government, even when you could have the pleasure and the pride of voting for one of the greatest statesmen the world ever knew. The stockholders have changed their opinion greatly in these four years, or else they did not vote their principles at all.

Well, as we know human nature is full of imperfection, and as men are gaining light every day in the world, we fondly hoped, by the school-houses and churches that we had erected, we would get some intelligence. We would begin to suppose that we were mistaken in 1840, and that we had learned that the Democratic was the true rule of government in the country.

Four years more rolled round, which brings us to 1848. The country, in the mean time, had been involved in a foreign war, and it is very rare, when the ambition of a nation is concerned and that ambition is put into conflict with another nation, it is very rare that the men of the nation do not take sides with him who wages the war. Mr. Polk was to be reelected or rejected. What did we in 1848? With about the same unanimity as before, we declared that we would have no more Democratic government, we will have Whig government, even though we have to deposit this great power of statesmanship in the hands of a man fresh from the battle-field, who was never in the councils of his country. The stockholders have changed back again!

Four years more rolled around, and 1852 comes upon us, and finds us still increasing in light and knowledge. Mind, in 1848 we jumped back just eight years. We found, I suppose, that the light had been leading us astray—that we failed in 1844. Now we are at the stand-point of 1840 again. Instead of continuing our resolution to continue Whig government, we have found out that we were mistaken a second time, and we take not Gen. Scott, by no means an ordinary man. He was a Whig, and you put away that illustrious General and that eminently qualified statesman, and took a man who, it is true, had been on a battle-field, and on his back on a battle-field. [Laughter.] He was such a brave man that he could lie down and just drop off his horse on the battle-field. I wish to speak in no way disrespectful of Mr. Pierce, but I say that you fell so much in love with Democratic government, that you threw away a Whig who was eminently qualified as a statesman and renowned as a warrior, and took a man not renowned in either way.

A GO-DEVIL ILLUSTRATION.

Now this, and all of this, is applicable to all of us. What would you think of any man—to illustrate—of any farmer, who would take one of those fine patent plows and plow down his barren ground, and raise a good crop upon his land which he had thrown aside as useless. He gathers his crop into his garner, reaps the reward of his labor, thanks God for his fruitful harvest and pockets the money it brings to him; and that same man, when he had another crop to raise should say, "By that plow I got a good crop, a better one than I expected, but as I have the power to do as I please with my own land, I will try the old 'go-devil' plow this year." You all know what a "go-devil" is. You know it is a harrow with three prongs, a very good thing in its way, but by no means a good thing to break up ground with. [Laughter.] Well, he takes his "go-devil" and kicks his ground about, and he gets no crop, and I tell you he can't get much of a crop that way, anyhow. Well, he gets in debt. He says, "Well, I was a great fool to take "that 'go-devil;' I will get that patent plow to work "again." The third year he uses that plow again, and he gets another good crop, and gets out of debt. He gets his money into his pocket, and goes to his thanksgiving dinner, eats his turkey, and thanks God for his goodness. The fourth year, however, he says, "Have I not a right to do as I please, I will take that old 'go devil' again." [Laughter.]

That is precisely what you, the people of the United States, have done with your power of voting. That is exactly what you have done. Do you wonder that those veteran old statesmen in Europe, such fellows as Metternich, or Walewski in France, and Palmerston and Derby in England, who have read over and over again all that is said about popular government and all that has been written, and have seen it always remarked that especial care must be taken to guard against the carelessness and vacillation of the people; do you wonder when those old fellows see what you have done, how you have acted with the exercise of this right of suffrage, as if you did not care what became of your country, or did not know what ought to be done, changing four times in four successive elections from Whig to Democrat and from Democrat to Republican, should despise your discretion? It seems as if you did not know how to do this work. Do you suppose that any man that was to act with his plows as I have stated to you could ever make a will in the world? I tell you no judge would allow such a man's will to go on record, because such a man must be insane. If that man was to make a deed of a house and lot, and his heirs were to prove this, it would be declared null and void. If his heirs should want to set aside such a man's deed, let them send for me, and I will set it aside before any intelligent jury in your country, because the man must be insane.

Yet you have done the same thing with this right of voting. You have acted in just that way, and now when we lift up our hands with indignation, at the bad conduct of our rulers, don't let us blame the "go-devil" because he did not go twelve inches into the ground, because he can't. That is what we have done. Let us cast the beam out of our own eye, and then we will see clearly the mote that is in old Buck's eye. [Laughter.] At least, it looks that way to a man up a tree. [Laughter.]

Now, my fellow-citizens, it is because of this subject, and this absence of the exercise of that great office which we hold, and because I am, as a man, interested in this matter, that I have the impudence at all to come and speak to you on this subject. We are going to elect a President and Directors soon again, and I am interested in it, and if you are weak enough to listen to me, I am going to tell you, as I have told others, something about that.

ABOUT PARTY ASPERITY!

We here have parties! I am not one of those that believe that political parties are necessary. I am not one that believes that, as men of sense and discretion, we have need to differ about this thing at all. I admit that parties are made necessary by the present imperfections of mankind. But while I would say that, I would beg of you, in God's name, to put away the little, mean, and trifling ambitions and asperities of parties, and, my life on it, if you would do that there would not be so much party in the country as there is. If you could get a President who would devote the whole faculties of his head and the better emotions of his heart, and concentrate them upon the idea that he was the representative of the only free Government on the face of the earth, and the one supposed to be the model of all to come after us in all nations of the world, that want to be free—if we could but get a man that would elevate himself even so high as to think that, and act upon it, do you believe that the postmaster whose office is on some prairie in Illinois (I am speaking of a fact that I have seen related in the newspapers), the proceeds of whose office amounted to three dollars and seventeen cents per annum, gross [laughter], who had the impudence to poke his head out of the little log cabin in which his office was held, and say that he thought Stephen A. Douglas was a respectable man, and was overheard by some poor man—not poor in property, but poor in soul, that had a little starved and miserable soul in him, who wrote on to this mighty representative of the only free country on the face of God's earth, taking care of the liberty of the people of the country—thirty millions of them—that he did not like Mr. Douglas while the other man did; that he, the President, would send forth a mandate to that poor little fellow on the prairies, who was collecting his three dollars and seventeen cents a year—not a tenth part of the expense of fuel that he burned in one Winter—to go out of office [laughter], and let some man come in who did not like Douglas.

This is a fact, so they say. Don't let me now be holding up Mr. Buchanan as an exception. Such has been too much the case with every President since this party spirit has been so much in vogue. Whig and Democrat, etc., have been guilty of the same sin. I know when you are electing a man to make laws for you, you must elect one whose notions agree with yours; but I do not know, that when you have a clerk at Washington, and the Whig party believes the penknife he uses ought to pay thirty per cent *ad valorem* duty, and that poor clerk has not been able to see that distinctly, although he is a capital bookkeeper and a faithful man, but in his soul and conscience, he thinks it would not be right to pay so much duty as that, that you should turn him out of office, and say that he is not fit for a bookkeeper. It is not respectable. I know that, because I have tried it. No man can feel like a gentleman, if God has made him one, and do that thing. If that man holds his tongue we will not question him as to that; but if he is to go to Congress and make laws for us, to establish that duty on the penknife, then we will ask him about it.

REPRESENTATIVE MEN.

All of this we have done, and this has increased that party asperity, and induced men to take sides with the party in power, and of course the meanest men in the country will get the offices on that principle, the little executive offices and the little ministerial offices. That is what we have all done. Let us quit it. Let us see if we cannot quit it. If you want a man to represent your Republic abroad, find a man who has some of the qualifications of a gentleman—I mean a gentleman of God's making, not a fellow in fine clothes, though of course he ought to be dressed decently when he goes *courting*. [Laughter.] Let him be a man of respectability. You have enough of these men. Don't appoint a man who shall be spoken of as a friend of mine told me of one of our representatives. My friend had been *Chargé d'Affaires* at Brussels, a great while, four years; while there, he became acquainted with a French diplomat, and that French diplomat had seen a man at Copenhagen, in Denmark, who represented our Government abroad as *Chargé d'Affaires*. He was a very stupid man; he did not speak any language very well, and, said this French gentleman: "Why don't you send fine specimens, good-looking men, who speak some language?" "Oh!" said my friend, "don't they all speak some language?" "No," was the answer, "I met a gentleman at Copenhagen who speaks no language at all. He was from the State of Ohio, and he speaks some infernal *patois*. I think he called it Ohio." [Loud laughter.] Of course your representative was treated with contempt, for they thought he was the best man we had.

That is what you should do. I would not be very particular about his politics either, for our domestic politics have very little to do with our foreign missions. The man who would select a Judge of the Supreme Court or Circuit Court of the United States, to discharge the great duties of that station, because he was a Democrat or a Republican, without reference to other qualifications, his head ought to roll upon a block. Judicial qualifications have to do with this thing; they decide matters of law, not measures of policy.

COLOR CONSIDERED.

Some, beside my friend (referring to Mr. Moore of Kentucky, Congressman elect, who was on the platform), are familiar with the topics that I am now going to discuss. The only object I had in view in calling him to the stand, was that you might see that they could tolerate a man of his color. [Loud laughter.] I have been called "Black Corwin" about long enough just look at him! [Renewed laughter.] I don't wish to make any egotistical comparisons, but I say I am as white as he [laughter], and I have no doubt we shall take our seats side by side in Congress, and we are both better-looking fellows, I can tell you, than a great many men that we shall meet there. [Continued laughter.]

THE POWER OF CONGRESS.

The opposition to the Administration on the other side of the river have been chiefly concerned in a dispute as to what shall be done with the slave property of the South. You have heard what friend Dennison has said. He says it is the doctrine and resolute determination of the Republican party of Ohio, and he might have added, of all of what are called the Free States of the Union, to exert the power which they hold belongs to them, under the Constitution of the United States, by Congressional action to prohibit Slavery in any Territory where Slavery does not already exist. My own impression is, that that ought to be done. That is my belief about it.

I am not so very particular about this, as a mere matter of doctrine, because I think that there will be much more important duties for us to perform when we get to Congress than to dispute about this abstract proposition. Slavery exists, as you know, in certain portions of the United States. The only Territories that can ever be subject to Slavery are those of Utah, New Mexico, and Washington; that is, all we have got left. Kansas has settled the question for herself, after fighting a pretty hard battle, under this beautiful doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty."

SQUATTER SOVEREIGNTY.

Did any man ever read the Constitution of the United States and find that phrase in it—Squatter Sovereignty? Yet it is said that it is a constitutional doctrine put in there. Now do you suppose that if the men who made that Constitution, when they enacted that clause, "Congress shall have power to "make all needful rules and regulations for the gov"ernment of the Territories," would not have just added that every Territory should have had "Squat"ter Sovereignty?" Don't you think that they would, my brother Democrats, you that have adopted this new doctrine?

This is a new doctrine. It is only eleven years old. No man ever heard of it more than eleven or twelve years ago—since 1847. I was there when it was done. I was in the council of the nation when it was first started.

You perceive, my fellow-citizens, that there is a history belonging to this question, just the same as that there is a history belonging to the Christian Church. What does every propagator of Christianity do when there is a dispute about a text? If he can find out that St. Paul, Matthew, or any of the Apostles or Disciples of Christ had that subject under consideration, and gave an interpretation of it, by their conduct or words, he does not dispute about the philological criticism that could be made on the word. We have too much sense, if not too much conscience, for that; for all men are understood in the sense in which they use a word themselves. A man may use a word in common use, to mean very different from what the lexicon may give its meaning. So the men that made that Constitution said that "Congress shall have power to "make all needful rules and regulations for the gov"ernment of the Territories." These men were not common men. They knew that in every instrument in the world, men used words appropriate to the sense intended to be conveyed, and that they must use these words appropriate to the sense they would convey. If you were writing about a fracture, and understood what a fracture was, you would use the words of the books treating on fractures; but an unlearned man, by the same words, might mean a very different thing. These men were not only wise men, they were learned men. The man who reduced that Constitution into words, was probably one of the most learned men that ever lived under this Government—I refer to Gouverneur Morris, then of New-York, a very distinguished man. They gave it to a committee, of which he was chairman, to put in the right English words, and you will observe, there is not half as much "hifalutin" in it as you have heard from me since I stood here. [Laughter.] Gouverneur Morris knew that Sir William Blackstone had written four volumes of commentaries on law in England. He knew that all the lawyers that would expect to use this instrument as law, would expect to see in it those words common to law, and he would look to see what Blackstone meant by "rule," when spoken of in reference to the legislature. Congress was the national legislature. Sir William Blackstone asks the question, What is law? and says it is a rule of action, prescribed by the superior power of the State, commanding that which is good and prohibiting that which is evil. Law is only a "rule," prescribed by the legislative power. When they said then that Congress should have power to make all needful "rules," they added "regulations," which is but a synonym for "rules"—for the Latin word *regula* is interpreted to be rule. What did they mean by that word when they came to act upon it? That is the question I would propound to my friends over the river. This is a question of law about which on one side they hold one opinion and on this side entertain another. I appeal from any interpretation put upon it in the latter days of the Church, and go back to the Apostles and see what they mean. If I can find that out, no man shall come in the way of my following them.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

They say now that Congress has no power to make laws for the Territories. That is Mr. Douglas's idea, I believe—not that I understand it so—but I understand some Douglas Democrats think it is. I have been trying to find out from my fellow-citizens of the Democratic creed what they mean by "Squatter Sovereignty." Now, in the year 1803, you know we acquired the Territory of Lousiana from France; at that time Slavery was in it as one of the domestic institutions. I say they had a right by the terms of the treaty under which we acquired it to come into the Union with Slavery, for Napoleon, the First Consul, would not sign the treaty unless that was in it. Slavery being in Louisiana, Congress thought, by the terms of the treaty, that they had no right to expel it. The treaty was the supreme law of the land; the faith to the nation required that they should come in, but in the meantime they were a Territory. Now you will observe that by the Constitution, the slave trade was allowed to go on for twenty years, within a State, but in 1804, getting hold of this Territory peculiarly interested in the importation of negroes, Congress, believing Slavery ought not to be extended, passed a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into the Territory of Louisiana. Many men were in Congress that year that helped to make the Constitution. What they understood by Congress making rules and regulations for the Territory, was that Congress should make laws. They understood that, and practiced upon it, and prohibited Louisiana from importing slaves. They did not say to the Territory of Louisiana, you have "Squatter Sovereignty," do as you please, did they? Such a thing never was thought of. There was not even a demagogue wild enough to utter such a thing. The old men that made the Constitution were there, and they knew they were present to confront them. They enacted a law, saying that any man who took a negro in to that Territory for sale, should pay a fine of three hundred dollars, which was then about the value of a negro. They did not do that in a State—they did not pretend to do it; but they had omnipotent power over the Territories as if they were in a legislative capacity, making laws for a State in the State.

MONROE AND HIS TIMES.

That they did in 1803-4-5. They had also some little experience at a later date. This same territory of Louisiana forms a State and calls it Missouri. Their Southern line was described by saying it should be on 36 deg. 30 min.—that it was the Southern line of the State of Missouri, a part of this Louisiana purchase. This was about the year 1820. You know who was then President. It was during one of those halcyon periods of our country to which all of us so much love to refer; we had gone through the second war with Great Britain and although not always triumphant, we had vindicated our right to demand of Great Britain that she should not impress our seamen and compel them to serve in her navy. We made peace upon honorable terms at last. Mr. Madison had retired from the Presidential Chair and it was filled by Mr. Monroe. Missouri was told by the vote of Congress that she must take her constitution back and expunge from it the article concerning slavery. The country was then in a state of great agitation. It was then held that Congress might, or might not, admit a State as she pleased. I know she has power to declare war against the whole human race, to-morrow. I know she has the power to refuse any State—she might have refused admission to Ohio in 1803, but the question is whether it is her duty or right to do so. I say a State has a right when she forms a constitution for her internal government to make it after her own wishes. That is not a matter of much account now, because the question will never arise.

SOMETHING FOR A KENTUCKIAN.

I want now to have a little free conversation with my brother from Kentucky, after awhile, for I believe after all, although he has been advocating one doctrine on one side of the river, while I am advocating another here, that when we come to have a class meeting or two, that I shall so convince him of the apostolic interpretation of this thing, that he will be brought to a sense of his own unworthiness. [Laughter.]

JOHN Q. ADAMS ON TREATIES.

In 1821, therefore, Missouri came back and said, we will not expunge that article, and we demand admission upon our Constitution, because it was in the treaty that we should be admitted upon an equality with the other States of the Union, and the Constitution says that a treaty shall be the supreme law of the land. I can show you that old John Quincy Adams held to the truth of this. I suppose that my friends who are very much given to Free-soilism—who are strong Abolitionists—will not deny that old Mr. Adams was "some pumpkins" in his way, that he even backed Slavery; he had gone through a terrible conflict about the right of petition, and if angry opposition could have moved the understanding of that old man, he might have changed many an opinion upon that subject, but when Arkansas came to be admitted, that very man, sitting by the side of me, rose up at 4 o'clock in the morning, quoted the treaty, and offered a resolution in about these words:

"*Resolved*, That in admitting Arkansas, with Slavery, into the Union, we do not intend to say that we approve of Slavery."

The resolution, of course, was voted down. He then said, I must vote for Arkansas to come into the Union with her Slavery. Why? Because my country's honor is concerned in the matter. The treaty gives them the right to come in with or without Slavery, and he voted for the admission of Arkansas, as I did—as the Quakers say in their discipline, "I did it by convincement," although I don't approve of Slavery in any country where a white man can live. (I don't say that I approve of it any way, and may give my reasons by and by.)

ADVICE GRATIS.

We must understand this subject. All of you have to act upon it at times. Legal questions require profound study and research. You will not make it, and so I want to make it for you, as a lawyer would make it—as an American citizen should make it—and for the counsel I give you this day I pledge you my word I will never ask you for a fee—although it will be worth to you, if you will but follow it, more than many a piece of advice you have dearly paid for.

There was talk of a dissolution of the Union, as there is now. It occurred to the United States that it might be accommodated, and that a Slave State might come into the Union, but that the people would be glad to know it was the last of it and they said that 36 degrees 30 minutes should be the end of that limit, and that is the question we are discussing to-day.

THE MAN WHO WAS BURNED IN EFFIGY.

Who was President, and who started the trouble now? It was started in that country—as to what you should do with that land taken from the Mexicans—torn from her. It was but fitting, in the course of God's retributive judgment, that you should have a little trouble with that which you took from your neighbor.

There was a man—I will not mention his name—that wanted to stop that war; and he foretold that the moment you got that land, it would be a firebrand of discord; that it would, if anything could, sever the whole family, and drive us all off. For saying that, the man that I allude to was burned in effigy often, very often, but he was not burned up. [Laughter.] Well, it just so happened that, in 1850, the same question came right up, and then, for the first time—I shall not say in 1850—but when this territory had been ceded by the treaty of Guadaloupe-Hidalgo, we endeavored to say that it should be free territory before we got it. On that question, one of the best lawyers endeavored to establish that the Constitution carried Slavery there without the need of law at all. We all thought he failed in that. I allude to Judge Berrian in Georgia. That is the first time that idea ever entered into the head of man. I think, perhaps, it was in 1848. Why not think of it before? Why did not the men who made the Constitution think of it when they prohibited Louisiana from importing slaves from abroad, while yet the slaves might do so?

THE CABINET DECISION.

Well, now, in 1822, Mr. Monroe being President, this law came to his Cabinet for his signature. There had been a violent controversy, and all the problems that could cluster around and between the interests of the Free and Slave States, the contradictory interests of the two, the rights of the Free and Slave States, had been discussed by some of the ablest men in the world. Mr. Monroe asked his Cabinet to give him, every man, their opinions upon this question: "Has "Congress the power to prohibit Slavery in the Ter"ritories north of 36° 30'?"

Who were in his Cabinet? Let us see if they were equal to the men who have preached this modern idea—I speak of all the men concerned in propagating this doctrine. John Quincy Adams was Secretary of State; Wm. H. Crawford, a slaveholder of Georgia, Secretary of the Treasury; John C. Calhoun—my Democratic friend, my partner, my brother, you that believe in "Squatter Sovereignty," was not John C. Calhoun a man of considerable head, and was not he a great friend to Slavery, as much as any of you can be?—he was Secretary of War. William Wirt—I wonder if the young lawyers now-a-days who adopt this new idea of "Squatter Sovereignty"—young gentlemen only let loose from school yesterday, and who in a course of study have looked so far as to read Espinasse's Nisi Prius, two or three chapters in Blackstone's Commentaries, Swan's Treatise on Justices of the Peace, and Wilcox's Forms—certainly they know more of this thing than Mr. Wirt, a man who was born in a Slave State, and as the Tennesseeans sometimes say, "*raced*" up in a Slave State, educated to the highest point of qualification of the human faculties, with a heart open as charity itself to every impression, and with cultivated head, as I have said, the like of which has rarely appeared among the most distinguished of our jurists and statesmen—he was Attorney-General. S. L. Southard, of New-Jersey, was Secretary of the Navy. John McLean was Postmaster-General, but at that time the office was not a Cabinet office. Do you remember these men? Do you know anything about them? If you do, do you see no evidence of the decadence that takes place in public men of our times? Write down those names, read their biographies, and then write down the names of the present cabinet, and then compare them. The one generation has gone away. I say nothing disrespectful of these men; I think that they are about the best Buchanan could get, but of course these gentlemen nearer to the time when the Constitution was made than we are, would know a little better what was meant by it than we would. Monroe himself did not entertain a doubt upon the subject (and he was something of a man), that if any Legislature could expel or admit Slavery into the Territories, Congress could do it. There was no other legislative function to be performed by anybody, and nobody to perform it. Mr. Wirt, Mr. Southard, Mr. Adams, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Crawford, all of them agreed. Some of these gentlemen I had the honor to know; and I do not know of those who hold to the doctrine of the Dred Scott decision, any that could be said to be their equal, or the equal of any of them. It was so in 1823.

I ask you, my fellow-citizens, is there ever to be an end of this question? What does the Judge tell you when he decides a case? He tells you, in the language of the law, that "it is expedient for the country "that there should be an end to the question." Your law titles depend upon that. Would you not consider it strange, if, twenty years after, another Court should come and decide the contrary? A sensible Court would say, this has been decided twenty years ago, argued legally, and "it is expedient for the country "that there should be an end to the question." If you want to have a written Constitution that you can rely on at all, you must have an interpretation put upon the words, and let it read that way until the people choose to change it by altering the words, otherwise a written Constitution will be made to read this thing one year, and another thing another year.

It was settled, then, in 1803, in 1805, in 1822 in the great Missouri restriction, by the judgment solemnly of an entire Cabinet, one of the profoundest lawyers we have known in the country being Attorney-General.

WISCONSIN AND MICHIGAN.

But what else did you do about it? I tell you you did right on the same thing to the year 1850. In the year 1836, Wisconsin came as a Territory; you organized her. Michigan came as a Territory, and you organized her, and you provided in that organic law that while the Legislature might make laws and send them to you, if Congress disapproved of those laws they should be null and void. President Jackson signed bills of this kind. Did not "Old Hickory" know a thing or two about this matter? President Adams signed such a bill; both the Adams signed such bills; Monroe signed such bills; Madison signed bills like it. All of those bills involved that question, and all decided them one way, and even in 1850, in that Compromise, as it was called, it is enacted that New-Mexico and Utah shall send their laws to Congress, and if Congress disapprove of them, they shall be null and void.

Now, my brother Democrat, what becomes of your "Squatter Sovereignty?" Do you know more than all those men? Are you egotistic enough to believe that you understand the words of the Constitution better than all the statesmen, public men, lawyers and private men that have lived before you for seventy years? Have you that confidence in yourself? If you have, God have mercy upon you! You are past praying for, and I am done. [Laughter.]

POLK'S DOCTRINE.

Don't you know we acquired the Territory of Oregon under Polk's administration, and put the Wilmot proviso on it? Did not Polk know as much about it as Mr. Douglas? Did not Jackson know as much about this thing as Stephen A. Douglas? Did not Mr. Monroe and his Cabinet? So far about the legislative power on this question.

THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION.

The question came up from Florida in perhaps 1824 or 1826, in the case of Canter against an Insurance Company. You will find the case in Howard's Reports. John Marshall was Chief Justice of the United States then. Mr. Story was on the bench; a man whose law books on the subject of our laws, and on the subject of law and chancery in general, have been read with the highest commendation of any man that has ever written law books during the last century, in the Court of King's Bench in Westminster Hall. John Marshall was on the bench, and the man that does not know something of him ought not to be allowed to vote. The very question was brought into the Court as to whether a law being made by a Territory was valid or not. The Court said it was not; that there was no power under heaven to make laws in a Territory but Congress.

Now, my brother Democrat, what was the reasoning of Chief Justice Marshall? He was no fool; but, if there was an intellect ever vouchsafed by God to man, that was competent to unravel the sophistries of men, it was John Marshall to whom it was given. Why, he said, How is this; how can this be? Congress has the power to acquire territory by treaty, and who will the territory be conveyed to? To the Territory? No! To any State? No! To the United States the cession is made. Spain conveys New-Mexico and California to the United States. What follows? If there is any law to be made for that Territory that was yesterday a foreign Territory, it is by the legislative department of the Government to whom the Territory is conveyed. What is the legislative department of the Government of the United States? Congress! That was his reasoning. It is very simple, very plain, and utterly and hopelessly conclusive against those who have got up this new doctrine.

Well, is not that enough? Must there not be an end to the question some day? Must we not know some day what is the meaning of our Constitution? For sixty-four years the Courts of the United States have so decided, and Congress has so decided, and Cabinet Ministers have so decided; Presidents, of every complexion and degree of political partizanship, have agreed to it, and now, all at once, we throw it away, and we are told that they did not know anything about it all the time. That is playing at the old game of "go-devil" and patent plow, over again.

Next year suppose Chief Justice Taney to die. Will not that decision be reversed? Now I wish you to understand that I don't believe that the Court has decided that question at all, because the question was not before it and we never regard a decision of a court upon any point of law, unless that point was in the case. But if they have, what have they done? Overruled their own decision; overruled their predecessors—and such predecessors. I hold to the judgment of Marshall, my brother Democrat, before that of Mr. Taney, if he has decided it. I hold it is a case where every brother has a right to his private judgment, seeing that the same court has decided otherwise, when they were more likely to know more about it than we do or can.

INHERENT RIGHTS.

I want now to read, for the benefit of weak brethren [laughter], a passage or two from one of the apostles. [Laughter.] I don't use these words in any sense of levity, at all. They occur to me as being very appropriate. On or about the 4th March, 1850, I was present when this speech was made: "In claiming the "right for the inhabitants, unassisted by Congress, to "legislate for a Territory, in this proviso it is assumed "that the sovereignty over the Territory is vested in "the Territory." "Squatter Sovereignty"—I do really think they might have invented a better adjective than that to go before the word Sovereignty, "squatter"—there is something in it to raise a laugh. "Or to express it," he continues, "in the language used by the resolution offered "by the Senator from Texas (Houston), they have "the same inherent right of self-government as the "people of States." That is the way it is broached to us now. Some of the people on the other side of the river say that they have an inherent right to go and take a man of my color and whip him. [Laughter.] But I should think that they would get into a scrape in doing it, if they could not show that he was born a slave. We have no inherent rights! Some people on my side of the river say that no man shall take a fugitive slave back from here, because he has an inherent right to freedom. There is, I tell you, no such thing as an inherent right. All our rights are given us by the compact of the Constitution. We see there what rights every citizen shall have, and what rights every man in the States shall have. It was sealed by the blood of your fathers, sanctified by the martyrdom of your fathers, and he is a recreant dog who will not fulfil the compact of your fathers. There is no such thing as sovereignty in these States; God alone is sovereign, as well as omnipotent. Your President is not sovereign, although he tries to act like it; but have you not observed that there is such an incongruity between sovereignty and its pretension, that whenever one of your Presidents tries to act the elephant or giraffe, he is sure to act like a monkey, and gibber and chatter for the laughter and scorn of the world? [Laughter.] No such thing as sovereignty exists in this country except in you—God help you! Shabby sovereigns we are! [Renewed laughter.] The man that has the right to go to the polls and vote for whom he pleases, that man is in that particular a sovereign, and has upon him all the responsibilities of a sovereign. That freedom of will wherewith it has pleased Almighty God, as I think sometimes, to curse human nature—that freedom of will is not permitted to any man for all time, but to the voting man on the day of election. Demagogues often tell you this. They tell you the truth in that, and that is all the truth that they do tell you, and you don't believe it; or, if you do, then you don't act like sensible sovereigns. By-the-way, I include myself in all this.

I continue my reading: "This assumption is utterly "unfounded, unconstitutional and contrary to the en"tire practice of the Government, from its commence"ment to the present day, as I shall proceed to show." Who do you suppose uttered that? Some little man from some remote district in Arkansas, or Ohio, or Big Sandy in Kentucky, [laughter] or Sugar Creek in Warren County? No such man! It was the same man who was Secretary of War under James Monroe, when the Missouri question came up before his cabinet—John C. Calhoun! "Utterly absurd," he says, and besides "contrary to the practice of the Govern"ment, from the beginning to the present time." My brother Democrat, you have some confidence in him; he committed some errors I suppose—have not you? He was a man of wonderful head, and although the very question pending before the Senate was the one we are now discussing, and it was to the interest of Mr. Calhoun, as the great leader of the Pro Slavery party, to take the other side, he could not do it. The Government had committed itself—he had committed himself—all the sensible men had committed themselves to that day, and he denounced it as absurd and contrary to the practice of the Government, from the organizing to that day. How did he proceed to show it? Among other things he quotes all but the very language of Chief Justice Marshall, in the case of Canter and the Insurance Company. He does not quote it, but uses the language as his own. "If," said he, "the Govern"ment of Mexico could make whatever law it pleased "before the cession of the Territory, so the Govern"ment to whom the cession is made, alone can make "laws for it now."

DOUGLAS AGAINST SQUATTER SOVEREIGNTY.

Well, my friends, have you ever seen the honey bee, after having sipped honey from the rose, the carnation or the japonica, light down upon the Jamestown weed and finish its meal? I have seen it when a boy, and I have wondered why it did not commence on that and top off with the best. I am about to do something of that kind. I am coming from the sayings of a great man to the sayings of a man not quite so great. Here is a speech delivered June 2, "Sir," said he, "I do not hold the doctrine that to exclude "any species of property by law from any Territory, "is a violation of any right of property. Do you not "exclude banks from most of the Territories?" Yes, and I was on the Committee of Territories once, when Wisconsin sent a law with five or six banks. I voted for them, but the Democratic brethren associated with me, nullified the law. It went back to the Territory, and squatter sovereignty that it was, it ceased to be a law. "Do you not," continues he, "exclude whisky "from being introduced into large portions of the Ter"ritories?" Do you take up Washington Territory, and if there is a tribe of Indians in it, and any man sells them whisky, they go back to a law of 1802, and punish the man for doing it. The law was made by Congress, yet they say that Congress has no right to make the laws for the government of anybody in the Territories. But the Indian Intercourse act instituted by Jefferson himself, is in force in every Territory, and "Squatter Sovereignty" vails her diadem, and then it is in humble compliance for the United States to make the laws.

If the Territories have the right to make laws for the Territories, why don't you say to the people, sell what you please. Squatter Sovereignty is but a youth yet, and he had not time to think about that. Possibly he will think over these things some day, gather himself up and slink away.

The speech continues—"Gambling tables, which are "property, recognized as such in many of the States, "are they tolerated in your organic laws? And has any "one found that the exclusion of ardent spirits was a vio"lation of any Constitutional privilege or right?" Yet you will perceive that the gentleman is so certain of his conclusions that he puts them in the interrogatory form. "And yet it is the case in a large portion of the terri"tory of the United States, but there is no outcry "about it." "The law also prohibits certain other "descriptions of business from being carried on in the "Territories. I am not, therefore, prepared to say that "under the Constitution we have not power to pass "laws excluding Slavery from a Territory."

My brother Democrat, who do you suppose said that? I said something like it, but I did not say that. That was the speech of Stephen A. Douglas, in 1850. You can read it in your books in the debate.

A VOICE—"Just before he sprung the trap?"

Mr. CORWIN—I don't say that—but I believe it though.

Well, now I have given you, my fellow-citizens, the law as it has been decided by every department of the government for sixty years, upon the doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty—the decision against it by the very man who is now appealed to as the great leader of that doctrine. He has changed his opinion—he wants to get back to the "go-devil." That is what he is after. Douglas is a respectable gentleman, and a man of considerable talent—so am I, [laughter,] but I differ with him on that point, and I have the advantage of standing by the side of Washington, who put his hand upon my head and said: "My son, you are right;" and laid his hand upon Stephen's head and said: "You must go "to school." That is what Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson and Calhoun would say too. While I am in company like that, I am content to remain.

I say this, if it be the constitutional rule that the Constitution of the country carries the relation of master and slaves into the Territories, it is the bounden duty of Congress to make laws to protect that right. I cannot comprehend that a man has any conception of the harmony that was to reign in our country that don't believe that. If they can establish that proposition that the sacred panoply of the Constitution carries Slavery into Kansas and Nebraska, what Squatter Sovereignty dare to raise its parricidal hand to destroy its validity? Has it provided that a man shall have a right to go wherever a State Constitution does not prohibit it, and sit down and exercise dominion over the black man who was his slave in Virginia, upon the theory that a local legislature shall overrule the Constitution and destroy it? What sort of a Kilkenny cat fight is that, swallowing each other! It is revolting to a man's common sense. I can't treat it with patience. I cannot argue with a man that will say you have armed the Government to commit suicide—it must kill itself, it shall kill itself. Oh! I have nothing to say upon that. I won't condescend to mention it again to a sensible man.

If the Constitution carries it there, it is safe there. No State or Territorial Legislature can touch it; but if the Constitution is as they say, it carries it there only to remain as a visitor—goes there to rest itself a little while, but as soon as the Territory seeks to be a State, take up your niggers and walk Spanish, for they can drive you out. [Laughter.] I don't like to say much about that, because I like the men on the other side of the river, who call themselves the Opposition to this Administration doctrine.

PATERNAL PROCLAMATION.

I wish to proclaim here, and I wish to do it by authority—that is, by my own self-existent power, the authority as the father of the Republican party (turning to Mr. Dennison)—I have nothing to say against you, Sir; but you are a young gentleman, and you should allow us old gentlemen to have some liberties. I maintained that very doctrine contended for by the Republicans, in 1847. I wanted to put the Wilmot Proviso upon the act organizing the Territory of California. That was in executive session, and a secret, but I tell you it now in confidence. I maintained the doctrine that the Congress has omnipotent power in the Territories. I don't say that they ought to exercise it everywhere. It was a condition with Spain that California should be admitted with all her rights of property. Men must, no doubt, vote for it, that we may keep our faith with foreign nations. That ought to be the first and last duty of every American citizen. That is my doctrine. I know I am right, and I know there are a great many fellows that have not got as much sense as I have that think I am wrong. [Laughter.] I fall back on old Adams whenever you come to that. If you don't believe me, take him. He was of my opinion on that subject. But I hold that Congress ought to exercise that power in all the territory of the United States where white men can work as well as the negro. For this reason, that the negro is not educated at the public expense to make him a voter, and we want all the room left for the poor white men, from the Slave States and from the Free States, to go there and work; and we do think more of the white man that is to vote than of your negroes. I want to educate the white man because he is my partner, his vote