THE REPUBLICAN PARTY: Its Origin, Necessity & Permanence.

A SPEECH BY CHARLES SUMNER,

Before the Young Men's Republican Union of New-York, at the Cooper Institute, July 11, 1860.

Long before 8 o'clock last evening, an immense gathering of both sexes thronged the great hall of the Cooper Institute. Despite the entrance-fee, very properly charged to cover the expenses of the occasion, such an assemblage was present as has rarely been equaled, for numbers, intelligence, and enthusiasm at a political meeting in the City of New-York. The platform was filled; the seats were filled; the lobbies were packed to overflowing.

When Mr. Sumner made his entrance, the applause was deafening. All present rose to their feet, giving cheer after cheer; ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and seemed as excited as the rest.

Mr. CHARLES T. ROGERS, President of the Young Men's Republican Union, nominated the Hon. ABIJAH MANN as the President of the evening, presenting him with a gavel made of wood from the "old log-house" where Mr. Lincoln resided in earlier days. Mr. Mann, assuming the chair, at once presented the orator of the evening to the audience.

Mr. SUMNER said:

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF NEW-YORK: Of all men in our history, there are two whose influence at this moment is most peculiar. Though dead, they yet live, speak and act in the conflict of principles which divides the country—standing face to face like two well-matched champions. When I add that one was from South Carolina and the other from Massachusetts, you will see at once that I mean John C. Calhoun, and John Quincy Adams.

Statesmen both of long career, of marked ability, and of unblemished integrity—acting together at first—sitting in the same Cabinet—which they quitted—one to become Vice-President, and the other President, then for the remainder of their days battling in Congress and dying there—each was a leader in life, but each has become in death a grander leader still.

Mr. Calhoun possessed an intellect of much originality and boldness, and, though wanting in the culture of a scholar, made himself felt in council and in debate. To native powers unlike, but not inferior, Mr. Adams added the well-ripened fruits of long experience in foreign lands, and of studies more various and complete than those of any public man in our history, beside an indomitable will, and that spirit of freedom which inspired his father when in the Continental Congress he so eloquently maintained the Declaration of Independence, making himself its "colossus" on that floor.

Sitting together in the Cabinet of Mr. Monroe, they concurred in sanctioning the Prohibition of Slavery in the Missouri Territory as constitutional, and so advised the President. But here the divergence probably began—though for a long time it was not made manifest. The Diary of Mr. Adams shows that at that early day, when Slavery had been little discussed, he saw its enormity with instinctive quickness, and described it with corresponding force. The record is less full with regard to Mr. Calhoun; but when in later life they appeared one in the Senate, and the other in the House of Representatives, each openly assumed the position by which he will be known in history—one as the leader in all the pretensions of Slavery and of slave-masters, and the other as the champion of Freedom.

Mr. Calhoun regarded Slavery as a permanent institution; Mr. Adams regarded it as transitory. Mr. Calhoun vaunted it as a form of civilization; Mr. Adams scorned it as an unquestionable barbarism. Mr. Calhoun did not hesitate to call it the most stable basis for free government; Mr. Adams vehemently denounced it as a curse, full of weakness and mockery and doubly offensive in a boastful Republic. Mr. Calhoun, not content with thus exalting Slavery, proceeded to denounce the early opinions of Washington and Jefferson as "folly and delusion," to assail the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence as "absurd," and then to proclaim that human beings are property under the Constitution, and as such, may be transported into the Territories and there held in Slavery; while Mr. Adams added to the glory of his long and diversified career, by persistent efforts, which are better for his fame than having been President—upholding the great rights of petition and of speech; vindicating the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence; exposing the hateful character of Slavery; insisting upon its prohibition in the Territories; denying the asserted property in man; and especially and often exhibiting the unjust power in the National Government, usurped by what he called "the little cluster" of slave-masters, whose yoke was to him intolerable.

Such, most briefly told, were the antagonist opinions of these two chiefs. Never was great conflict destined to involve a great country more distinctly foreshadowed. All that the Republican party now opposes may be found in John C. Calhoun. All that the Republican party now maintains may be found in John Quincy Adams. Choose ye, fellow-citizens, between the two. The rule of "Principles, and not men" is hardly applicable to a man whose life now bears the sacred seal of death, and whose name is the synonim of principle; yet I do not hesitate to say that our cause is best appreciated in its precise objects and aims. Proud as we may be to tread where John Quincy Adams leads the way, there is a guide of more commanding authority found in the eternal laws of Right, and the concurring mandates of the Constitution itself, when properly interpreted, which teaches the duties of a good citizen. Such is the guide of the Republican party, which, I say fearlessly, where most known, will be most trusted, and which, when understood in its origin, will be seen to be no accidental or fugitive organization, merely for an election, but an irresistible necessity, which in the nature of things, must be as permanent as the pretensions, moral and political, which it seeks to constrain and counteract.

Let us dwell, then, on the Republican party, its origin, its necessity, and its permanence.

All must admit that if no Republican party existed now—even if that halcyon day so often promised by cajoling politicians had come, when the Slavery question was settled—still there would be a political necessity for a great party of Opposition to act as a check on the Administration. A kindred necessity was once expressed by an eminent British statesman, who gave as a toast, "A strong Administration and a strong Opposition." Parties are unknown in despotic countries. They belong to the machinery of free governments. Through parties, public opinion is concentrated and directed. Through parties principles are maintained above men. And through parties, men in power are held to a just responsibility. But if ever there was occasion for such a party, it is now, when the corruptions of the Administration have been dragged to light by recent Committees of Congress. On this ground alone, good men might be summoned to rescue the Government of our country.

It is now an attested fact that Mr. Buchanan became President through corruption. Money, familiarly known as a "corruption fund," first distilled in small drippings from clerks and petty officials, was swollen by the larger contributions of merchants and contractors, and with this accumulation votes were purchased in Philadelphia, enough to turn the election in that great metropolis, and in the chain of cause and effect, to assure the triumph of the Democratic candidate. I speak now only what has been proved. Fraudulent naturalization papers in blank, by which this was perpetrated, have been produced before a Committee of Congress. It was natural that an Administration thus corrupt in origin, should continue to exercise power through the same corruption by which power was gained; but nothing else than that insensibility to acts of shame, which is bred by familiarity, can explain how all this should be done with such absolute indecency of exposure—wearing scarcely so much as a fig-leaf.

A letter from a local politician, addressed to the President himself, urging without disguise the giving of a large contract for machinery to a particular house in Philadelphia, employing 450 mechanics, with a view to the approaching election, was inclosed to the Secretary of the Navy, with this indorsement, in a well-known hand-writing: "Sept. 15, 1858. The inclosed letter from Col. Patterson of Philadelphia is submitted to the attention of the Secretary of the Navy. J. B." Thus did the President of the United States, in formal written words, now of record in the history of the country, recommend the employment of the public money, set apart for the public service, to influence an election. Here was corruption as positive as when his supporters purchased votes in the streets. From one, learn all; and from such a characteristic instance, learn the character of the Administration. But there are other well-known instances; and the testimony before the Congressional Committees discloses the President on Sundays, in secret conclave with one of his corrupt agents, piously occupied in discussing the chances of an election, and how its expenses were to be met, while, at the same time, like another Joseph Surface, he was uttering in public fine sentiments of political morality, and lamenting the prevalence of the very indecencies in which he was engaged.

It was natural that a President, who with professions of purity on the lips, made himself the pander of such vulgar corruption, should stick at nothing needed to carry his purposes. I shall not dwell on the Lecompton Constitution; but it belongs to this chapter. You all know its wickedness. Concocted originally at Washington, with the single purpose of fastening Slavery upon the people of Kansas, it was by execrable contrivance so arranged as to prevent the people, when about to become a State, from voting on that question. Next, sanctioned by a convention of usurpers, who in no respect represented the people of Kansas; then fraudulently submitted to the people for their votes, it was frandulently adopted by stuffing ballot-boxes on a scale never before known—thus at the Delaware Crossing, where there were but forty-three legal voters, 400 were returned; at Oxford, where there were but forty-two legal voters, 1,000 were returned; and at Shawnee, where there were but forty legal voters, 1,200 were returned. And yet this Constitution, disowned by the very Governor who had gone to Kansas as the agent of the President, rotten with corruption, gaping with fraud, and steaming with iniquity, was at once recognized by the President, urged upon Congress in his Annual Message, and pressed for adoption by all the appliances of unprincipled power. If the words of Jugurtha, turning his back upon Rome, cannot be repeated, that *all had a price*, it was not from any forbearance in the President. A single editor was offered the printing of the Post-Office blanks, worth at least $20,000, upon the condition that he should, by an editorial no longer than a man's hand, promise subserviency to the Administration. Bribes of office were added to bribes of money. As the votes of electors had already been purchased to make Mr. Buchanan President, the votes of Representatives were now solicited to carry out his schemes of corruption, and the halls of Congress were changed into a political market-house, where men were bought by the head. Is not all this enough to arouse the indignation of the people?

It is true that the President, whose power began in corruption, and who is the responsible author of the corruption by which his Administration has been debased, is no longer a candidate for office. Already judgment has begun. His own political party has discarded him. The first avenging blow has been struck. Incorruptible history will do the rest. The tablets conspicuously erected in Genoa to expose the crimes of Doges, branding one as *Fur Magnus* and the other as *Maximus Latronum*, will not be needed here. The exposed corrupter, the tyrant enslaver, and the robber of human Freedom, cannot be forgotten. Unhappy President! After a long career of public service, not only tossed aside, but tossed over to perpetual memory as an example to be shunned. Better for him the oblivion of common life than the bad fame which he has won!

But, though not himself a candidate for office, his peculiar supporters, animated by his spirit, linked with him in all his misrule, are embodied as a party, and ask your votes. Simply to resist this combination, and to save the Republic from its degrading influence, would justify the formation of the Republican party; and I doubt not that there are many who will be content to unite with us on this ground alone, anxious to put the National Government once again in pure hands. To all such, welcome!

While this consummation necessarily enters into the present purposes of the Republican party, while we naturally begin by insisting upon purity in the Government, and make this one of our urgent demands, it is obvious that the quickening impulse of the party is to be found in other purposes, which cannot pass away in a single election. The Republican party seeks to overthrow the Slave Oligarchy in the National Government, and especially at this moment to stay its aggressions in the Territories, which through a corrupt interpretation of the Constitution, it threatens to barbarize with Slavery. But all who seek purity in the National Government must unite in this purpose; for only by the overthrow of this corrupt Oligarchy, which beginning in the denial of all human rights, necessarily shows itself in barbarism and corruption of all kinds, can a better order of things prevail. It is out of Slavery that all our griefs proceed; nor can the corruptions of the present Administration be fully comprehended without considering the nature of this Evil and its chronic influence over our Government, reaching everywhere by subtle agencies or more subtle far-reaching example, but still in itself the original and all-sufficient activity. As well attempt to explain the Gulf Stream without the Gulf of Mexico, or the origin of Evil without the human heart, as attempt to explain the present degraded character of our National Government without Slavery. As well attempt to enact the play of Othello without the Moor. And permit me to say that our warfare with these corruptions will be feeble unless we attack them in their origin.

The subject is so vast that I can undertake to expose it by glimpses only.

At the beginning of our history, Slavery was universally admitted to be an Evil. Nobody then so hardy as to vindicate it. In the Convention which framed the Constitution, it was branded as "a nefarious institution," or more mildly called simply "wrong," and these generous voices came from the South as well as from the North. Out of the Convention there was a similar accord. I shall not quote the words of Washington, Jefferson, or Franklin, or Jay, for they are familiar to all. But as they spoke others spoke, and I might occupy this whole evening simply in reciting this testimony. Nor were these declarations confined to men in public life. The Colleges all, by special action, arrayed themselves against Slavery, especially the University of William and Mary, in Virginia, which conferred upon Granville Sharpe, the acknowledged chief of British Abolitionists, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. The Literature of the land, such as it was, agreed with the Colleges. The Church, too, added its powerful voice; and here, amid the diversities of religious faith, we hail that unity of spirit which animated all. Quakers, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists seem almost to have vied with each other in this pious testimony.

The Constitution was adopted, but the word "slave" was not allowed to pollute its text; and this was in declared deference to the prevailing opinion, which regarded Slavery as temporary, destined soon to pass away. All looked forward to this glad day, which seemed to be almost at hand. In harmony with this expectation, Slavery was prohibited in all the existing territories of the Union, so that when Washington, as first President of the United States, at his inauguration here in New-York, took his first oath to support the Constitution, the flag of the Republic nowhere on the land within the jurisdiction of Congress covered a single slave. Little then did the Fathers dream that the Evil which they regarded with shame, and which they exerted themselves to prohibit, would elevate its obscene crest, as it now does, and flaunt its pretensions before the world. Little did they dream that the Constitution, from which they had carefully excluded the very *word*, would, in defiance of reason and of common sense, be held to protect the *thing*, so exceptionally that it could not be reached by Congressional prohibition, even within Congressional jurisdiction. Little did they dream that the text, which they left so pure and healthful, would, through corrupt interpretation, be swollen into such a hideous *Elephantiasis*.

Two circumstances, civilizing in themselves, have exercised an unexpected influence for Slavery; first, the abolition of the slave-trade, which by taking away the supply has increased the value of slaves; and secondly, the increased cultivation of cotton stimulated by the invention of new machinery. The last has been of especial influence. Indeed it is hardly too much to say, that out of this slender cotton fiber have been formed the manacles of the slave. Thus through sinister influences, and the wickedness of men, is good made the minister of wrong. Next after Christopher Columbus, who, by his sublime enterprise, opened the pathway to the New World, Eli Whitney, who discovered the cotton gin, has been indirectly and unconsciously a chief agent in the bondage of the African race on the North American continent; and surely a proper gratitude for the advantages which we enjoy in such large store from these two discoveries must prompt us to increased activity for the welfare of those who, alas! have been such losers where we have been such gainers.

This change of opinion, so disastrous in its results, was gradual. Though easily detected, in its successive stages, by the careful inquirer, it did not become manifest to the whole country till 1820, when it burst forth in the Missouri question. Then, for the first time, Slavery openly showed itself violent, insolent, belligerent. Freedom was checked, but saved something by a compromise—called, at the moment of its adoption, by Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, "a triumph of the South," where, in consideration of the admission of Missouri as a Slave State—thus securing an additional preponderance to the Slave Power—it was stipulated that Slavery should be prohibited in certain outlying territory, at the time trodden only by savages. Then came a lull, during which the change was still at work, until cotemporaneous with the abolition of Slavery in the British West Indies, the discussion was ignited anew. Meanwhile slaves had augmented in price, and slave-masters had become more decided in opinion. At first, in timid deference to the world, they ventured on no defense of Slavery in the abstract; but at last, bolder grown under the lead of Mr. Calhoun, they threw aside all reserve, openly assailed the opinions of the Fathers, audaciously denied the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, and by formal resolution asserted the new dogma of Slavery in the Territories. This was in 1847. A letter from Mr. Calhoun of that day, addressed to a member of the Alabama Legislature, shows that there was an element of policy in the exaggeration. His desire was "to force the Slavery issue" on the North, believing that delay was dangerous, as the slavemasters were relatively stronger, both morally and politically, than they would ever be again.

At last the end has come. Slavery is openly pronounced at one time "the black marble keystone of our National Arch;" at another time "the corner-stone of our Republican edifice;" then it is vaunted as "the highest type of civilization;" then as "a blessing to the master as well as the slave;" and then again "as ennobling to the master if not to the slave." It is the only first step which costs, and therefore the authors of these opinions, so shocking to the moral sense, do not hesitate at other opinions equally shocking to the reason which pretend to find impossible sanctions for Slavery in the Constitution. Listening to these extravagances, who would not exclaim with Ben Jonson in the play!—

> Grave father, he's possest; again I say,
> Possest; nay, if there be a possession
> And obsession, he has both.

And now, fellow-citizens, what is Slavery? This is no question merely of curiosity or philanthropy; for when the National Government, which you and I at the North help to constitute, is degraded to be its instrument, and all the National Territories are proclaimed open to its barbarism, and the Constitution itself is perverted to sanction its pretensions, the whole subject logically and necessarily enters into our discussion. It cannot be avoided; it cannot be blinked out of sight. Nay, you must pass upon it by your votes at the coming election. Futile is the plea that we at the North have nothing to do with Slavery. Granted that we have nothing to do with it in the States; we have much to do with all its irrational pretensions under the Constitution, and just so long as these irrational pretensions are urged, Slavery must be discussed. It must be laid bare in its enormity, precisely as though it were proposed to plant it here in New-York. Nor can such a wrong—foul in itself, and fouler still in its pretensions—be dealt with tamely. Tameness is surrender; and charity, too, may be misapplied. Forgiving those who trespass against us, I know not if we are called to forgive those who trespass against others; to forgive those who trespass against a race; to forgive those who trespass against the Republic; to forgive those who trespass against civilization; to forgive those who trespass against a whole race; to forgive those who trespass against the universal human family; finally to forgive those who trespass against God. Such trespasses now exist among us—possessing the organization of party—possessing the control of the National Government—constituting at this moment a colossal Power—and "what seems its head the likeness of a *President* has on." Surely if ever there was a moment when every faculty should be bent into the service, and all should be invigorated by an inspiring zeal falsely rejected by the heartless diplomatist, it is now, while the battle between Civilization and Barbarism is still undecided, and you are summoned to resist the last desperate shock. To this work I am not equal; but I do not shrink from the duties of my post. Alas! Human language is gentle, and the human voice is weak. Words only are mine, when I ought to command thunderbolts. Voice only is mine, when, like the ancient Athenian, I ought to carry the weapons of Zeus on the tongue.

What then, I repeat, is Slavery? The occasion forbids details; but enough must be presented to place this outrage in its true light—as something worse even than a constant state of war where the master is the constant aggressor. And here I put aside for the moment all the tales which reach us from the house of bondage; all the cumulative, crushing testimony, alike from slaves and from their masters; all the barbarous incidents which have helped to arouse a yet too feeble indignation; in short, all the glimpses which have come to us from this mighty Blue Beard's chamber. All these I put aside, not because they are of little moment in exhibiting the true character of Slavery, but because I desire to arraign Slavery on grounds above all controversy, impeachment or suspicion, even from slave masters themselves. Not on triumphant story, adorned by the genius of woman; not even on indisputable facts do I now accuse Slavery; but on its character as revealed in its own simple definition of itself. Out of its own mouth do I condemn it.

By the *law of Slavery*, man created in the image of God, fearfully and wonderfully made, with sensibilities of pleasure and pain, with sentiments of love, with aspirations for improvement, with a sense of property, and with a soul like ourselves, is divested of his human character, and declared to be a mere *chattel* "to all intents and purposes whatsoever." I do not stop to give at length all its odious words; you are doubtless familiar with them. But in this simple definition is contained the whole incalculable wrong of Slavery; for out of it, as from an inexhaustible fountain, are derived all the unrighteous prerogatives of the master. These are five in number; and I know not which is most revolting.

First, there is the pretension that *man can hold property in man*, forgetful that, by a law older than all human law, foremost stands the indefeasible right of every man to himself.

Secondly, the *absolute nullification of the relation of husband and wife*, so that all who are called slaves are delivered over to concubinage or prostitution, it may be with each other, or it may be with their masters; but with whomsoever it may be, it is the same, for with slaves marriage is impossible, as they are always "coupled," never married.

Thirdly: The absolute nullification of the relation of parent and child; for the infant legally belongs, not to the mother who bore it, but to the master who bought it.

Fourthly: The absolute denial of instruction; for the master may always, at his own rude discretion, prevent his victim from learning to read, and thus shut upon him those gates of knowledge which open such views on earth and in Heaven. And

Fifthly: The absolute robbery of the labor of another and of all its fruits; forgetful that by the same original law under which every man has a title to himself he has also a title to the fruits of his own labor, amounting in itself to a sacred property, which no person, however called, whether despot or master, can righteously appropriate.

Such are the five essential elements of Slavery. Look at them, and you will confess that this institution stands forth as a hateful assemblage of unquestionably wrongs under the sanction of existing law. Take away any one of these, and just to that extent Slavery will cease to exist. Take away all, and the Slavery question will be settled. But this assemblage becomes more hateful still when its unmistakable *single motive* is detected, which is simply this—*to compel Labor without wages*. Incredible as it may seem, it cannot be denied that the right of a man to himself—the right of a husband to his wife—the right of a parent to his child—the right of a man to instruction—the right of a man to the fruits of his own labor—all these supreme rights, by the side of which other rights are petty, are trampled down, in order to organize that *five-headed* selfishness, practically maintained by the lash, which, look at it as you will, has for its single object COMPULSORY LABOR WITHOUT WAGES.

That Slavery thus constituted, can be good for the master, is one of the hallucinations of the system—something like the hallucination of the opium-eater. Fascinating, possibly, it may be for a time, but debasing and destructive it must be in the end. That slavemasters should be violent and tyrannical—that they should be regardless of all rights, especially where Slavery was in question—and that the higher virtues of character should fail in them—all this might be inferred, even in the absence of evidence, according to the irresistible laws of cause and effect. No man can do injustice with impunity. He may not suffer in worldly condition; but he must suffer in his own nature. And the very unconsciousness in which he lives aggravates the unhappy influence. Nor can familiarity with the scenes of Slavery fail to exert hardening influence.

Persons become accustomed to scenes of brutality, till they witness them with indifference. Hogarth, that master of human nature, has portrayed this tendency in his picture of a dissection at a Medical College, where the President maintains the dignity of insensibility over a corpse which he regards simply as the object of a lecture. And Horace Walpole, who admired the satire of this picture, finds in it an illustration of the truth, that "the legal habitude of viewing shocking scenes hardens the human mind, and renders it unfeeling." And this simple truth, in its most general application, illustrates the condition of the slave-master. How can he show sensibility for the common rights of fellow-citizens, who sacrifices daily the most sacred rights of others merely to secure *labor without wages*. With him a false standard is necessarily established, bringing with it a blunted moral sense, and clouded perceptions, so that when he does something intensely barbarous or mean, he does not blush to find it fame.

Here, again, I forbear all details. The reason of the intellect blending with the reason of the heart; the testimony of history fortified by the testimony of good men; an array of unerring figures linked with an array of unerring facts: all these I might employ. And I might proceed to show how this barbarous influence beginning on the plantation, diffuses itself throughout society, enters into official conduct, and even mounts into Congress, where for a long time it has exercised a vulgar domination. But I shall not open this chapter.

But there is one frightful circumstance, unhappily of frequent occurrence, which proclaims so clearly the character of the social system bred by Slavery that I shall be pardoned for adducing it. I refer to the roasting of slaves alive at the stake; one has been roasted only recently; not after a public trial, according to the forms of law, as at the fires of Smithfield, but by a lawless crowd, suddenly assembled, who in this way make themselves the ministers of a cruel vengeance. This Barbarism, which seems to have become a part of the customary law of Slavery may well cover us all with humiliation, when we reflect that it has already been renounced by the copper-colored savages of our continent; while, during the present century, more instances of it have occurred among our slave masters than we know of among our savages since that early day when Capt. Smith was saved from this fate by the tenderness of Pocahontas. Perhaps no other usage reveals with such fearful distinctness the deep-seated, pervading influence of Slavery, offensive to civilization, hostile to law itself, by virtue of which it pretends to live, insulting to humanity, shocking to decency, and utterly heedless of all rights, forms or observances, in the maintenance of its wicked power.

Let me not be unjust to slave-masters. Some there are, I know, of happy nature, uncorrupted by the possession of tyrannical power, who render the condition of their slaves endurable, and in private virtues emulate the graces of civilization; but the good in these cases comes from the masters, *notwithstanding* Slavery. And, besides, there are the great examples of the Fathers of the Republic, who, looking down upon Slavery and regarding it as an Evil, were saved from its contamination. To all these I render heart-felt homage. But their virtues cannot save from condemnation the essential wrong which I now expose.

Such, fellow-citizens, is Slavery as it appears in its law, and also in its influence on society. Bad as it is, if it modestly kept at home—if it did not stalk into the National jurisdiction, and enter into the National Government *within the reach of our votes*, I would not summon you on this occasion to unite against it; for whatever may be the promptings of sympathy and of Christian philanthropy, nothing is clearer than that our political duties depend simply upon our political responsibilities; and since we are not politically responsible for Slavery in Charleston, or in Constantinople, so in neither place have we any political duties in regard to it. Lament it wherever it exists we must, and surround its victims with our prayers, but our action while inspired by these sentiments must rest within the landmarks of the law and the Constitution.

And here the field is ample. Indeed, if Slavery existed nowhere within the national jurisdiction, as it clearly does, our duties would still be urgent, to grapple with that pernicious influence, which through an *Oligarchical Combination* of slave masters, unknown to the Constitution, never anticipated by its founders, and existing in defiance of their example, has entered into and possessed the National Government, like an Evil Spirit. This influence, which, wielding at will all the powers of the National Government—even those of the judiciary itself—has become formidable to Freedom everywhere, clutching violently at the Territories, and menacing the Free States themselves, as witness the case still undecided in the Court of the last resort of a citizen of Virginia to hold slaves in New-York on the way to Texas; this influence, now so vaunting, was for a long time unobserved, even while exercising a controlling power. At first timid and shy, from an undoubted consciousness of its guilt, it avoided discussion; but it was determined in its policy. The Southern Senator who boasted that for sixty years the Slave States had governed the country, knew well their constant inferiority to the Free States in population, wealth, manufactures, commerce, schools, churches, libraries, and all the activities of a true civilization; knew well that they had contributed nothing to the literature of the country, even in political economy and the science of Government, which they have so vehemently professed, except the now forgotten "forty bale theory;" knew well that by no principle of justice could his long predominance be explained; but he forgot to confess the secret agency. True it is that, in the game of office and legislation, the Slave States have always won. They have played with loaded dice—*backed with Slavery*. The trick of the Automaton Chess Player, for so long a time an incomprehensible marvel, has been repeated with similar success. Let the Free States make a move on the board, and the Slave States have said "check." Let them strive for Free-Trade, and the cry has been "check." Let them jump toward Protection, and again it is "check." Let them move toward Internal Improvements, and the cry is still "check." Whether forward or backward, to the right or left, wherever they move, the Free States have been pursued by an inexorable "check." But the secret is now discovered. Amid the well-arranged machinery, which seemed to give motion to the victorious chess-player, was concealed a *motive force* which has not been estimated—the Slave Power. It is the Slave Power which has been the perpetual victor, saying always "check to the Free States. And it is the Slave Power which, according to the boast of the Senator, has governed the country.

The actual number of slaveholders was for a long time unknown, and on this account was naturally exaggerated. It was often represented to be very great. On one occasion, a distinguished representative from Massachusetts, whose name will be ever cherished for his devotion to human rights—I mean the late Hon. Horace Mann—was rudely interrupted on the floor of Congress by a member from Alabama, who averred that the number of slaveholders was as many as 3,000,000. At that time there was no official document by which this extravagance could be corrected. But at last we have it. The late census, taken in 1850, shows that the whole number of this peculiar class—embracing men, women, and children, all told, who are so unfortunate as to hold slaves—was only 347,000; and of this number, the large part are small slaveholders, leaving only 21,000 persons as the owners of the great mass of slaves and the substantial representatives of this class. And yet this small Oligarchy, odious in origin, without any foundation in that justice which is the essential basis of every civilized association, stuck together only by confederacy in all the *five-headed* wrong of Slavery, and constituting in itself a *Magnum Latrocinium*, has, by the confession of one of its own leaders, for six years governed the Republic. To this end two things have concurred. First, its associated wealth, being the asserted value of its human flesh, constituting a flagitious capital of two thousand millions of dollars; and secondly, its peculiar representation in the House of Representatives, where, under the three-fifths rule of the Constitution, ninety members actually hold their seats by virtue in part of this flagitious capital. Thus are the slavemasters an enormous corporation, or joint stock company, by the side of which the United States Bank with its petty thirty millions of capital, and without any peculiar representation, is dwarfed into insignificance.

I feel humbled when I dwell on the amazing disproportion of offices usurped by this Oligarchy. From the beginning, all the great posts of the Republic—the Presidency, the Vice-Presidency, seats in the Cabinet, seats in the Supreme Court—seem to have been almost perpetually in their hands. At this moment, the Free States, with double the population of Slave States, have only four out of the nine Judges of the Supreme Court; and of these four, it must be said three are Northern men with Southern principles; and in the humbler places at the Departments, the same extraordinary disproportion prevails. Out of the whole number there employed, 421 are from the Free States, but mostly with Southern principles, and 806 from the Slave States. These instances are typical. There is nothing in the National Government which the Oligarchy does not appropriate. Down to this moment, it has held the keys of every office, from the President to the humblest Postmaster, compelling all to do its bidding. It organizes Cabinets. It organizes Courts. It directs the Army and Navy. It manages every department of public business. It presides over the census. It controls the Smithsonian Institution, founded by the generous charity of a foreigner, to promote the interests of mankind. And it subsidizes the national press, alike in the national capital and in the remotest villages of the North.

In maintaining its power, the Slave Oligarchy has applied a test for office very different from that of Jefferson: "Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the Constitution?" These things are all forgotten now in the single question, which signalizes the great change which has taken place, "Is he faithful to Slavery?" With arrogant ostracism, it excludes from every national office all who cannot respond to this test. So complete and irrational has this tyranny become, that at this moment while I now speak, could Washington, or Jefferson, or Franklin, or John Jay, once more descend from their spheres above, to mingle in our affairs, and bless us with their wisdom, not one of them, with his recorded, *unretracted* opinions on Slavery could receive a nomination for the Presidency from either branch of the divided Democratic party, or from that other political combination, known as the Union party; nor, stranger still, could either of these sainted patriots, whose names alone open a perpetual fountain of gratitude in all your hearts, be confirmed by the Senate of the United States for any political function whatever, not even for the local office of Postmaster. What I now say amid your natural astonishment, I have often said before in addressing the people, and I have more than once uttered from my seat in the Senate, and no man there has made answer, for no man who has sat in its secret sessions, and there learned the test which is practically applied could make answer; and I ask you to accept this statement as my testimony derived from the experience which has been my lot. Yes, fellow-citizens, had this test prevailed in the earlier days, Washington—first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen, could not have been created generalissimo of the American forces; Jefferson could not have taken his place on the Committee to draft the Declaration of Independence; and Franklin could not have gone forth to France, with the commission of the infant Republic, to secure the invaluable alliance of that ancient kingdom; nor could John Jay, as first Chief Justice, have lent to our infant judiciary the grace of his name and character.

Standing on the bent necks of an enslaved race—with four millions of human beings as the black marble Caryatides to support its power, the Slave Oligarchy erects itself into a lordly Caste which brooks no opposition. But when I speak of Caste I mean nothing truly polite; and when I speak of Oligarchy I mean nothing truly aristocratic. As despotism is simply an abuse of monarchy, so an Oligarchy is simply an abuse of aristocracy, unless it be that most vulgar of all, the "aristocracy of the skin." Derived from Slavery, and having the interests of Slavery always in view, our oligarchy must naturally take its character from this *five-headed* wrong.

> "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill."

All that is bad in Slavery—its audacity, its immorality, its cruelty, its robbery, its meanness, its ignorance, its barbarous disregard of human rights, and its barbarous disregard of human obligation, must all be reproduced in its representative. If the Oligarchy hesitates at nothing to serve its selfish ends, it simply acts in harmony with Slavery, from which it draws its life-blood. If in grasp of power it is like the hunchback Richard; if in falsehood it copies Iago, and if in character it is as brutal as the untaught Caliban,

> "Which any print of goodness will not take,
> Being capable of all ill";

Aye, if in all these respects it surpasses its prototypes, be not astonished, fellow-citizens, for it acts simply according to the original law and the inborn necessities of its being.

The soul sickens in contemplating the acts of dishonest tyranny which have been perpetrated by this domineering power. I cannot give their history now. But looking at the old Missouri Compromise, founded on the admission of Missouri as a Slave State, and in consideration therof the Prohibition of Slavery in other outlying Territory, and seeing how—after an acquiescence of thirty-two years, and the irreclaimable possession by Slavery of its especial share in the provisions of this Compromise—in violation of every obligation of honor, compact and good neighborhood, and in contemptuous disregard of the out-gushing sentiments of an aroused North—this time-honored Prohibition was overturned, and the vast region now known as Kansas and Nebraska, was opened to Slavery; looking next at the juggling bill by which this was accomplished, declaring that its object was to leave the people "perfectly free to form their domestic institutions in their own way"—and seeing, how, in spite of these express words, the courageous settlers there were left a prey to invading hordes from Missouri, who entering the Territory organized a Usurpation, which by positive law proceeded to fasten Slavery upon that beautiful soil, and to surround it with a code of death; looking at the Lecompton Constitution, that master-piece of wicked contrivance, by which this same people, in organizing for a State, were fraudulently prevented from passing upon the question of Slavery—and seeing how the infamous counterfeit, though repudiated by the people, was openly adopted by the President, and by him corruptly urged upon Congress, with all the power of his Administration; looking at these things, and others which fill the mind, I feel how vain it is to expect truce or compromise with the Slave Oligarchy. Public in faith, no compact can bind it, while all interpretations of the Constitution, friendly to Freedom, though sanctioned by Court and Congress in continuous precedents, are unceremoniously rejected. Faust, in the incomparable poem of Goethe, on being told that in Hell itself the laws prevail, says:

> Now that I like; so then, one may, in fact,
> Conclude a binding compact with you, gentry!

To which Mephistophil s replies:

> Whatever promise in our books finds entry,
> We strictly carry into act.

But no compact or promise binds the gentry of Slavery—although in their books it may find entry!

Of course, fellow-citizens, you are now ready to see that the corruptions by which the present Administration has been degraded are the natural offspring of the immorality of Slavery. They have all occurred in sustaining the policy of the Oligarchy, and in the case of the Lecompton Constitution, in a direct effort to fasten Slavery upon a distant territory, and they are all marked by the effrontery of Slavery. Smollett attributes the peculiar profligacy of England at a certain period to the demoralization of the South Sea Bubble; but such an influence cannot be comparable in this respect to Slavery, which indeed if it were not a crime, might well be called a Bubble. But a Government which vindicates the sale of human beings need not hesitate to purchase the vote of an elector at the polls, or of a member of Congress. The two transactions belong to the same family, though unquestionably the last is the least reprehensible.

Fellow citizens, would you arrest these corruptions, and the disastrous influence from which they spring, involving nothing less than civilization on this continent, the Republican party tells you how, and in telling you how, it vindicates at once its origin and its necessity. The work must be done, and there is no other organization by which it can be done. A party with such an origin and such a necessity cannot be for a day or for this election only. It cannot be less permanent than the hostile influence which it is formed to counteract. Therefore, just so long as the present false theories of Slavery prevail, whether concerning its character, morally, economically and socially, or concerning its prerogatives under the Constitution, just so long as the Slave Oligarchy, which is the sleepless and unhesitating agent of Slavery in all its pretensions continues to exist as a political power, the Republican party must endure. If bad men conspire for Slavery, good men must combine for Freedom; nor can the Holy War be ended until the barbarism now dominant in the Republic is overthrown, and the Pagan power is driven from our Jerusalem. And when this triumph is won, securing the immediate object of our organization, the Republican party will not die, but, purified by its long contest with Slavery, and filled with higher life, it will be fitted to yet other efforts for the good of man.

At present the work is plain before us. It is simply to elect our candidates: Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, whose ability so conspicuously shown in his own State attracted at once the admiration of the whole country; whose character no breath has touched, and whose heart is large enough to embrace the broad Republic and all its people—him you will elect President; and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine, whose clear head, firm principles, and ample experience none who sit with him in the Senate Chamber can contest—him you will elect Vice-President. Electing these, we shall put the National Government—at least in its Executive department—openly and actively on the side of Freedom; and this alone will be of incalculable influence—not only in itself, but as the harbinger of the future.

First and foremost, we shall save the Territories from the five-headed barbarism of Slavery, keeping them in their normal condition, as they came from the hand of God, free, with Freedom written on the soil and engraved on the rock, while the winds will whisper it in the trees, the rivers will murmur it in their flow, and all nature echo it in joy unspeakable.

Next we shall save the country from the crying infamy of the slave-trade, whose opening anew, as now menaced, is, indeed, but a logical consequence of the new theories of Slavery. If Slavery be the "blessing" it is vaunted, then must the slave-trade be beneficent, and they who ply it with the fiercest activity must take their places among the missionaries and saints of humanity.

Next we shall save the Constitution, at least within the sphere of Executive influence, from outrage and perversion; so that the President will no longer lend himself to that wildest pretension of the Slave Oligarchy, as Mr. Buchanan has done, by declaring that Slavery is carried under the Constitution into all Territories, and that it now exists in Kansas as firmly as in South Carolina. As out of nothing can come nothing, so out of the nothing in the Constitution on this subject can be derived no support for this inordinate pretension, which may be best dismissed in that classical similitude by which the ancient Romans rebuked groundless folly, when they called it *ass's wool*, which is something that does not exist—and plainly said to its author, *asini lanam quaeris? You gather ass's wool?*

Next we shall help to save the Declaration of Independence, now dishonored and disowned in its essential life-giving truth—the *Equality of Man*. This transcendent principle, which appears twice at the Creation—first, when God said, "Let us make man in our own image," and, secondly, in the unity of the race, then divinely established; which appears again in the Gospel when it was said, "God that made the world and all things therein, hath made of one blood all nations of men;" which appears again in the primal reason of the world, anterior to all institutions and laws, belongs to those self-evident truths, some times called axioms, which no man can question without exposing to question his own intelligence or honesty. As well deny arithmetically that two and two make four, or deny geometrically that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, as deny the axiomatic, self-evident, beaming truth, that all men are equal. As of the sun in the heavens—blind is he who cannot perceive it. Of course, this principle, uttered in a declaration of rights, is applicable simply to rights; and it is a childish sophism to allege against it the obvious inequalities of form, character and faculties. As an axiom, it admits no exceptions; for it is the essence of an axiom, whether in geometry or morals, to be universal. As an abstract truth, it is also without exception, according to the essence of such truth. And finally as a self-evident truth, so announced in the Declaration, it is without exceptions, for only such