THE NEW YORK HERALD.

WHOLE NO. 6388. SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 19, 1854. PRICE TWO CENTS.

ANOTHER NEBRASKA MEETING.

Mr. Douglas' Bill Again Considered at the Tabernacle.

LETTER FROM N. BOWDITCH BLUNT.

Speeches of John P. Hale, Joseph Blunt, and Others.

&c., &c., &c.

At the Tabernacle, Broadway, last evening, a meeting was held in accordance with the following call:—

THE PEOPLE'S MEETING TO PROTEST AGAINST SLAVERY IN NEBRASKA.

The citizens of New York who are opposed to the violation of the Missouri compromise and the extension of slave territory, are invited to meet at the Tabernacle on Saturday evening, the 18th inst, to utter their stern protest against the threatened breach of faith, and their determined hostility to any encroachment by the slave power on the rights of free labor in the territory secured by that compact.

NAMES SIGNED TO THE ORIGINAL CALL.

Robert Smith	Shoemaker.
Thomas Crane	Grain.
John M. Dodd	Builder.
Wm. R Stewart	Builder.
Thomas Charlock	Plumber.
Isaac Fryer	Lime dealer.
James B. Ward	Mechanist.
James Harriot	Builder.
James Robinson	Contractor.
Alexander Masterton	Stonecutter.
Nathan Resh	Lime dealer.
John Taylor	Granite
James Wotherspoon	Plaster manufacturer.
John A. Harriot	Builder.
Jacob W. Geoghwis	House mover.
T. M. James	Granite.
John T. Conover	Builder.
George W. Ford	Builder.
Martin E. Thompson	Architect.
Samuel A. Warner	Architect.
John Bliomell	Iron worker.
Isaac Lewis	Builder.
Robert Taylor	Plasterer.
Freeman Bloodgood	Builder.
John T. Seal	Builder.
Jacob C. Bogert	Builder.
George F. Codington	Builder.
Thomas Chalmers	Builder.
Asa W. Fry	Builder.
A. A. Denman	Merchant.
J E Hosgland	Lime dealer.
B. F. Smith	Stone dealer.
Wm. Laimbur, Jr	Builder
John Foster	Contractor.

At half-past seven o'clock fifteen hundred persons had assembled in the Tabernacle, and soon afterwards the meeting was called to order by Mr. McCLAY, who nominated JOSEPH P SIMPSON to preside over the meeting, which nomination was ratified by the meeting. Mr. McClay then nominated the following named Vice Presidents and Secretaries, and the meeting accepted the list:—

PRESIDENT:

JOSEPH P. SIMPSON.

VICE PRESIDENTS:

Robert Smith,	Cyrus Curtis,
Horatio Allen,	H M. Schieffelin,
J. I. Coddington,	Robert Taylor,
A. A. Denman,	T. B Stillman,
Wm. H Webb,	Wm. Maxsies,
Benj. F Camp,	James Harper,
James Harriot,	Thomas McElrath,
James Wotherspoon,	George Bruce,
John B Cornell,	John Anderson,
Robert M. Hoe,	Jacob Aims,
Thomas Charlock,	John H Cornell,
Edmund Hurry,	Thomas Carnley,
Joseph Tucker,	James Stewart,
John S. Rowell,	John Delamater.
Samuel A. Warner,	Thomas Addis Emmet.
Thomas Keech,	

SECRETARIES:

Gustavus A. Conover,	Thomas Chalmers,
Peter Van Antwerp,	Rensselaer N. Havens.
Howard Potter,	

The CHAIRMAN came forward and said:—

Fellow citizens—I feel highly sensible of the honor you have conferred upon me in calling upon me to preside over this meeting. It is called as a meeting of the mechanics of New York, a body of men with whom I have been connected for the last half century. But it is not only a meeting of mechanics, but of American freemen, (applause,) and to discuss a subject of the highest importance to us all. It is simply whether the country is to be given up to slavery, or whether freedom shall triumph. Thirty four years ago I attended a meeting of citizens, held in the Assembly Rooms of the City Hotel, where were met the best men in the city; and among them all there was but one voice and that was for freedom. (Cheers.) I trust that that sentiment will be reechoed here. (Applause.) The question before us is one of great moment to mechanics. In my opinion the slave power has always been pulling down mechanics. I have always been jealous of the slave power, though never what is called an abolitionist. I have always been an anti-slavery man and an anti slavery boy. (Applause.) My parents taught me. I do not intend to detain the audience, but I must call the attention of the audience to one fact. The reputed author of the bill was once a mechanic. I have watched his career with interest as I do that of all mechanics who study to qualify themselves for the highest positions in the land. Sometimes I approved of his course, and sometimes I did not. I am now compelled to say that since he has sold himself to the slave power (applause) I withdraw that sympathy from him. It remains to be seen whether, on the sober second thought, he will redeem the false step he has taken, or whether we shall mourn him as one lost forever.

Mr. WHITEHEAD then read the following letter from N. Bowditch Blunt, Esq., prosecuting officer of the city and county of New York:—

N. B. BLUNT'S LETTER.

NEW YORK, Feb. 18, 1854.

GENTLEMEN—I received and at the time intended personally to respond to your request, to address my fellow citizens this evening, upon the threatened violation of the Missouri compromise; but insuperable engagement in a cause yet undinished, leaves me no alternative but to present briefly my views in writing.

For a period of several years, I have felt constrained from a regard to my official position, entirely to abstain from any direct or public interference in political matters, and, if I deemed the present a partisan meeting, I certainly should not now be found deviating from that rule. Considering, however, the question now pending in Congress, and which has led to your assemblage, as far above all party considerations, regarding it as one of vital importance to the integrity of the Union, and more especially as involving not only a breach of plighted faith, but the welfare of our common country, I have not felt myself at liberty to withhold a public expression of my opinion.

Most of the actors in the eventful drama which led to the enactment of the so called "Missouri compromise," have passed from the scene of their labors and their triumphs, "and the places which knew them once will know them no more forever." He whose name has been identified with that great measure, whose eloquent voice was so often raised to soothe the excited passions of heated partizans, whose last expiring energies were devoted to the hopeful effort to extinguish forever the fire of social and national discord which for a time threatened with destruction our political edifice, has been scarcely consigned to the tomb ere the torch of anarchy has been again lighted and the worst passions of civil dissension again aroused. Deeply to be regretted as is the occasion of your assembling, our duty requires us to meet the emergency with calmness, but with firmness. For myself, I have been taught to revere the constitution of my country, to hold to its principles; and however much I may regret the existence of any cause calculated to affect the feelings of any portion of our citizens, I have always felt it my duty fairly and honestly to maintain its every provision. That constitution was itself a compromise. The successful result of our revolutionary struggle had left for our fathers a still more difficult task to accomplish—the creation of a form of government binding alike themselves and their posterity. It was no easy task to bring together under one political system the stern descendants of the Puritan the persecuted Huguenot, the placid Quaker, the zealous disciple of Romish supremacy, and the fiery Cavalier of the South.

But the task was accomplished. Its results are before the world in the present proud condition of the American Republic as a great and stupendous monument of civil and religious liberty. One of the principal acts preceding the adoption of the constitution was the settlement of the conflicting claims of the States to the unsettled lands alleged to be within the borders of different States, by cessions on the part of a portion of the states; and the ordinance of 1787 for the grant of the territory north of the Ohio, formed part of the condition of those cessions.

It is the proud privilege of our own Empire State that she was the first to place her contribution upon this altar of the public weal.

As States after State was admitted from this great North western domain, it became obvious to the statesman of that day that possession of the free navigation of the Mississippi, and of its mouth, was indispensable to the development of the immense resources of the mighty West and negotiations followed, resulting in the purchase of the French domain of Louisiana. It is well known at this day that the constitutionality of that purchase was questioned by Jefferson, and that his final acquiescence was the result of the almost inevitable necessity of the purchase. Out of the acquisition of Louisiana, three States have already been formed, the first being Louisiana.

Upon the question of the admission of Missouri, a discussion arose which shook the Union to its centre. It terminated in the adoption of that enactment which declared:—"That in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of the 36 deg. 30 min. north latitude, not included within the limits of the State contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crime whereof the parties shall have heendulv convicted, shall be and is hereby forever prohibited."

For a period of thirty-four years that measure has remained undisturbed amid all the conflicts of party, and under its provisions two States have been admitted—Missouri and Arkansas—with a recognition of the right of involuntary servitude within their borders. It has been left for the present day and generation to proclaim this measure unconstitutional, and to stultify, or worse, to charge with intentional violation of the spirit of the constitution the pure and gifted men of that day whose names are identified with the proudest annals of our history as a republic. I say not the man who, from any motive of personal or political aggrandisement, has thought proper to disturb the peaceful character of this great measure of public policy, and thereby to foment the angry passions so easily engendered upon the exciting topic therein embraced.

I believe I may, without being justly chargeable with egotism, assert that I have never been accused of any faltering in maintaining the just and constitutional rights of every portion of the confederacy. The compromise measures of 1850 received my sincere support; but if I had supposed that, by any casuistry or refinement of sophistry, those measures could be construed into a repeal of or interference with the Missouri compromise, most certainly they never would have received my sanction; and I hazard nothing in saying, from my knowledge of Mr. Clay and his views at the time, that the idea never for one moment entered his mind, and that that high minded and magnanimous statesman never for one moment would have lent his sanction or encouragement to any such act or implication. No man living, I think, will venture to assert that the great statesman of Kentucky ever was guilty of duplicity or intentional concealment of his views upon questions of public moment, and if such venture should be hazarded, it is not too much to predict that the bold assertor would find but few believers. I had supposed—certainly I had hoped—that the asperities of party spirit, and all times of personal animosity, which beset him especially in the latter part of his political career, had been buried in his grave; and I have yet to learn that any man will undertake to dispute his claims to the gratitude of his countrymen, or that the tears shed over his ashes by all classes of his fellow citizens were other than tears of unalloyed grief. In the name of Henry Clay, I repudiate and disavow this miserable subterfuge, this wanton desecration of his honor and fame. I trust never to see the day when the fraternal bonds of our confederacy shall be broken when this great republic shall be robbed of a single line or member; but if time shall ever come, (wish may God in his Providence avert) upon the heads of those who, disregarding the honorable pledges of their fathers and their brethren, have so unnecessarily opened afresh the scarce healed wound, let the responsibility and the dishonor rest. For one, I spurn the associations and reject the act.

With great respect, your fellow citizen,

N. BOWDITCH BLUNT.

To Robert Smith, Thomas Crane, Eqrs., and others, Committee.

The CHAIR—Fellow citizens, I will now introduce to you Joseph Blunt, Esq., who will offer some resolutions for your consideration.

Mr. BLUNT said:—

I am happy to see this representation of the free labor of the North. I am happy to address a meeting of men who come here to discuss this question calmly and deliberately. Sixty-five years ago in this city were assembled the representatives of the thirteen States, anxiously awaiting the time for the organization of the government. Only a few years had elapsed since they had severed themselves from the mother country, and had proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence that all men were born free and equal. They afterwards saw fit to refer the question of slavery to be settled by the Legislatures of the various States; but we all believe that the time must come when the United States will give in their full adherence to the principle in its fullest sense. (Great Cheering.) At this time two States—Massachusetts and New Hampshire abolished slavery within their limits. In the other States slavery existed to a greater or less extent. Very soon slavery was abolished in the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Connecticut; and the patriots who handed this free government down to us merit our eternal gratitude. (Applause.) But we had bound ourselves to respect the rights of the South, and to that pledge no Northern State has ever faltered in its adhesion. After the revolutionary war it was found that there was a vast amount of territory west of the mountains to which the South had a claim. The States of New York, Virginia and New Jersey claimed the territory West of the Ohio. New York came forward first and gave up her claim to the territory, and through the exertions of such men as Thomas Jefferson and Rufus King, slavery was prohibited in the States northwest of the Ohio. The present prosperity of those States is owing to the exertions of these men. In the process of time Louisiana was acquired, and that portion of it known as the province of Orleans, was erected into a State. It was agreed that slavery there should not be touched. Next Missouri came in, and there was a great contest. The result was that slavery was prohibited north of the line of 36 30. I recollect well the sensation the news of this measure created on the Sabbath morning when it came here; but the compromise once made, the North remained true to it, as I always has been. (Applause.) Such has always been the case with the North. Whether it will always do so remains to be seen. I object to this bill because the Southern people have not asked for it. It is the work of a few politicians, and is a political lever for the gratification of their personal ambition; and I must do the Southern people the justice to say that I fully believe they never asked for anything of this sort. The speaker referred to the insurrection at Southampton, Virginia, and the fact that the Southern politicians asked impossible things of the North. They demanded that we should never write or speak against slavery, and never allow any anti slavery newspaper or pamphlet to go through the mails. They knew that this never could be done. Afterwards, when the cry of saving the Union was got up, Southern gentlemen said that the Union should be put an end to unless these resolutions passed. Was there a Northern man who acceded to these measures? And once more, when these gentlemen met, for the purpose of giving formal representation to their opinions, what was the treatment which they received at Nashville? Why, they were driven by the voice of the people almost beyond the borders of the town, to discuss and argue their monstrous and ridiculous doctrines. Therefore, I tell you, gentlemen, it is not the South who desire these measures; but they come from the petty politicians who fawn around the executive at Washington. (Applause.) I really, most heartily detest those men of the North who broach these measures—false to the principles which they first took in their childhood. (Applause.) Again: we are told that this compromise of 1820 is unconstitutional. If it is, is it not strange that over thirty years have passed without its being found out, and that it was at last discovered by Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois? It has passed the scrutiny of the Monroe Cabinet. John Quincy Adams was satisfied with it—(loud and long applause)—and now a man, unknown except as a politician, jumps up and with a swallow-like twittering pronounces it unconstitutional! One thing further, gentlemen—Congress has entire control over these territories; and they must determine, when they are first to start into social existence, whether they are to take a free and vigorous form or whether they are to be trammelled by slavery. (Applause.) As to the effect of slavery, let us look at the progress respectively of Missouri and Michigan. The latter is fast advancing to the front rank in the galaxy of States, and the former is lagging behind under the burden and evils of slavery. (Loud applause.) If we were to legislate merely for this generation; if, like the people before Noah, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die, then we might discard all regard for posterity, and say "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." (Applause.) I will detain you with no further remarks, but will read the

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, That we, the mechanics and working men of New York, heartily concur in the stern protest recently uttered in this place by the great meeting called by the leading merchants and bankers of this city, against the threatened repeal of the Missouri compromise: that we cordially agree with the sentiment uttered by the presiding officer on that occasion, that "a bargain is a bargain, and that we do not understand, and will not tolerate, the doctrine of repudiation;" and with the declaration of Mr. Gerard, that "the common and honorable sentiment of all mankind will condemn it;" and that we deem it proper to express our surprise and regret that the respectful resolutions adopted by that meeting, when presented by Senator Fish to the Senate, were refused a reading.

Resolved, That the pretence that the repeal of the Missouri compromise is a legitimate consequence of the acts of 1850 has been well shown to be without foundation in fact, by several Senators, and especially by Senator Houston, whose manly adherence to truth and honor we warmly appreciate; that the doctrine broached in some quarters, that that compromise was unconstitutional, and therefore ought to be repealed, is alike novel and startling, involving a denial of our constitutional rights, conflicting with the views of our greatest statesmen and the repeated action of our government; that until the Territories are organized into States, and admitted to the Union, the people thereof have no right to make rules and regulations for the governance of the same, but that such right by the constitution belongs absolutely and exclusively to the people of the United States, in Congress assembled.

Resolved, That a decent respect on the part of our Representatives for the rights, opinions, and feelings of the people, demands that no great change in our settled national policy—no change permanently affecting the mutual interests and relations of the various sections of the Union—should be suddenly adopted by Congress until a fair opportunity has been afforded for an expression of the views of their constituents, from whom alone all just power is derived; that any attempt to hurry this till through the Senate, or to force its passage through the House, in order to forestall the judgment of the people, would be an act treacherous and treasonable, and that we appeal to both Senators and Representatives, by their oaths of office, and by the confidence which has been generously reposed in them, not to be persuaded by any inducements into so great wrong. That, speaking in the name of the people, we respectfully but frankly remind them that they are our servants, and not our masters.

Resolved, That the repeal of the Missouri compromise, in order to introduce slavery into our free territory of Nebraska and Kansas, would be in every point a crime, a breach of plighted faith, a violation, not only of our just rights, but the rights of man, in defiance alike of republican principles and Christian duty.

Resolved, That the intimation by Senator Badger that all the Southern whig Senators will vote for the bill, has aroused equally our sorrow and our indignation. That we of the North repeat the warning already given them by the merchants of our city—that with the repeal of the Missouri compromise, harmony and confidence are at an end forever, and every existing compromise other than those embodied in the federal constitution between the slave masters of the South and the free laborers of the North and West, will be vitiated by their own want of faith.

Resolved, That in regard to the Senators and Representatives in Congress from the free States, if such there be, who are disposed to abet this scheme, and surrender the territories secured to us by that compact, we warn the government and the country that they do not truly represent the people, whose most cherished rights, principles, and interests they are betraying for the promotion of their personal ambition, or at the dictation of party leaders. And we warn all our public servants who may be tempted to falter in their allegiance to the rights of free labor, that a day of reckoning is at hand.

Resolved, That the agitation and alarm already excited throughout the free States, at the proposed violation of our ancient rights, and the popular indignation, not only of our native, but also of our adopted citizens, at this scheme for depriving them of homesteads in Kansas and Nebraska, unless they will consent to work side by side with slaves, indicates the bitter curse that awaits those who shall dare to trample on compacts and remove the landmarks of freedom. That we call upon the free laborers of the North to forget all difference of party and to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of our common rights, and that we call upon all the ministers of religion, by the high duties of their holy office, to invoke the Ruler of Nations to turn the hearts of those who are contemplating this stupendous wrong.

Resolved, That we call upon our Senators and Representatives in Congress, to resist unflinchingly, in such manner as they shall deem meet, all attempts, from whatever quarter, to repeal, abrogate, or render inoperative, directly or indirectly, the eighth section of the Missouri Act; and that we call upon the President of the United States, in case of the passage of such a bill by Congress, to secure that compact from violation by interposing his constitutional veto.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the Senators and Representatives of the State of New York in Congress, for presentation to those bodies, to the Governor of each State of the Union, and to the President of the United States.

Hon. JOHN P. HALE then came upon the platform, amid considerable cheering and some slight hissing; a few catcalls were also audible. Mr. Hale said:—

My friends and fellow citizens—I chanced yesterday afternoon to be in the Senate chamber of the United States when Governor Seward, one of your representatives, presented to that body—(applause and hisses)—I say when Gov. Seward presented to that body the resolutions of the Legislature of this State remonstrating against the passage of the bill to which allusion has been made this evening. The resolutions were received respectfully, quietly read, ordered to be printed, and laid upon the table, producing no more impression than was produced a moment after when the Clerk of the House came in and announced that the House had passed a certain bill upon some very trivial subject, in which they asked the concurrence of the Senate; the one produced as much excitement, as much emotion, as the other. I could but go back with my mind's eye some three quarters of a century, and look at the moment and occasion when some other resolutions were presented by a certain other body, prior to the Revolution. When the Stamp Act was passed by the British Parliament, and was sent over to these colonies to be enforced, there was a town meeting held in a town in New England, then not comprising over twenty thousand people—the town of Boston—and at it the people resolved that the Stamp Act should not be enforced in the town of Boston, and they sent those resolutions to the British Parliament. They were not read and laid upon the table; but the Stamp Act was repealed. (Applause.) Why is it that the voice of three millions of people, speaking through their legitimate organ, the Legislature of their State, and presenting those resolutions to the national Legislature, did not produce one thousandth part of the effect that the town meeting in Boston produced upon the British Parliament? The answer is plain. The men of Boston were in earnest, and meant what they said: and the British Parliament knew, when they received those resolutions, that the men who passed them had the resolution to live up to them. The Senate did not believe that of yours. If they had they would not have been laid upon the table. (Applause, mingled with hisses.) Now, my friends, to night, I never rose to address an audience when I felt so inadequate to the task, because I think I appreciate something of the importance and something of the magnitude of this question. If I were to stand before you to-night to argue the case of one solitary individual, and upon the determination to which you might come rested his fate for the future of his life, and by the determination to which you came his fate hereafter was to be freedom or slavery, I should find the responsibility too overwhelming for my poor capacity. But how does such a question as that sink into utter insignificance in comparison with the question you came here to-night to consider? Look on it for a moment; look at that map—(pointing to the large map suspended in front of the organ)—important as is the position it gives the territory, it is not quite geographically correct. That territory, I say, lying in the centre of the United States, with the waters from its mountain peaks running now into the Atlantic, now into the Gulf of Mexico, and then into the northern lakes. That Territory comprises an area of 480 000 miles more than ten times the size of the State of New York, and fifty times the size of the State of Massachusetts. It occupies a position in relation to the rest of the country which the Chinese claims for his country in relation to the rest of the world. It is the Central Kingdom; and if the reports of those who have explored it be true, it only needs the hand of civilization to make it the Flowery Land. Well the question is how shall it be governed?—and Oh! God, that it should be a question, when for thirty four years we have slumbered in the security that it was ours—ours beyond peradventure. (Applause.) Why, Daniel Webster, on the 7th of March, 1850, in his celebrated speech which won him so much of fame and so much of obloquy, declared that the position of that Territory as to slavery was fixed by an irrepealable law. But now we are awakened to the fact that what we supposed for more than the time of a generation to be settled is safe and secure no longer. The question which we supposed our fathers settled more than a third of a century ago has come up to be settled again. What is it—what shall that great land be? Let me tell you. It is for you to say; it is for the mechanics and the workingmen—the strong hands, the honest hearts and clear heads—the voters of this city to say. (Applause.) The honorable gentleman who preceded me says he has a contempt for those southern men who are continually agitating this subject, but he has more for the Northern men who are treacherous to their trust! But let me tell you that there would be no Northern doughfaces to vote for that territory to begiven up to slavery unless they did it knowing that they represented doughface constituencies. (Loud applause.) Let the people of this city take hold of this question, and let it be known that they are in earnest. Let the laborers of New York stand up, in the conscious pride of their labor, and determine that they will reckon at the polls with the men who vote to give up this fair inheritance to slavery, and I tell you it will not be done. There will be no treachery at Washington unless there be treachery in New York to precede it; but let New York speak out and that land is safe. That country will soon be settled; the wars and oppressions of the Old World are turning out hundreds and thousands annually to people it. Soon another tide will come from the East across the Pacific, as now it pours across the Atlantic, and the tides will meet and settle there in the central land, and the Chinese will find that he has left one central kingdom to find another on another continent. And what shall be its institutions of government? Shall they be such as made New York and New England what they are? Shall the hum of busy industry be heard on its hills and in its valleys—shall churches and schoolhouses and academies dot its hills? (Loud cries of "Yes, yes," applause and hisses.) Shall spires of Christian churches point from grateful hearts to a benificent God? (SEVERAL VOICES—"Yes," "no"—noise, hisses, and applause.) And when the laborer goes home at night, wearied with his toil, shall he look in the face of a wife that is his, and on the children of his love, secured to him by the laws not only of God, but of man also? (Applause.) Shall the grateful song of thanksgiving go up to the Giver of every good, from free hearts and happy homes; or instead of that, shall the clank of the chain and the wail of the bondsman go up, filling the ear of him who has revealed it as His peculiar glory that He is the God of the oppressed? (Applause.) That is what you have to settle; not for this year—not for this generation—not for this century, but for all coming time, whether slavery is an institution of human government. And, my friends, let the wings of your imagination take flight, and see if you can scan the magnitude, the importance, the immensity and infinity of this question. Let me ask you, my friends—my political friends—if this is one of those minor questions which you are willing to trade off at the polls for a place in the Custom House? ("No—no"—laughter and applause.) Are there not some things that are a little higher and holier than to be put in the political shambles for the market, and is not this one of those questions? Now it is proposed to do all this: it is proposed to throw down the barrier which you see marked on that map, not to let freedom come down below it, but to let slavery march up above it and that is the issue—freedom or slavery. Well, now, I want to deal with this thing fairly—I want to argue the question that has been presented. It is said that the measure is to be passed for two reasons: the first is because the restrictions of the Missouri compromise are unconstitutional; and the second, because they are inconsistent with the legislation of 1850. You may think it strange that I should propose to argue a constitutional question in a mixed assembly like this. It is the very sort of an assembly in which I would like to argue it. Some people affect to think that common people cannot understand a constitutional question. They think that a man must be as stupid as an over fed alderman, or corrupt as a member of Congress, before he is fit to appreciate a constitutional question. (Laughter and cheers.) I propose to put it to you, my friends, in the confidence that you can understand it. Let us first examine the question as to the constitutionality or prohibiting slavery in the Territories. Let us suppose in the first place, there was no provision or precedent about it. The United States own territory: suppose, then, there is no precedent or provision in the constitution, but the simple fact that they own it. Through whom do the United States speak? Why, through their government—through Congress. Then, if the United States own the Territories, excluding all other title, and the only mode through which they can speak is through Congress, would it not seem to follow in the absence of any express provision, that Congress had the right and power to legislate? Well, then, the next question I put is, how the early fathers of the republic understood this question. Did they understand that Congress had the right to legislate for the exclusion of slavery from the Territories? We can best answer it by history. The constitution was adopted in 1789. In 1787 the Continental Congress passed an ordinance excluding slavery from every inch of the territory that the United States then owned. Two years after that the first Congress under the federal constitution met, and one of the very first acts which that Congress performed was to pass unanimously an act, the preamble of which declared that, to render the ordinance of 1787 compatible with the constitution of the United States: "Whereas," says the act, which was passed on the 7th of August, 1789, and may be found in the first volume of the United States laws—"whereas, in order that the ordinance of the United States in Congress assembled, for the government of the territory north west of the Ohio river, may have full effect, it is requisite that there should be some provision made so as to adapt the same to the present constitution of the United States," &c., &c. I have the entire act in my hand. Well, then, Congress thought there were some things in that ordinance that should be amended so as to make it perfectly in accordance with the constitution; and the only alteration or amendment the first Congress made to render that ordinance compatible with the constitution, was in reference to certain things that were required to be done by the old continental Congress, and which, under the new constitution, were required to be done by the President and Senate, leaving all that part of the ordinance excluding slavery in full force and existence. But perhaps they did not know what they were about—they had not the aid of the new lights that have shone on a later day. Now, I will read you some of the names of those who were members both of the continental Congress and of the first Congress held under the constitution. I find, in looking over the records of those bodies, that there were seventeen gentlemen who were members of both, and men who in their day were supposed to know something about the constitution. (Laughter.) There was John Langdon, of New Hampshire, a name well known; he was a member of the old Congress and also of the United States Constitutional Convention, and also of the new Congress, and was the first president *pro tem.* who presided over the United States Senate; from Massachusetts there was Elbridge Gerry; from Pennsylvania, Robert Morris, Clymer, Fitzsimons; from South Carolina, Pierce Butler; from Georgia, William Few; from Virginia, a person somewhat known, James Madison, &c. Well, seventeen members who participated in the convention which framed the constitution of the United States assembled in the first Congress under it. In addition to that there was another gentleman, who, if he did not understand this subject so well as his successor at the present day, may be supposed to have had some feeling upon it. George Washington presided—(enthusiastic cheering)—over the convention which framed the federal constitution, and of course listened to all the debates upon it, was the first President of the United States, and signed the act which, in his opinion, rendered the ordinance of 1787 consistent with the federal constitution. (Applause.) Well, now, the most that I will claim for those gentlemen is, that in their day they were supposed to be men who understood what the federal constitution meant. (Laughter.) You have their judgment—their deliberate judgment, the judgment of George Washington, of James Madison, of Elbridge Gerry, of Roger Sherman, of Ellsworth, and others—of the whole Congress, for the act passed unanimously—that it was consistent with the federal constitution, not only that it was constitutional to legislate for the territories in regard to slavery, but to exclude slavery from every inch of territory we then owned. Then if it be true that one act has a spirit which is inconsistent with some other act, and therefore it must be made to conform to the spirit of the first act, I ask you if an act which bears the immortal names of Washington, Madison and others, ought not to have a spirit of legal sanction to day with those new lights who have made this new discovery in constitutional law? (Applause.) If it be found that one is inconsistent with the other, which ought to give way? That which we inherited from our fathers—that to which they gave utterance when the wounds of the Revolution were not yet healed—when their garments had not been yet washed from the blood of the wounds that they had received in the great contest and their locks were hoary with the frosts that fell with the night dews of heaven, as they stood sentinels round about the posts of liberty? (Applause.) I think I might be safe, my friends—I might at least not be called arrogant—if I were to leave the constitutional question there, and if I might appeal to those gentlemen who have made this late discovery, and ask them to argue this question with those authorities, and leave us alone. But we do not stop there. From that day down to the time of James K. Polk, Congress has uniformly legislated upon the express position that they have power to exclude slavery from the territories. How was it in 1845, when Texas was admitted into the Union? Did not men—Southern men, in Congress, all the democrats North and South, with a solitary exception—vote to exclude slavery from the Territory in Texas north of 36 30? Did they think of this unconstitutionality then? How was it that in 1848, when that great territory of Oregon and Washington got a government, slavery was excluded, and James K. Polk signed the act? Go back to every one of the acts admitting Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and you will find that they contain a provision prohibiting slavery, and do not rest alone on the ordinance of 1787. Yet in the face of this continued practice of the government, it is now found out, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty four, that these men were all mistaken (laughter)—all mistaken, and a new light has risen from the White Mountains of New Hampshire, and from the Green Mountains of Vermont, that is to put out those little taper flashes to which we have been accustomed to look for light before. (Cheers and laughter.) What shall we have next? I should not be surprised if in this voyage of discovery in which they found out that these acts were unconstitutional, that they found that the ordination itself was an unconstitutional measure—(renewed laughter)—and they might say that the men who framed it had no power to frame such a constitution. And there for it was unauthorized; and I am not sure that in his age of progress we may not reach that point. There there is but a step further to go. It is very clear that the declaration of Independence was not an authorised act; the ordinance was not authorised by the British constitution that made it the law of the land. (Great cheering and merriment.) It was wholly unauthorized; and after a while, if we follow our leaders, we will find out that the Revolution was an unjustifiable rebellion. (Renewed applause and laughter.) Does there need to be any more light on this question—is all history and experience to go for nothing?—is the light of the past to afford no light?—is the experience of those to whom we have trusted so long to be thrown aside? are we to start off at this late day to follow this *ignus fatuus*, which tells us that it is the only true light? Besides all that, my friends, if you be not convinced by this, let me put it in another point of view. Have there not been some very astute men in both houses of Congress since 1820, whose whole lives have been the embodiment of perpetuating human slavery? I wonder that the keen-eyed scrutiny of John C. Calhoun never stumbled upon this truth, which has been so lately brought to light. I wonder that in his metaphysical speculations upon the divine origin of slavery, he did not discover this act to be unconstitutional. I wonder that Hammond, of South Carolina, who in his letter to Thomas Clarkson, said that slavery was "an institution ordained by God, and sanctified of Christ," did not make the discovery. But it was never until a very short time since suggested that the Missouri compromise was unconstitutional. And those very gentlemen—as the records of Congress show—who are now going to repeal the Missouri compromise on the ground of unconstitutionality, were day after day, in 1848 and 1850, moving to extend the line from the territory that we acquired from France, west to the Pacific. This question does not stop here. If this Nebraska bill is unconstitutional—if it has no force, validity or binding obligation—then the prohibition which excludes slavery from Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington is unconstitutional; the barrier is thrown down, and every safeguard which we supposed the patriotism and wisdom of our fathers left us is gone and slavery may march triumphant over the whole of it. It will not be long before it is discovered that there is nothing in the constitution sacred but slavery, and nothing worth extending except the empire of the chain. (Applause.) Well, now let me come to the other branch of the subject; but I find I am trespassing upon the time I know will be better occupied in listening to others. (Cries of "No, no; go on.") Well, then, it is said that this legislation is inconsistent—I believe that is the word—is inconsistent; that the legislation of 1850 was wrong. I take issue upon that. What! was it to leave the existing laws of the Territory just as we found them? If you look at the records of Congress you will see that repeated attempts were made to induce it to repeal the Mexican laws, to abolish slavery in Texas. Now, it was said, when we acquired that territory, we acquired it with the existing laws, and that slavery could not go into it unless those laws were repealed. But Congress refused to repeal them; it said, "No, whatever the law is, it must remain as we find it; if the Mexican law abolishes slavery, then it is abolished." And that was the first report that was published by the Committee on Territories, and it took the true ground. If this is to be made consistent with the legislation of 1850, it must be based upon intervention. That is the principle, and that is the very nature of that legislation—it was to leave the country as it was; if it was a free territory, it was to remain so, and if a slave territory, no attempts were to be made to change it. But the spirit of 1854 is to introduce slavery into it, and that no attempt shall be made to repeal it. That is the spirit we are called upon so lovingly to embrace, instead of the spirit of our fathers, which excluded slavery from every inch of territory. So, if I have stated the position fairly, the attempt to repeal this compromise is based upon a mistake, a misapprehension, because it is not inconsistent with the constitution to abolish slavery or perpetuate it, and it is not consistent with the legislation of 1850 to interfere with the existing laws and repeal them. Now let us look a little farther. It is said we are to have non intervention, that Congress is not to interfere, and at the same time they are not to interfere because it is unconstitutional: and yet it is proposed to organize territorial governments and to give them the right and power to determine for themselves whether they will have slavery. I recollect a comment made upon the story of the temptation, which I will relate to you as particularly applicable here. When the devil took the Saviour to the top of a high mountain and showed him the kingdoms of the world, and said "all this will I give you if you will fall down and worship me," the clergyman here said, "My friends, he promised what was not his own, and what he could not give." Let me ask, if Congress have not got the power to legislate, how can it give it to a territorial legislature? Territorial legislatures are the creations of Congress, and they have no power but what Congress gives them; it may repeal the whole act giving them any sort of territorial legislation. Here is Congress having all power, and yet not power to legislate upon the subject of slavery; but it may create an inferior tribunal, and confer upon that a power which the constitution does not confer upon itself. But, my friends, this matter does not rest even on the grounds which I have stated. The framers of our constitution were wiser men than to leave things liable to misunderstanding; they foresaw that from the immense territory they owned, new States and communities would spring up; they foresaw that immense interests would be involved, and that there must be a power resting somewhere—plenary, full, supreme—within the constitution, to legislate for them. And so they left it to no doubtful construction—no, thanks to their memory and to Almighty God for that memory, they settled this question upon the very page of the constitution, so plain, so clear, that he who runs may read. (Applause.) And if you will turn to the fourth article and third section of that constitution, you will find those very words written; but I know it is not fashionable to read the constitution of the United States now a days. (Laughter.) What is it to the Baltimore platform? (Renewed laughter and applause.) You will excuse me, my friends, therefore, for quoting from such an old fashioned paper. (More laughter.) The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States or of any particular state.

Now, let me ask you, my friends, can language be plainer? Who is to judge whether they are to have slavery or not? Why, clearly they themselves, subject to the supervisory power of the supreme judiciary, to say whether the provision were consonant with the constitution or not. If this argument is not closed—if it is necessary to go further and adduce authority to prove that the constitution confers upon Congress this power and it ought to be exercised as evinced by our whole history, then the question is settled. Why, they will tell you the doctrine of non-intervention is settled. But if they break off this old compromise what will the new one be worth? Let us look at the future. Suppose the torch of discord should blaze in our midst, and angry passions be aroused; suppose that sectional jealousies should be brought into existence; suppose the passions of one party should be arrayed against those of another, where, within this broad land, is to be found the man with temerity or absurdity enough to stand up and boldly propose another compromise? No, the word will be a hissing and a by-word, as it ought it to be. (Applause.) Let the men of this Congress repeal that compromise and I tell them they will do more to repeal everything which binds this Union together than all else they could do. (Renewed applause.) What would a community be that did not observe public faith? A community of thieves could not live together without it. Why, Father Ames says that if there were to be to night a resurrection from the foot of the gallows of all those who have expiated their crimes with their lives, and the crimes of past ages should be assembled into one community, the very first necessity that would be imposed upon such a community, would be the preservation of the public faith, for they could not exist without it. Let this compromise of 1820 be repealed, and where is public faith, and what is it? Thirty-four years it has existed in unbroken supremacy; thirty of the thirty-one shareholding portion of the States have enjoyed all the profits of it while we have had nothing but an unbroken forest. It has been only the wilds and mountains—the wilderness has been our portion; the savage and the wild beast have roamed unchecked over it, and the birds have built their nests in safety there, for the foot of civilized man has not trod upon it. But now, in these latter days, when the advancing tide of emigration is about to pour its people in—now, when two hundred white families have gone there to settle, this spirit of slavery, that has got three States out of it, are determined to seize upon this last foothold of freedom, and make it pasturing ground for slaves. Let them do it. But I do the South wrong; they have not demanded it; it is not the demand of the South, (applause,) but it is the tender of Northern servility. I have heard in private and in public—I have heard upon the floor of Congress, and out of it, remarks like this:—said the gentleman from the South who spoke for the measure, "I don't know a man in my State that wanted this compromise repealed, but when it is offered to us by the North how can we go home and maintain ourselves before our constituents if we refuse to take what is tendered to us." Said Mr. Benton to me, "Sir, if a Southern man had introduced this measure I would have denounced it as infamous; I would have black balled it, sir; it would not have had time to sit down in the hall; but, sir, if the North have made a bargain, a bargain that was imposed upon them, and have lived by it thirty-four years, and now want to give up their half, have I any right to complain?" I think, my friends, in discussing this measure, we ought