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BY McLANAHAN, TROUSDALE & DILL. MEMPHIS, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1860. VOLUME XI.—NUMBER 39.

Daily Appeal.

SPEECH OF SENATOR DAVIS,

IN REPLY TO MR. WILSON, OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Mr. Davis. Mr. President, the Senator from Massachusetts, in the course of his remarks, took occasion, in his general examination of what each Senator had said, to make allusion to me. I do not know whether he quoted the language I used or not. But though I cannot recollect the language, the sentiment was so much like my own that I am willing to accept it. It is what I think, but it is not what I thought when I spoke on the occasion to which he alluded, and therefore what I may have said, But the Senator greatly misrepresents the meaning. That is not a declaration that if a man of any particular class shall be elected, that if a majority who do not sympathize with us elect a President, we will therefore, break up the Union. It is a declaration that if a man be elected upon a particular platform, as there stated, and the name of an individual was only introduced in order to point to what distinct opinion was embraced within the delineation—if, in other words, a man were to seize the reins of Government not to administer it according to the Constitution, but to pervert it to our disruption, to make this Government one I hostility to us, we would with the right hand redress our wrongs. That is my opinion now. If a man is willing to perjure himself by taking the oath to maintain the Constitution that he may get possession of the powers of this Government to subvert it to the ends of that platform, I tell him, sir, that I have too much pride and confidence in the South to believe they ever will submit. For one single individual I can speak—I never will if driven to exile, I prefer it to tame submission to a traitor and perjurer who sought the possession of the Government in order that he might overthrow its Constitution.

That is my view. Therefore, I suppose the Senator may probably have quoted me correctly; his report may be correct, but how comes it that the Senator from Massachusetts is he who listens to the voice of secession? How comes it that we are to be chuffed into the attitude of those who are seeking to break up the Government, because we have avowed that we would not submit to Abolition? He, representing the very opinion which is a dissolution of the Union, he the destruction of its Constitution, claims to hold us responsible because we regard the election of such as wrong. We are represented as the secessionists, while they sneeded in the last presidential election, went of as a section, organized in a section, and attempted to force upon this Government a sectional candidate, supported exclusively by a sectional vote. That was secession—practical secession. Now he comes and says to us, the Constitution—We have respected the Government, and added by its compromise; and never was there a more audacious falsehood uttered than this arrangement which has constantly been made against the South as despising the Constitution and the compromises of which it was the result.

It was not my purpose on this occasion to go into any extended discussion; but it occurs to me that what you have just heard and what you heard it said that the South had violated the Missouri compromise, when they who sit on the other side of the Chamber know—they must know—that the South as a body, proposed to extend it to the Pacific ocean, having already accepted it as a damaging effect upon the Territorial Government of Texas, of the proposition. From them came the release from the obligation of the compact; and when different principles were declared and conduct adopted in the Territories, which we thought then I held that no honorable man who claimed to uphold those acts could but admit, as a result, that the repeal of the Missouri compromise was a justifying act. The Senator sustained the conduct of the Senator from Illinois, (Mr. Douglas,) who, pledged to that action, came forward to assist in the repeal, and was incumbent on every honorable man. We never admitted the constitutionality of the act of 1820. We said, however, to the people and the States, if you desire to have it, we will therefore, break up the Union. It is a declaration that if a man be elected upon a particular platform, as there stated, and the name of an individual was only introduced in order to point to what distinct opinion was embraced within the delineation—if, in other words, a man were to seize the reins of Government not to administer it according to the Constitution, but to pervert it to our disruption, to make this Government one I hostility to us, we would with the right hand redress our wrongs. That is my opinion now. If a man is willing to perjure himself by taking the oath to maintain the Constitution that he may get possession of the powers of this Government to subvert it to the ends of that platform, I tell him, sir, that I have too much pride and confidence in the South to believe they ever will submit. For one single individual I can speak—I never will if driven to exile, I prefer it to tame submission to a traitor and perjurer who sought the possession of the Government in order that he might overthrow its Constitution.

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I was not in the room when the Senator from Massachusetts, in the course of his remarks, took occasion, in his general examination of what each Senator had said, to make allusion to me. I do not know whether he quoted the language I used or not. But though I cannot recollect the language, the sentiment was so much like my own that I am willing to accept it. It is what I think, but it is not what I thought when I spoke on the occasion to which he alluded, and therefore what I may have said. But the Senator greatly misrepresents the meaning. That is not a declaration that if a man of any particular class shall be elected, that if a majority who do not sympathize with us elect a President, we will therefore, break up the Union. It is a declaration that if a man be elected upon a particular platform, as there stated, and the name of an individual was only introduced in order to point to what distinct opinion was embraced within the delineation—if, in other words, a man were to seize the reins of Government not to administer it according to the Constitution, but to pervert it to our disruption, to make this Government one I hostility to us, we would with the right hand redress our wrongs. That is my opinion now. If a man is willing to perjure himself by taking the oath to maintain the Constitution that he may get possession of the powers of this Government to subvert it to the ends of that platform, I tell him, sir, that I have too much pride and confidence in the South to believe they ever will submit. For one single individual I can speak—I never will if driven to exile, I prefer it to tame submission to a traitor and perjurer who sought the possession of the Government in order that he might overthrow its Constitution.

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