[CONTINUED FROM FOURTH PAGE.]

years older than myself—true, this will be a descent on my part—that it is a grave departure from high self-respect in a woman of my mature age, to marry, under any circumstances; but I must maintain my authority over Louise! I must do it by residing with her; and I can only reside with her as the mistress of this house and estate. I cannot take a subordinate position in the house of my daughter and son-in-law. I must make up my mind to marry this old Stuart-Gordon. The neighborhood, I presume, will have a great deal to say upon the subject, when it is known to be in prospect. Let them say it! If *I* can gain *my own* consent to the step, the opinions of others are unimportant, as they are impertinent. Moreover, these opinions will only be whispered in subdued tones; none will be found daring enough to raise their voices against any act of mine. After all, this will be only an alliance. It will give me almost absolute power over this estate; for, once mistress here, I shall do as I please with the old man, with his son, and I will see if the affairs of this estate will not be better administered by *me*, than they have ever been by this fox-hunting and dinner-giving *bon-vivant*, or this flute-playing, verse-making sentimentalist! The government of two such estates as those of Mont Crystal and the Isle of Rays, estates, that joined, form half the county, will give me as large a share of power, aye, and more absolute power, than that enjoyed by any petty sovereign in Europe. Come! it is decided! I will form an alliance with this—this old General." And recognising no appeal from her own high will, the arrogant woman set about the execution of her purpose. She became very exacting of attentions from General Stuart-Gordon, pressing him with commanding haughtiness into her service upon all occasions. She never arose to cross the room, without saying, with the air of an empress ordering her chamberlain—"General, I will trouble you for the support of your arm." She made him fetch and carry her fan, reticule, and knotting, open and shut doors, hand her water, pick up her handkerchief, and do her errands, and all with the air of conferring a great honor upon his Generalship. The climax was in the evening, when she would command him to open the chess-board, and play a game of chess with her. General Stuart-Gordon, gallant, good-natured, and at leisure, was very much at the command of any lady who would do him the honor of exacting his services. Besides which, he had a very great respect for Mrs Armstrong, both upon account of her imposing rank, character, and deportment, and by reason of her position as his guest. In addition to his universal gallantry and particular devotion, General Stuart-Gordon had two very important reasons for employing and conciliating Mrs. Armstrong. First, he saw that her surveillance over Louis and Louise impaired their happiness, and he wished to deliver his children, as he called them, from her espionage, by absorbing her attention himself. Secretly, he stood in great awe of Mrs. Armstrong; he felt a presentiment that she would be horrified and outraged at the news of the projected marriage between himself and Miss O'Riley, and he wished to conciliate her good feeling before he should dare to announce it. And as the marriage was [illegible] and approaching, this annunciation was an imperative necessity. Ah! little did he dream of the matrimonial designs of the lady herself upon him! Old gentlemen see nothing improper or unusual in their own connubial intentions, are grievously shocked when they hear of any such projects finding a lodgment in the brain of an elderly lady. This feeling may be natural and right. General Stuart-Gordon, then, never suspected the drift of Mrs. Armstrong's thoughts and purposes. He was charmed that she treated him well, with kindness, with sympathy; and as days passed, and as every day saw them somehow better friends, he did not despair of her consent to his marriage with Miss O'Riley. And this consent was of more importance to the General than any one at first-thought would suppose; for General Stuart-Gordon loved family peace and good fellowship above all things—*except Brighty!* Encouraged by Mrs. Armstrong's gracious and condescending manners, he began to feel his way, as it were, towards an explanation.

Finding himself alone with the dowager in the morning, when Louis and Louise would be roaming about the garden or reading poetry in their room, he would begin to say something pathetic about the solitude of his position, forgetting—the egotist!—that the lady to whom he spoke was just precisely in the same predicament as himself, and therefore extremely likely to misapprehend the drift of his discourse! And so he would say very moving things about his loneliness—very touching things about going down the vale of years *alone*—expecting to move Mrs. Armstrong's pity for his condition, and by and by win her consent to his marriage. And Mrs. Armstrong, totally misunderstanding his purpose and misapplying his words, would receive these confidences with much more indulgence than he could have hoped to obtain! Nay! Mrs. Armstrong would fully agree with General Stuart-Gordon, that it was a [illegible] thing to be left alone in the decline of life—that as young people would take to themselves partners and leave their parents alone, it behooved the latter to secure companions on the downward journey of life! And it was wonderful upon what good terms they would part after just such confidences as these!—each misunderstanding the other very thoroughly! General Stuart-Gordon would step off on tiptoe, as though he trod on air, thinking his paths made straight before him! Mrs. Armstrong would sail out with her stately mien, and assume an extra degree of authority over Louise, Louis, the negroes, the mansion, and the estate—fully believing this authority to be but slightly anticipated.

The decisive hour arrived. General Stuart-Gordon was to be married in a month; and no one, as yet, suspected it. It was now absolutely necessary that the announcement of this approaching marriage should be made.

One morning, immediately after breakfast, Louis and Louise as usual left the house. They were to take the boat and have a little voyage. Mrs. Armstrong sailed majestically into the drawing-room, and seating herself in one of the high-backed chairs near the front windows, took out her knotting and commenced work. The door opened, and General Stuart-Gordon, having screwed his "courage to the sticking-place," stalked superbly down the room, and, drawing a chair opposite to that of the dowager, sank into it, and—and—unluckily forgot the speech—a piece of the most convincing logic and the most subduing eloquence ever composed—that he had prepared to conquer Mrs. Armstrong with. He found nothing to say but that which he had said a hundred times already, namely—

"You perceive that those young people have left us alone again, madam! the egotists! the egotists! They forget every one else—every *thing* else—except themselves, and the presence of nature!"

"Happiness is selfish, sir," replied the laconic lady.

Silence—a deep pause—a great sigh from General Stuart-Gordon, who breaks the spell by saying, pathetically—

"It is a dreadful thing to be alone, madam."

"It is, sir."

"Ah! *dreadful!*"

"Yes, sir."

Silence again—another pause—expectancy on the side of the lady—embarrassment on the part of the gentleman, who again finds courage to speak in moving tones, saying—

"To go down the vale of years alone, Mrs. Armstrong!"

"Certainly, sir."

"Is a deplorable prospect!"

"Undoubtedly, General."

"Ah!"

"I perfectly agree with your view of the case, General."

"To have no gentle female friend to smooth the pillow of—the pillow of—of—"

Silence a third time—the lady out of patience—the gentleman out of courage.

The lady at last comes to his assistance—

"I am surprised, General Stuart-Gordon, that you, who do not like the loneliness of your life, should never think of taking a consort."

"Madam! oh!"

"That you should never think of marrying!"

"Mrs. Armstrong, if I presumed, if I thought, if I hoped"——

"Well? sir."

"If I *dared* to hope!"

"Well? sir!"

"In short, madam, I have *dared* to hope your approbation to my suit! — I"——

A pause.

"I listen, sir!"

"In one word, madam, I *have* selected a lady!" said General Stuart-Gordon, in an earnest tone of voice, looking intently at the dowager, who kept her eyes fixed upon her knotting.

"I await your further explanation, sir!"

"A lady of the finest intellect, of the highest spirit, of the most dignified manner"——

"You are extravagant, I fear, sir!"

"A lady in whose praise *no* terms of admiration *could* be thought extravagant!"

"You are an enthusiast, General!"

"A lady worthy of the *highest* honor!"

"Your panegyric is embarrassing, sir!"

"A lady who has my whole *heart's* affection—my whole *head's* approval!"

A pause.

"I listen to you, sir!"

"A lady who will be singularly acceptable to my dear daughter-in-law—one bound to her by the ties of affection—one bound to her by the obligations of gratitude—one whose care and instruction has contributed to make Louise what she is—one with whom it will delight Louise to pass her whole existence!—one beloved, idolized by Louise!"

"And this lady"——

"*Is one whom Mrs. Armstrong cannot for a moment be at a loss to designate,*" said General Stuart-Gordon, in a deep, earnest tone of voice, and looking intently in the face of Mrs. Armstrong.

Mrs. Armstrong arose, with an air of majestic grace, and, standing, placed her hand within that of General Stuart-Gordon, and said—

"Sir, I *cannot*, as you have asserted, be at a loss to designate the lady whom you have honored by your preference—and I thank you in the acceptance of your overtures! Do not, however, suppose by that I receive all the extravagant encomiums that you have been so polite as to lavish upon me. I listen to them merely as the stereotyped compliments gentlemen are pleased to pay upon these occasions! I will, however, dispense with them from this time, sir, as we are rather mature to make or receive gallant speeches! Nevertheless, there is a singular propriety in your selection, and a most becoming fitness in our alliance, sir! The house of Blackistone and of Armstrong, like that of Cartwright and Stuart-Gordon, is one of the oldest in the country. I shall not dishonor the old and haughty name of Stuart-Gordon!" and, bending her head graciously, the lady was sailing majestically from the room, when ——!

I wish you could have seen the countenance of General Stuart-Gordon, as his face blanched and blanched, his head grew dizzy, his back grew weak, and his knees smote together! Here was a catastrophe! In truth, the sky was falling! He felt the fragments shattering his nerves! With an adjuring gesture of despair and desperation, he advanced towards her—

"*Mrs.* Armstrong!"

"Well, sir?" said the lady, turning quietly around.

"My *dear* madam!"

"Well, sir?"

"I am *covered* with confusion!"

"I do not understand you, sir!"

"Madam! my *dear* lady! you have misunderstood me!"

"Sir?"

"*Excuse* me! you have mistaken my meaning!"

"Sir?"

"*Forgive* me! I never presumed to the distinguished alliance of Mrs. Armstrong!"

"*Sir!*"

"*Pardon! pardon!* The lady of my choice does not occupy so high a place in society. The lady of my choice"——

"Is?"——

"*Miss Britannia O'Riley!*"

Words would fail to express the dumb-founded astonishment! the astounded dismay! of that haughty woman, struck statue-still, with wonder, where she stood! Yes! at first it was simple stupefied *wonder* that fixed her there, with rigid limbs, pallid cheeks, and darkly corrugated brows! Yes, it was wonder, before it was even rage or vengeance!

"BRITANNIA O'RILEY!!"

"Britannia O'Riley."

"A *governess!* a *domestic!* a hired *servant!*"

"Britannia O'Riley! a beautiful, graceful, elegant, and accomplished *woman!*"

"A *beggar!* a low Irish beggar!"

"A lady! a lady to whom I shall be proud to give my name!"

"A poor, miserable Irish *beggar*, whom I hired to serve my daughter!"

"My intended *wife*, Mrs. Stuart-Gordon, *senior*, and mistress of my house within one month from this!"

"Are you dreaming! insane! *intoxicated!*"

"Madam! I should lay myself under the suspicion of being influenced by one of the three states, if I permitted you for one moment longer to indulge in the intemperate language you have just used!"

"General Stuart-Gordon, *I shall leave your house!*"

"Mrs. Armstrong! I trust you will see the absolute, the inevitable necessity of your leaving this house before the arrival of my wife!"

"Am I to be insulted! *outraged!* under the roof of my daughter!"

"No, madam! nor are you to insult or outrage the intended wife of her husband's father!"

"Enough! I leave this house to-morrow! and *my daughter returns to Mont Crystal with me!*"

"Madam!"

"My daughter came hither a bride! entered this house as its mistress! She should not have entered it upon any other terms! she shall not remain in it in any other capacity! She shall not cede her place, and give precedence to a low-born Irish serving wench!"

"My wife will be mistress of my house without a doubt, madam! And Mrs. Louis will certainly give precedence to Mrs. Stuart-Gordon, as becomes her!"

"*In-deed!* sir! You forget that Louis Stuart-Gordon inherits the Isle of Rays in right of his mother, Margaret Stuart-Gordon—not in right of the man who bartered his patronymic for a fortune! That, therefore, Louis Stuart-Gordon is master of the estate and mansion house, as his wife is mistress of the name!"

"I think you have been misinformed upon some of these points, madam! I think you will find yourself seriously mistaken!"

"Sir! my daughter and myself have too much self-respect to *strive* for precedence with an Irish waiting maid, or the dotard whom her cunning has enslaved. My daughter returns with me to Mont Crystal."

"You return *alone*, madam! Mrs. Louis remains where she is!"

"We shall see, sir!" exclaimed the lady, sweeping from the room, purple with rage!

"We *shall* see, madam!" replied the General, bowing ceremoniously, as he held the door open for her to pass through.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MOVEMENTS OF THE PEOPLE.

The Union meetings got up in New York and Philadelphia have ceased to be remembered, so slight an impression did they make on the public. Since then we have received accounts of meetings of a very different kind, which would have been noticed sooner, and to which more space would now be devoted, were it not for the great pressure of Congressional matter.

The Free Soil Convention at Faneuil Hall a week or two since must have been a most enthusiastic gathering of freemen. The Boston *Republican* says:

"The Convention of the Free-Soilers of Massachusetts, on Wednesday, was a magnificent one. It was a demonstration worthy of Massachusetts and of the occasion. At an early hour Faneuil Hall was thronged by freemen who had come from all parts of the State to take counsel together in this crisis of the country. The Convention was composed of men of talent and character, and its proceedings were characterized with moderation and firmness. The Address, drawn by R. H. Dana, Jr., Esq., is a production of consummate ability. Some of the speeches were of great eloquence and power—worthy of the men and the occasion.

"Much disappointment was felt that Mr. Root of Ohio was not able to be present. He would have received a cordial greeting in Old Faneuil Hall. Mr. Sumner, also, was prevented from attending, by sickness—so his glowing eloquence and thrilling tones were not heard. He sent a letter—breathing the true spirit—which was read to the Convention."

The following officers were chosen:

For President—Hon. John Gorham Palfrey.

For Vice Presidents—Hon. S. C. Phillips, John Mills, Samuel Hoar, B. V. French, Alex. DeWitt, Charles Choate, John W. Graves, William Jackson, Amasa Walker, William H. Wood.

For Secretaries—William S. Robinson, Thomas Russell, Dr. J. W. Stone.

Mr Palfrey on taking the chair delivered a most admirable speech. Several other speeches were made, all of an elevated character; a spirited address and several resolutions were adopted, after which the Convention adjourned.

A mass meeting of the citizens of Chicago was held on the 21st. ult., to express their sentiments against the extension of Slavery. A large portion of those participating in the proceedings, we learn, were Democrats who had voted for Mr. Cass. Among the resolutions adopted were the following:

"*Resolved*, That we have observed with feelings of the deepest humiliation, in the struggle of Freedom with Slavery, Illinois, our own beloved State, standing out among her sisters, 'solitary and alone,' as the only free State of the Confederacy casting a majority of the votes of her delegation against the resolutions of Mr. Root of Ohio, knowing as we do that such is not a faithful representation of the will of her people.

"*Resolved*, That the proposition recently presented by Hon. S. A. Douglas to the Senate of the United States, for the creation of a new State of the, as yet, unsettled portions of the Territory of Texas, to be admitted into the Union concurrently with California, and also to provide Territorial Government for New Mexico and Deseret, which shall leave them open to the introduction of slavery, as the basis of a 'Compromise' with the slave States, involves a principle especially obnoxious to the free States, subversive of the true principles of the Constitution, and a violation of the wishes and feelings of the people of this State, and the instructions of the Legislature, whose expressed will it is his duty to obey or resign.

"*Resolved*, **That we earnestly invite our fellow-citizens in all the towns, villages, and settlements of this and other free States, to join with us at this 'crisis' in the expression of their feelings of opposition to any measure of compromise which may be proposed in the Congress of the United States, believing, as we do, that a necessity exists for such an expression at this time, the party press of the country being in a measure silent, and to prevent such silence from being construed at Washington and elsewhere, as it has heretofore been, as indicative of indifference among the people on this momentous subject.**"

The following report of the officers nominated and chosen will serve to show the character of the meeting.

On motion of I. N. Arnold, James H. Woodworth, Mayor of the City, was chosen President.

On motion, the following gentlemen were appointed Vice Presidents:

Henry L. Rucker, Daniel Brainard, J. Y. Scammon, Owen McCarty, F. C. Sherman, James Curtiss, Andrew Smith, Peter Cure, E. C. Larned, A. Loyd, Mark Skinner, I. N. Arnold, W. B. Snowhook, Grant Goodrich, P. L. Updike, Sylvester Marsh, Dr. Helmuth, C. Stose, C. V. Dyer, Hon. N. B. Judd.

On motion, J. L. Scripps, D. M. Bradley, H. Kriege, Joseph Pollock, W. H. Bushnell, were chosen Secretaries.

On motion of Thomas Hoyne, Esq., a committee of nine was appointed by the President, to draught resolutions, viz:

Thomas Hoyne, J. Y. Scammon, Mark Skinner, C. De Wolf, A. G. Throop, Thomas Richmond, E. B. Williams, James Breck, jun., George Manierre.

THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, MARCH 14, 1850.

REVIEW OF THE WEEK.

Our readers will not blame us for devoting our paper at the present time mainly to the great question which is absorbing the attention of Congress to the exclusion of almost everything else. Indeed, we live and breathe so constantly amidst Congressional excitements, that we find ourselves overlooking movements and events of much interest throughout the country.

The proceedings of the House since our last issue have attracted comparatively little attention, excepting a speech from Mr. Stanly of North Carolina, designed to show that much of the present excitement in the South was the result of party demagoguism, and that the Union was not in danger. He castigated the Disunionists, and in the course of his remarks fell upon Mr. Hilliard, a brother Whig from the South, who, in Mr. Stanly's opinion, had declaimed in too belligerent a style for a minister of the Gospel. Mr Hilliard was greatly excited, called Mr. Stanly to order, but, after a scene of much confusion, the latter was permitted by the House to proceed.

Mr. Stanly declared that, Wilmot Proviso, or no Wilmot Proviso, North Carolina would stand by the Union.

The *Senate* has been the theatre of great interest. Mr. Walker of Wisconsin delivered an able speech in explanation and defence of the Anti-Slavery views generally entertained by the North. He was frequently interrupted, but maintained his positions with great force. Mr. Webster addressed the Senate for nearly three hours, in a speech published in this week's *Era*, and on which we comment in another column. It was received with great favor by all that class of Southern men who had denounced the speech of Mr. Clay as conceding too much to the North. Mr. Seward delivered his views last Monday, in a speech of three hours' length, which was listened to with deep attention by the Senate. It was a bold, comprehensive, radical, uncompromising speech, in which hardly a topic connected with the Question of Slavery was overlooked. We shall publish it in our next.

THE SPEECH OF MR. WEBSTER.

We lay before our readers the whole of Mr. Webster's Speech, delivered last Thursday in the Senate. It is a full exposition of his views of the nature and bearings of the question of Slavery, and of the proper mode, in his judgment, of settling it.

As an intellectual effort, it will add nothing to the reputation of the Senator. The narrative portion of the speech is rather heavy; and his review of the history of slavery, though plain and intelligible, neither presents nor suggests any new or striking thoughts.

Mr. Webster, after a brief exordium, adverted to the war with Mexico, the successive triumphs of the American arms in that country, the resulting acquisitions of territory, the course of events in California, and its organization of a Constitution which prohibited slavery. As these acquisitions were on the south of the United States, it was expected that they would inure to the advantage of the slave States particularly. Events had turned out as was not expected; hence the present agitation, bringing up for discussion the whole subject of slavery.

He next presented an historical sketch of slavery. It had always existed—it prevailed among the oriental nations—among the Jews—and their theocratic Government did not prohibit it. It existed among the Greeks, and their ingenious philosophy sought to justify it on precisely the same ground on which it is attempted to be justified in this country; that is, a natural and an original difference among the races of mankind. The more manly philosophy of the Romans placed its justification on different grounds. They held that slavery was against natural right, but might originate in war, in debt, in crime, or in the voluntary sale of one's self. The Roman world was full of slaves at the introduction of Christianity, but the Gospel contained no injunction against the relation.

What connection there was between this review and what followed, we could not see—especially as he did not himself express any opinion of the theories to which he had adverted, or draw any inference from the statements he had made.

Mr. Webster next referred to the difference of sentiment in the two sections respecting slavery. In the North, it was regarded as a wrong, in conflict with the spirit and principles of Christianity. This sentiment had taken hold of the religious community of the North, and more or less of the religious feelings of a considerable portion of mankind. On the other hand, the South having been always accustomed to the relation, and having been taught to treat the subjects of bondage with great care and kindness, did not entertain this sentiment. Many of its people did not admit the unlawfulness of slavery; many more, whatever they might think of it abstractly, seeing no way in which the present generation could relieve itself of the institution, were content to take things as they found them. They were all just as conscientious in their views as the People of the North were in theirs. He adverted here to the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church; said that he had hoped while the controversy was in progress, it might terminate without division; and that he could not see any sufficient cause to justify that measure.

Mr. Webster, in comparing the views of the North and South, carefully refrained from passing judgment between them, or suggesting even indirectly, on which side, in his opinion, the truth was to be found. His declaration, however, that he saw no cause for the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church, clearly proved that he either did not understand the merits of the controversy leading to that event, or that he did not concur in the views of the majority of the Church concerning the nature of Slavery.

After some remarks, showing how excitement on the question of Slavery must necessarily grow out of these differences in the religious sentiments and feelings of the two sections, he reviewed the state of sentiment existing at the time the Constitution was formed. The People of all sections regarded Slavery as an evil, and concurred in the general policy of abating it. The framers of the Constitution, under the general impression that to prohibit the slave trade w[illegible] to pave the way for the extinction of Slaver[illegible] incorporated in the Constitution a clause empowering Congress to put an end to it in twenty years. While this Convention sat at Philadelphia, the Congress of the Confederation in session at New York passed the Ordinance of 1787, excluding Slavery from the only Territory under the jurisdiction of the Confederated States. He believed this was done with the full concurrence of the Convention. From these facts, from the careful exclusion of the terms "slave," and "slavery," from the Constitution, and from the celebrated opinion of Mr. Madison, that he thought it wrong for the Constitution to recognise the idea that there could be property in man, he inferred that there was a general expectation that Slavery would soon run out, and that there was a prevailing disposition to restrain it within its existing limits.

We take pleasure in commending this portion of the speech. Though not novel, the views were just and forcibly presented. But what use did he make of them? Was it not reasonable to argue from these premises, that good faith between both sections required an adherence to the policy of the framers of the Constitution—that the subsequent extension of slavery into new territory was in violation of this faith—that in demanding the restriction of slavery now within its present limits, the People of the North were only asking for a return to the principle of 1787, merely insisting upon a policy to which the People of all the States were committed at that period?

But it did not suit Mr. Webster's purposes to frame such an argument. He presented a just view of the policy of the Congress of the Confederation and of the Convention of 1787, but forbore to derive a single argument from it in favor of Freedom! What then did he do? He paused for a moment to contrast the sentiment of 1787 with that of 1850. The feeling of the North against Slavery had strengthened; that of the South had changed so much, that now the system was spoken of as an institution to be cherished, supported, extended.

One might have supposed that a real opponent of Slavery would have taken occasion to lament this change—to show that, while the North had kept pace with the spirit of the age, the South had retrograded—and that he would have asked with some emphasis, whether this change in one section of the country from the principles and policy of the fathers of the Union, were a good reason why the Government of the Union should also abandon them? But if such thoughts were in Mr. Webster's heart, they found no utterance. Here, as in every part of his speech, he seemed anxious to abstain from doing or saying anything that could strengthen the position of the opponents of Slavery Extension, or offend the delicate sensibilities of its advocates.

What, he next inquired, was the cause of this change of sentiment in the South? The uprising and rapid growth of the cotton-planting interest. In guarded terms he showed how the interests of the South had become involved in the maintenance and extension of Slave Labor; and under the control of these interests, new territory had been constantly sought for the purpose of enlarging the area of this kind of labor. To this cause mainly he attributed the purchase of Louisiana and Florida, and the annexation of Texas.

But did he censure Southern men for these acts? Far from it. He was rather at pains to show that they were controlled by reasonable motives, interested to be sure, but not dishonest. Not a word in denunciation of their policy escaped him. But, he was not so tender in dealing with the Northern Democracy. Instead of showing how barbarous was the policy of seeking to acquire new territory for the purpose of propagating slavery, how preëminently disgraceful in a Republic professedly founded upon the Rights of Man, he lost sight of these high considerations in a paroxysm of party indignation. He charged the Northern Democracy with aiding in the accomplishment of the scheme of annexation, when they knew that the territory to be annexed would come in as slave territory. This was not all. In their lust for territory, they voted against all resolutions opposing the acquisition of territory from Mexico, by conquest or purchase; they sought such acquisitions, and then, resolved to apply to them the saving grace of the Wilmot Proviso! Yes—and after voting for the annexation of vast, illimitable Texas, with their eyes wide open to the fact that it was slave soil, they went home, and became the devoted advocates of Free Soil and No Slavery!

After holding up to ridicule the strange inconsistencies, as he deemed them, of the Northern Democracy, Mr. Webster referred to his own course. He had steadily opposed the annexation of Texas—opposed the acquisition of Mexican territory—avowed his opposition to the annexation of any territory, Slave or Free; and in this connection he caused to be read extracts from several of his speeches at former periods to show his opposition to the admission of any more slave States or territory.

All this discourse on the inconsistency of the Northern Democracy, and his own consistency, was evidently designed to prepare the way for the essential part of his speech, that in which he pledged himself to sustain the admission of *four new slave States in the territory of Texas, when they should be ready for admission, and in which he formally renounced the policy of the Wilmot Proviso in its application to the Territory of New Mexico.*

Yes—the Wilmot Proviso, which Mr. Webster in his Springfield speech, in 1847, claimed as *his thunder*, he ridiculed in this Senatorial speech as "A WILMOT." Twice, in his speech, (we do not know whether he is so reported) he contemptuously nicknamed the Proviso, "A WILMOT;" whereat the Senators from the South seemed greatly pleased.

But, let us return to our analysis of this singular performance.

The object of Mr. Webster was to avow himself in favor of the admission of four new slave States in Texas, to renounce openly the Wilmot Proviso in its application to a Territorial Government for New Mexico, and to pledge himself to the support of the Slave Bill of Mr. Butler of South Carolina. All these things might have been done, briefly, without preliminary, without the exordium or peroration of a formal oration. How easy for him to have said—

"Senators, I hold that, under the resolutions of annexation, four new slave States may be formed in Texas, with the consent of that State, and, for one, I intend to vote to receive them when they apply. I have come to the conclusion that the Wilmot Proviso, in other words, the Jeffersonian Ordinance of 1787, whilom my particular thunder, is, in relation to New Mexico, a—*Wilmot*—and I shall oppose its introduction into any bill for the organization of a Territorial Government in New Mexico. I believe the North has done wrong in the matter of fugitive slaves, and I shall go for the most rigid legislation to enable their pursuers to catch them, and inflict heavy penalties on all who shall interfere."

This is his speech condensed. All else is surplusage. Why his tedious detail of events leading to the acquisition of territory? Why his elaborate historical sketch of slavery? Why his analysis of the religious sentiments of the North and South in regard to the system? Why his exhibition of the Public Opinion of the era of 1787, and his reference to the intentions of the framers of the Constitution? Why his philosophical dissertation on the cause of the change of Southern sentiment in the course of sixty years? Why his ridicule of the Northern Democracy? Why the labored vindication of his own consistency? We put the question to every thinking man—what had all or any of these topics and fragmentary dissertations to do with the great design of the speech? How could they elucidate, explain, justify, or in any way affect Mr. Webster's advocacy of the admission of four slave States, his abandonment of the Wilmot Proviso in relation to New Mexico, his condemnation of the free States as guilty of bad faith in the matter of escaping slaves, his denunciation of Abolition Societies, his repudiation of the doctrine of Legislative instructions, or his expression of willingness to give to Virginia one or two hundred millions of dollars, for the purpose of aiding her and the Southern States to transport to Liberia all their free people of color?

We beg every reader to examine the speech. Far be it from us to do injustice to its author. We have not questioned his motives—we shall not impeach his integrity. With his words and acts we deal plainly. They have astounded us—they will astonish the country, North and South. The opponents of the extension of slavery are pained, humiliated—but in another quarter there is rejoicing without measure.

Suppose that, by the resolutions of annexation, four new slave States may be formed with the consent of Texas, was it for Mr. Webster to enlarge upon this subject, and apparently revel in the bonds of a guaranty which he once denounced? Was it for him, who had ridiculed the change of opinion in General Cass, to come out in the Senate two years after the publication of the Nicholson Letter, and take the ground assumed in that document, that, as slavery was prohibited in New Mexico by the peculiarity of the climate and soil, therefore the Proviso was unnecessary, and he should vote against it? What new light has been thrown upon the subject? One might have supposed that, in abandoning the Wilmot Proviso, he would at least lend the sanction of his great name to the doctrine that slavery had been excluded from that Territory by Mexican law; but even this tribute to the cause of Freedom was withheld. Henry Clay and Thomas H. Benton had boldly asserted such a doctrine; and Democratic Senators from the North had strongly insisted upon it. Why must Mr. Webster be silent? Had he no opinion to offer?

The wrongs sustained by the South at the hands of the North he spoke of freely, and some he admitted, to the extent asserted by Southern Senators. But, what of the wrongs sustained by the free States from Slavery? Oh—how delicately this topic was handled! He scarcely expressed an opinion of his own, but he said the North *thought* it had reason to complain of the South, in relation to the extension of the area of slavery. Had he forgotten how citizens of his own State, in the pursuit of necessary business in some Southern ports, are seized on account of their complexion, taken from the vessels on which they are employed as sailors, and imprisoned as criminals, till their captains are ready to sail? Has he forgotten how agents commissioned by the Legislature of his State to proceed to South Carolina and Louisiana, for the purpose of trying before their courts the validity of their laws in derogation of the rights of citizens of Massachusetts, were driven from both States, under the pressure of threatened violence?

How we longed to hear in that speech one generous sentiment of manly indignation against oppression, one fearless sentiment of genuine devotion to the Rights of Man!

Surely, we thought, he will say a word for California, the first free State on the shores of the Pacific. Clay and Benton and many other generous Southerners had extended to her cordial greeting, had vindicated her claim to admission into the Union, were seeking by every honorable means to secure her a seat at the Council Board of the Republic. General Taylor, a slaveholding President, had warmly urged her admission. How could a Massachusetts Senator, a Free Soil Whig, especially after having insisted strenuously upon the claims of four new inchoate slave States in Texas, forbear speaking a welcome to the Free Soil State of California, first born of American States in our Pacific empire! But, did he do it? Nothing of the kind. No greeting from Daniel Webster to California! He would discuss the question of her admission, her boundaries, her Constitution, at some subsequent time! And not a word fell from his lips that could indicate his course his relation to the question!

Mr. Webster ridiculed the application of the Wilmot Proviso to the Territory of Oregon. And yet we all know slaves had been carried to that Territory, and were held there in bondage till the People themselves prohibited slavery. The climate and soil of the country are just as well adapted to slave labor as those of the slave State of Missouri. His assumption that New Mexico is secured against slavery by an irrepealable law of Nature is not sustained by facts. General Cass took the same ground two years ago, and adduced just as good reasons in its support, as Mr. Webster does now; but the People of the United States were not then convinced, neither will they be now. There are slaves at this time in New Mexico and Deseret, as is admitted by the delegates from those Territories. Lying adjacent to a slave country, New Mexico can only escape the advancing wave of slavery by the barrier of a positive prohibition. Her mineral wealth is great, and her gold mines, though not so accessible as those of California, will yield well by the aid of machinery and hard labor. Freemen will shrink from such drudgery, but capital and slave labor will extract the hidden gold. The labor of slaves is precisely the kind that will be in demand.

But Mr. Webster will no doubt be amply compensated for the disapprobation of his speech by Free-Soilers, by the warm praise of the Washington *Union*, the central organ of the Slavery Propagandists. It cannot find words strong enough to express its admiration. Much as the Slavery men had hoped for, Mr. Webster has "exceeded their expectations." We close our article by publishing the editorial from that paper:

MR. WEBSTER'S SPEECH.

This powerful and manly speech is the lion of the day. It was the theme of universal conversation yesterday in the Capitol and in private circles. It was the object not only of general approbation, but of admiration. We venture to say, that never did Mr. Webster, in all the pride of place, and in the height of his renown, deserve more respect for any of his efforts than he has obtained by the speech before us.

We have now read all the speech as it comes from the hands of our reporters, and we have had the opportunity of comparing our impressions with those of others. We have heard but one opinion upon the subject, though we are aware that the fanatics, and free-soilers, and demagogues of the North, will not all concur in this general tribute of approbation.

The times had come which try men's souls. The country was in danger. Discord was brandishing her torch; and this glorious Union was threatened with dissolution. The conciliation which is so necessary in a confederacy, the wisdom which was to concert a scheme of compromise, and the high moral courage which is so necessary to carry it into execution, amid the clamors of faction and the fury of sectional prejudices, were wanting to meet the crisis. Some of the distinguished men in Congress were coming forward to throw themselves into the breach to save their country. The public voice began to call out the Senator from Massachusetts to the post of duty. But had he the moral courage to meet the occasion? Was he prepared to risk everything for his country? There were anxious doubts entertained about it. Much was said and much was unsaid. First, it was asserted that Mr. Webster would propose a compromise that would satisfy both North and South; then it was reported that he had declined to offer anything, shrinking from "the sounds himself had made." What were our own feelings upon this subject—what our anxieties, what our doubts—will appear from the following article, which appeared in our paper of the 3d instant, and poured from our pen the feelings as they came freely from the heart:

[He quotes the article, which it is unnecessary for us to publish, and then proceeds—]

"The trial is over, and he has passed the fiery ordeal. It gives us pleasure to say that Mr. Webster has even exceeded the 'public expectation.' He has pursued a bold yet conciliatory course, which is suitable to the times; and the very peculiarity of his position enhances the merits of his course.

"The above article has been ascribed by a Washington scribbler to motives which we did not feel; but we are happy now to repair the injustice which we had done to Mr. Webster, by the tone of doubt in which it was conveyed. Mr. Webster has had the moral courage to risk himself for his country. He has profited by the rare opportunity which presented itself, and proved himself worthy of the occasion. And who will now coöperate with him in the glorious cause which he has boldly pursued? Who will unite with him in the effort to extinguish the torch of civil discord, and to save the Union, in a spirit of conciliation, by a liberal system of compromise and concession? The Constitution was framed in the spirit of compromise and equality; and by the same spirit it must be maintained. In this spirit all our present differences can be adjusted, and the ship can be saved from the perils which surround it."

By our Congressional report it will be seen that Mr. Calhoun expressed high approbation of what may be deemed the main parts of Mr. Webster's speech. Now, when Mr. Webster, Mr. Calhoun, and the Washington *Union*, agree on one plan for settling the Slave Question, what is the country to think? Who has abandoned his ground—Mr. Webster, or Mr. Calhoun?

EQUILIBRIUM—HOW DESTROYED.

"The great and primary cause" of the universal and dangerous discontent in the South, is to be found, says Mr. Calhoun, "in the fact that the equilibrium between the two sections of the Government, as it stood when the Constitution was ratified and the Government was put in action, has been destroyed." He presents the relative political power of the two sections in 1790, and in 1840 and 1850, as follows:

"According to the former, the population of the United States, including Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee, which then were in their incipient condition of becoming States, but were not actually admitted, amounted to 3,929,827. Of this number, the Northern States had 1,977,899, and the Southern, 1,952,072—making a difference of only 25,827 in favor of the former States. The number of States, including Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee, was sixteen; of which eight, including Vermont, belong to the Northern section, and eight, including Kentucky and Tennessee, to the Southern—making an equal division of the States between the two sections under the first census. There was a small preponderance in the House of Representatives, and in the electoral college, in favor of the Northern, owing to the fact that, according to the provisions of the Constitution, in estimating Federal numbers, five slaves count but three; but it was too small to affect sensibly the perfect equilibrium which, with that exception, existed at the time. Such was the equality of the two sections when the States composing them agreed to enter into a Federal Union. Since then, the equilibrium between them has been greatly disturbed.

"According to the last census, the aggregate population of the United States amounted to 17,063,357, of which the Northern section contained 9,728,920, and the Southern 7,334,437—making a difference, in round numbers, of 2,400,000. The number of States had increased from sixteen to twenty-six, making an addition of ten States. In the mean time, the position of Delaware had become doubtful as to which section she properly belonged. Considering her as neutral, the Northern States will have thirteen and the Southern States twelve—making a difference in the Senate of two Senators in favor of the former. According to the apportionment under the census of 1840, there were 223 members of the House of Representatives, of whom the Northern States had 135, and the Southern States (considering Delaware as neutral) 87—making a difference in favor of the former in the House of Representatives of 48. The difference in the Senate of two members added to this gives to the North in the electoral college a majority of 50. Since the census of 1840, four States have been added to the Union—Iowa, Wisconsin, Florida, and Texas. They leave the difference in the Senate as it stood when the census was taken; but add two to the side of the North in the House—making the present majority in the House in its favor of 50, and in the electoral college of 52.

"The result of the whole is to give the Northern section a predominance in every department of the Government, and thereby concentrate in it the two elements which constitute the Federal Government—majority of States, and a majority of their population, estimated in Federal numbers. Whatever section concentrates the two in itself possesses the control of the entire Government."

Had this inequality been produced by the operation of natural causes, Mr. Calhoun says the South would have no right to complain; but he assumes that it is the result of the action of the General Government; directed, first, to the exclusion of the South from the common territory belonging to all the States; and secondly, to the imposition of unequal burthens upon the South, through the Tariff policy.

Mr. Calhoun perverts facts, and reasons fallaciously. At the time of the formation of the Constitution, and for several years thereafter, there were seven Northern and five Southern States, (we throw Delaware out of the account, as she rather sympathized with the North,) represented in the Senate by fourteen Northern and ten Southern Senators. The equilibrium he talks of did not then exist, any more than it does now. There are at this time thirty States, fifteen of which are free, fifteen slaveholding. Throwing Delaware out of the account, as belonging properly to neither section, as she is in a transition state, we have thirty Senators from the free States, twenty-eight from the slaveholding—nearer an equilibrium in the Senate than at the time of the formation of the Constitution.

There has been no disturbance of the equilibrium, then, so far as the Senate is concerned. In the House of Representatives it has certainly been destroyed, but not by the action of the Federal Government.

The area of the Northern States and of the territory belonging to them at the time of the formation of the Constitution, was 164,081 square miles. By the Ordinance of 1787, passed by the Congress of the Confederation, (and not by the present Government,) the entire territory between the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers was consecrated to freedom; and under the provisions of that Ordinance, five States have been organized in that territory, and admitted into the Union, comprising an area of 239,345 square miles. So that, at the time the Constitution was formed, the area of free territory amounted to 403,426 square miles. The area of slave territory, including the territory out of which Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi have since been formed, amounted to 385,771 square miles.

This was the state of things at the date of the organization of the present Government. There was no equilibrium in the matter of territory between the two sections, as the North and Northwestern sections comprised eighteen thousand square miles more than the Southern section. In 1802–'3, Louisiana was acquired by the General Government, and in 1819–'20, Florida. Out of these have been organized four large slave States, and but one free State—the former numbering 225,217 square miles, the latter 50,914. After these accessions and organizations, the relative amount of free soil and slave soil, or the comparative amount of area in the free and slave States in 1840, was as follows:

Free States 454,340 square miles.

Slave States 610,793 square miles.

Thus, by the action of the General Government, in the year 1840, the inequality in the areas of the two sections in favor of the North, produced by the Ordinance of 1787, had been destroyed, and an advantage secured to the Southern or slave States and Territories, of an area 156,453 square miles greater than that of the free States and Territories.

On this smaller area, the latter had raised up in 1840 a population 2,400,000 greater than that of the slave States and Territories. And yet, in view of these facts, Mr. Calhoun ventures to assert, that one of the causes of this great superiority of population is, the action of the General Government in excluding the South from the common territory of the Union, "which has had the effect of extending vastly the portion alloted to the Northern portion, and restricting within narrow limits the portion left to the South!"

We have spoken of the inhabited territory of the United States; for it is obvious that no matter what the extent of the uninhabited portions belonging to either section, they are not to be reckoned into the account, in estimating the growth of population that has already taken place. Undoubtedly, in estimating the relative increase of population hereafter, they must be allowed their due weight, but they have had nothing to do with the ratios of population thus far. The facts we have presented show that the free section, in the space of sixty years, has gained upon the slave section in population, 2,400,000, and that this gain has taken place on an area of territory 166,458 square miles less than that of the other section. It is impossible, therefore, to attribute this loss of equilibrium between the two sections to the action of the General Government in reducing slave territory.

The other cause assigned is the system of revenue and disbursement adopted by the General Government.

"I shall not undertake to show that all such duties must necessarily fall mainly on the exporting States, and that the South, as the great exporting portion of the Union, has in reality paid vastly more than her due proportion of the revenue; because I deem it unnecessary, as the subject has on so many occasions been fully discussed. Nor shall I, for the same reasons, undertake to show that a far greater portion of the revenue has been disbursed at the North than its due share; and that the joint effect of these causes has been to transfer a vast amount from South to North, which, under an equal system of revenue and disbursements, would not have been lost to her. If to this be added, that many of the duties were imposed, not for revenue but for protection—that is, intended to put money, not in the Treasury, but directly into the pockets of the manufacturers—some conception may be formed of the immense amount which, in the long course of sixty years, has been transferred from South to North. There are no data by which it can be estimated with any certainty, but it is safe to say that it amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars. Under the most moderate estimate, it would be sufficient to add greatly to the wealth of the North, and thus greatly increase her population, by attracting emigration from all quarters to that section."

The South has suffered chiefly from having been obliged to pay more on her foreign articles of consumption than she would have done had a more liberal commercial policy been pursued. But this is an evil under which all the consumers of the North and West have equally labored. The manufacturers, it may be, have been the gainers, but it so happens that the great increase of the population of the North and West has been, for the most part, not in the manufacturing region, but in the Great West, which certainly has derived no more benefit than the South from high tariffs.

Mr. Calhoun's alleged causes are not sufficient to explain the advance of the North beyond the South in population. No sophistry can blind us to the fact that there is but one cause, and that is this: *Slave Labor prevails in the South, Free Labor in the North.* Unwilling to admit this, an objector says that the reason of the rapid growth of the North is, the tide of foreign immigration constantly setting upon its shores. Well, why do immigrants seek one section and avoid the other? Another says that the people of the slave States constantly emigrate to the free, while the citizens of the latter do not generally settle in the former. True: but *why is this?* We all know that were it not for the system of slavery, which degrades labor, builds up an aristocracy, allies itself with and encourages a monstrous system of land monopoly, keeps down the arts, and is constantly driving out planters who have been reduced to bankruptcy, small farmers, and the poorer classes of freemen, the States of the South would keep pace with the population of the North. The loss of equilibrium, then, between the two sections, is the result, not of the laws of man, but of the laws of nature, and no human device can prevent the inequality from becoming more and more marked.

A PASSAGE BETWEEN MR. FOOTE AND MR. CALHOUN.

We had not room to notice last week a passage between Mr. Foote and Mr. Calhoun, the day following that on which the speech of the latter was delivered. Two things in the speech displeased many of the Southern Senators—to wit, the indiscriminate denunciation of the Northern People, and the demand of an amendment of the Constitution, so as to restore the South to an equilibrium of political power. Mr. Foote, at an early period of the session the next day, arose, to relieve himself and Southern Senators generally, of responsibility on those points. While avowing the highest respect for Mr. Calhoun, and approval of his speech generally, he protested earnestly against those particular views. He thought them unjust and unreasonable, pregnant with evil. Just before he closed his remarks, Mr. Calhoun entered, and learning that Mr. Foote had been expressing dissent from some of his views, became deeply excited. Rising promptly, he demanded, with great sternness, and extreme *hauteur*—"What is the question under discussion?" And he continued, in a manner which expressed far more anger than did his words—"I must express my regret that any one in my absence this morning, before one o'clock, the usual hour for debate, should be engaged in commenting upon my remarks. I had not the advantage of hearing the character of the remarks of the Senator from Mississippi. Did he accuse me of Disunion? Did he insinuate anything of that kind?"

Mr. Foote very temperately explained what he had said, and then took occasion to show Mr. Calhoun that it would not do for him to play the despot.

"I ventured," he said, "to differ with him in opinion, as I had a right to do. I took the liberty of stating my own opinion, in opposition to his, as clearly and strongly as I could. This, I hope, was not impious or indecent, or unallowable. Whilst I aspire to be the leader of no man, I wish it to be understood that I recognise no man, either here or elsewhere, as my leader. I menace no one, and I will submit to no menace; I command no one, and I will yield to no commands. I show courtesy, and I certainly shall exact it from all with whom I may have intercourse. Gentlemen who venture boldly upon the arena of debate here must expect sometimes to have their favorite positions questioned and their arguments responded to; and they have no right to presume unkindness merely on the ground that their speeches are not permitted to go wholly unanswered."

Mr. Calhoun found that he had gone too far, and replied temperately, calling the Senator from Mississippi his *friend*. He neither would take back nor qualify anything in his speech.

"But I will say, and I say it boldly—for I am not afraid to say the truth on any question—that, as things now stand, the Southern States cannot with safety remain in the Union. When this question may be settled, when we shall come to a constitutional understanding, is a question of time; but, as things now stand, I appeal to the Senator from Mississippi, if he thinks that the South can remain in the Union upon terms of equality?

"Mr. Foote. We cannot, unless the question is settled; but, in my opinion, the question may be settled, and honorably settled, within ten days' time.

"Mr. Calhoun. Does the Senator think the South can remain in the Union upon terms of equality without a specific guaranty that she shall enjoy her rights unmolested?

"Mr. Foote. I think she may, without any previous amendment of the Constitution. There we disagree.

"Mr. Calhoun. Yes, there we disagree entirely; and there, I think, he disagrees with our ancestors. I agree with them. They thought liberty required guaranties; they thought that it required protection; and so believe I."

Mr. Calhoun will not be satisfied, then, with anything short of an amendment of the Constitution, securing to slaveholders a political power equal to that of all the non-slaveholders of the Union! This is very modest, very reasonable; but we are not prepared to say that it is visionary. Let him insist upon such an amendment; let him rally Southern Senators in its support; let him get up Southern Conventions, Legislative resolves, and threaten a dissolution of the Union, as an inevitable consequence of the refusal of such an amendment; and we have no doubt he can force it through the Senate. He might not be able to succeed this session, but he would the next. Cass, Webster, Dickinson, Douglas, Clay, &c., would begin to yearn for the Union; their followers would melt with fear, and the proposition for amendment, if united upon by the South, would most certainly command enough Northern patriotic votes, to carry it through the Senate.

That is our opinion of the Senate. A more timid, nervous, legislative body does not exist in Christendom.

Governor Towns, of Georgia, has issued a proclamation, recommending an election to be held in April next, for delegates to the Southern Convention.