stitution, and the enforcement of the slave law at every hazard. [Applause.] There is more to be done to-night. Before I leave this meeting, I will take the opportunity of presenting a resolution.

I do not mean, my friends, to detain you much longer. You have heard able and eloquent speeches, much better than any thing I can give you; but I would tell you there is not a heart in this vast assembly that responds with more fervor to the cause of this country than mine. [Applause.] I am for my country; next to my God, I owe my duty to it. [Applause.] I shall propose, before I leave this meeting, that the proceedings of the assemblage, signed by the chairman and secretaries, shall be transmitted to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, that those high, noble, and mighty assemblages that stood by the country in its hour of peril and danger shall receive a voice of encouragement from those assembled here to-night. [Applause.]

There are other gentlemen here prepared to speak, and as I already have been making a speech to-night, my voice is not good for addressing so large a gathering; but I beg you to bear in mind that this constitution, which was given to us by our predecessors, is a sacred and mighty prize, which we should transmit unimpaired to posterity; that which was formed by the deliberations of the greatest of spirits; that we stood long enough to test its value to humanity and to the world; and we should see that this prize is preserved, that the Union is not destroyed, and with it the hopes of the nation. Let us rally to the rescue upon this occasion; and a true way to assure the South, as was remarked by one of the eloquent speakers who preceded me, is to let them alone, and enforce the law—the fugitive slave law. [Applause.]

If we stand by them, then we said to the South the assurance that all is safe; that we are acting in good faith, and that the Union will be preserved, and be, as we have heretofore been, in the language of one of the speakers, a band of brothers. I thank you for the patient attention which you have given to what I have said.

Mr. Isaac Hazlehurst being announced by the President, came forward and said:

It gives me very great pleasure, fellow-citizens, to appear before you on this occasion. I knew that the call for this meeting would be responded to by the patriotic citizens of all parties. It has been well said by the gentleman who has just taken his seat that our platform is the Union and the Constitution of our beloved country—a Union cemented by the blood of patriots, a Constitution the most liberal in the world, and a country teeming with life and energy, the admiration of all nations. [Applause.]

Long before the adoption of the American Constitution did the idea of union enter into the hearts of the American people.

As early as 1743 they were united under the name of the United Colonies of New England. The close of the last century found them living under the articles of Confederation; and in 1787, as you have already heard, a Convention assembled in this city for the purpose of revising and amending and altering the articles of Confederation.

Among the delegates to that Convention was a union of signal ability and patriotism. After months, I had almost said years, of deliberation, the present constitution—the result of mutual concession—was adopted. The Union was the basis of that constitution, and it is our duty, under all circumstances, to enforce the guarantees of that constitution.

Whenever a law is passed which has for its object the enforcement of any guaranty of that constitution, patriotism requires fidelity to the provisions of that law. I do not speak now of sectional feeling; I do not speak now of that patriotism which recognizes a township, a county, or a State; but I speak of that patriotism which draws its inspiration from and overlooks and takes in the whole United States. [Applause.]

I say, fellow-citizens, that obedience to every law is the duty of all, and that it is the duty of all to enforce obedience to every law.

The constitution of our country cannot be impaired in part. Like the columns of this splendid room, giving and taking strength, not one could be removed without infringing upon the general symmetry. [Applause.] The Union was the foundation upon which our constitution was formed, and it is the preservation of the Union thus far that has made us what we are. It found us weak, it now beholds us powerful. The blessings of liberty—our splendid triumphs in the mechanic arts—the still greater blessings of religious toleration—these are matters of history. They are ours. They cannot be taken away from us. And this is the result of the American Union. And are we to disregard the principle of the constitution? Are we to dishonor the laws? Are our brethren of the South to be treated as entire strangers? [Cries of no, no.] Are their rights, their institutions to be the subject of desecration by a foreign emissary upon our shores?

If the constitution shall be invaded, if our brethren of the South see that there is no spirit of obedience to the law, then that perfect Union for which the constitution was ordained and established will be gone, and gone forever. And as the beautiful structure of the Republic fades away, there will rise in its place separate States, sectional interests, and burning jealousies. Then what is to be the position of our own dear Commonwealth, the Keystone of the arch? When the whole arch crumbles away, where will be the Keystone? What is to be the destiny of Pennsylvania? Where is she to go? What substitute shall there be for our own Union flag? Shall she run up a lone star, or shall she stand like the Keystone sustaining the great federal arch of the constitution? [Applause.]

Fellow-citizens, I feel a diffidence in addressing you after the eloquent remarks that have been made this evening. If this Union should ever be rent asunder, who is to claim that flag—the flag of the Union—that cheering record of trials and glorious triumphs—that flag which proclaims the Union from every mast head—that flag which now floats in holyday triumph, and now is raised amid the din of arms?

Let that flag be the orator on this occasion, and as it marshals us the way we should go, never, O! never let it be displayed with the "*Union down!*" [Cries of never, and great cheering.]

The resolutions were then put to the question, and carried with but few dissenting voices.

Mr. James Page then offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting, signed by the officers, be sent to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, to be by them laid before the bodies over which they respectively preside.

THE GREAT UNION MEETING IN FANEUIL HALL.

The great gathering of American citizens in the city of Boston, without distinction of party, took place at Faneuil Hall on Tuesday afternoon.

The attendance (says the *Boston Courier*, from which we copy) was worthy of the occasion. The hall was filled to its utmost capacity by an assemblage not drawn together merely by that species of curiosity which supplies so large a part of the numbers at many great meetings, but consisting of substantial citizens, brought from their homes and their occupations by the right spirit, and an earnest resolution to aid in the manifestation of a true American feeling. The deep interest of the matters which called for this display of public sentiment caused the attendance of great numbers of persons who, on common occasions, take no part in political transactions. Whatever Boston and its neighborhood contain of talent, moral worth, intelligence, and weight of character, was represented in very unusual strength, and we may safely assert that, regarding all the essentials of respectability and the substantial qualities in the character of a community, an assemblage equal to this never before convened within the walls of Faneuil Hall.

At a few minutes before four o'clock the Committee of Arrangements came in, and were received with loud cheers. At four o'clock precisely Thos. B. Curtis, Esq., mounted the rostrum, and said:

Friends of the Union—friends of the constitution: I am desired by the Committee of Arrangements to ask you to come to order, and to present for your sanction the following form of organization of this great meeting.

For President, John C. Warren, a name dear in the annals of the revolution, and connected with the history of Bunker Hill.

For Vice Presidents: David Henshaw of Leicester, Nathan Appleton of Boston, Caleb Eddy of Boston, H. A. S. Dearborn of Roxbury, John T. Heard of Boston, George G. Smith of Boston, Alfred Greenough of Boston, and Samuel Lawrence of Boston.

For Secretaries: Charles J. Hendee of Roxbury, A. W. Thayter, Jr. of Boston, George R. Sampson of Boston, Joseph Smith of South Boston, Ivers J. Austin of Boston, and Thomas J. Whittemore of Cambridge.

The meeting having been thus organized, the venerable Dr. Warren rose and spoke as follows:

It is not without reluctance that I appear before this great assembly to take part in the political proceedings of my fellow-countrymen. Having from an early period of life devoted myself to professional duties, I have not entered actively into the politics of the day; but I have never ceased to feel the deepest interest in the security and prosperity of our common country, and have ever considered that when these were in danger it was my duty, as well as the duty of every good citizen, to devote mind and body to their protection and preservation. Such a crisis seems now to have arrived. The Union, and consequently the existence of this nation, are menaced; and unless there is a great and general effort in their support, we may soon behold the mighty fabric of our Government tumbling over our heads, and threatening to crush in its ruins the prosperity which we have so long and happily enjoyed.

It has been my lot to have lived during a period when there was no constitution and no union; when there was no commerce, no manufactures, little of agriculture, or of any of the arts calculated to make a powerful and happy people. It was a period when there was no sound currency, no confidence between man and man, and no harmony in the action of the different States. It was a period when men's hands were turned against their neighbors, when the courts were beset with armed men, when law and justice were trampled under foot, when our best towns and villages were threatened with pillage, fire, and the sword, when the soil was polluted with the blood of its own citizens. I remember the unorganized little band of fathers of families, who in that emergency issued from this place feebly provided with arms or with other means calculated to put down a daring and desperate rebellion. What a dark moment was this! What dreadful forebodings arose in the minds of those who had been expending their labor, their treasure, and their blood, for the safety of an unhappy country!

But in the midst of this gloom a ray of light showed itself. A constitution was proposed, and, after a cautious investigation and careful adaptation to the varied interests of the country, was adopted as a bond of everlasting union. Under this constitution a new order of things has arisen. Commerce and agriculture have revived. Manufactures have every where grown up. Education, literature, and science have been diffused in all our cities and towns. The highest prosperity has pervaded the nation, and presented to the wondering eyes of Europe the spectacle of a federal republic free without licentiousness and rich without luxury.

Now, let me ask, is there any one desirous of returning to the disunion of 1786? Is there any one who is willing to trifle with, to spurn at, or to go behind this constitution? If there is, I cannot go with him. I go for the whole Constitution and the whole Union as the best security for the liberties of the people. For these I stand here; and if I am not ready to exert every faculty which I possess to uphold and maintain them, I shall be false to the blood which runs in my veins, false to the ancestors from whom I am descended, and false to every sentiment of my own heart. I stand, then, at all hazards, for the Constitution and the Union, one and indissoluble, now and forever.

Dr. Warren's speech excited great applause.

W. W. Greenough, Esq. was now introduced, and said: Fellow-citizens, I have been requested to present for the consideration of the meeting the following resolutions, prepared by the Committee of Arrangements:

Resolved, That the preservation of the constitution, and the Union which it creates, is the great duty of all citizens; that the blessings which have flowed from them in times past, which the whole country is now enjoying under them, and which we firmly believe posterity will derive from them hereafter, are incalculable; and that they vastly transcend in importance all other political objects and considerations whatever.

Resolved, That it would be folly to deny that there has been and still is danger to the existence of the Union when there is prevalent so much of a spirit of disunion, constantly weakening its strength and alienating the minds of one part of the people of the United States from another; and that if the spirit be not checked and restrained, and do not give way to a spirit of conciliation and of patriotic devotion to the general good of the whole country, we cannot expect a long continuance of the political tie which has hitherto made us one people, but must rather look to see groups of rival neighboring republics, whose existence will be a state of perpetual conflict and open war.

Resolved, That all the provisions of the constitution of the United States—the supreme law of the land—are equally binding upon every citizen and upon every State in the Union; that all laws passed by Congress, in pursuance of the constitution, are equally binding on all the citizens, and no man is at liberty to resist or disobey any one constitutional act of Congress any more than another; and that we do not desire or intend to claim the benefit of any one of the powers or advantages of the constitution, and to refuse, or seem to refuse, to perform any part of its duties, or to fulfil any part of its obligations.

Resolved, That the adjustment of the measures which disturbed the action of Congress for nearly ten months of its last session ought to be regarded as a settlement of them by the States and the people of the United States in good faith, in all the substantial provisions, *because*, although we may differ with each other about the details of those measures, yet, in our judgment, a renewed popular agitation of any of the main questions thus settled would be fraught with new and extreme dangers to the peace and harmony of the country, which this adjustment has happily restored.

Resolved, That every species and form of resistance to the execution of a regularly enacted law, except by peaceable appeal to the regular action of the judicial tribunals upon the question of its constitutionality—an appeal which ought never to be opposed or impeded—is mischievous, and subversive of the first principles of social order, and tends to anarchy and bloodshed.

Resolved, That men who directly or indirectly instigate or encourage those who are or may be the subjects of legal process to offer violent resistance to the officers of the law, deserve the reprehension of an indignant community, and the severest punishment which the laws have provided for their offence; and that we have entire confidence that any combination or attempt to fix such a blot upon the fair fame of our State or city will be promptly rebuked and punished by an independent and impartial judiciary, and by firm and enlightened juries.

Resolved, That we will at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, so far as our influence may extend, sustain the Federal Union, uphold its constitution, and enforce the duty of obedience to the laws.

B. R. Curtis, Esq. moved the adoption of the resolutions, and then spoke as follows:

It is a source of great satisfaction to me that I can stand *here* and say, not fellow-Whigs or Democrats, but *fellow-citizens*. That here I can meet on common ground, in an important emergency, those who have a common interest with me in the country; for I understand we have come here not to consider particular measures of Government, but to assert that we have a Government; not to determine whether this or that law be wise or just, but to declare that there is law, and its duties and power; not to consult whether this or that course of policy is beneficial to our country, but to say that we yet have a country, and intend to keep it safe. These are the objects for which I understand we have, as American citizens, here met, and, for my own part, I cannot think we have come together too soon.

There is a very excited state of the public mind all over the country. It grows out of a subject of the last importance, so connected with the interests, and sentiments, and passions of our countrymen as to make it difficult for the wisest and coolest on either side to restrain themselves within the limits of prudence and moderation. Many good men among us, with very tender consciences, but not very sound practical judgments, apparently not at all aware of the direction in which they are moving, or of the results to which they are tending, believing themselves to be as harmless as doves, and feeling, no doubt, quite sure they are as wise as serpents, have plunged into this contest. Others, who love excitement or notoriety, or influence and power, or who are smarting under disappointment, have found here a new field of promise. Others still, whose daily food is contention and whose daily drink is the waters of strife, have rushed as into a quarrel, and brought "with them such temper and feelings as have been justly characterized as malignant philanthropy." While influencing more or less all these and thousands of others who have suffered themselves to be led into this excitement, and lending a certain dignity and power even to the bad passions which are enlisted, is that deep and inextricable love of human liberty which resides in every throb of every heart of the true sons of New England.

And when we add to all this that the people of other parts of our country, having opposite interests and passions, who, I believe, have never been remarkable for letting that excellent virtue called moderation be known unto all men, have made upon this subject used language, and manifested feelings, and done acts which I am sure wise and good men every where must deeply regret, and that these things have produced their natural consequences here, we may not be greatly surprised, however deeply we may be concerned, at the existing state of things.

In my humble judgment it is a state of things calling for the sober and careful consideration of good citizens of all parties in the State, and for the public expression of a well-considered, tempered, but fixed opinion thereon.

In times of public danger it was the usage of our fathers to come together in this hall to embody and express the public sentiment of this people concerning their important affairs. Is not this an occasion in which we may well imitate their example?

There has been heard within these walls, addressed to a public meeting, and received with approbation by that meeting, the declaration that an article of the constitution of the United States shall not be executed, *law or no law*. A gentleman offered a resolve, which was passed at a public meeting in this city, that "constitution or no constitution, law or no law, we will not allow a fugitive slave to be taken from Massachusetts." Here and elsewhere have been publicly uttered exhortations to violent resistance to law, and assurance of aid and succor in maintaining such resistance. The chairman of a public meeting declared here that "the law will be resisted, and if the fugitive resists, and if he slay the slave-hunter, or even the marshal, and if he therefore be brought before a jury of Massachusetts men, that jury will not convict him." Here and elsewhere has been promulgated the idea that it is fit and proper for strangers, coming from abroad on to our soil, to put themselves upon their natural rights, avowed according to their own human light, and by that light arm and resist unto blood the execution of the law of the Commonwealth. I speak not of any law of Congress, but of the constitution, the supreme law of the land. The chairman of a public meeting here has ventured to assure such persons that judges and jurors will violate their oaths to protect them from punishment; and, as if there should be nothing wanting to exhibit the madness which has possessed men's minds, murder and perjury have been erected into virtues, and in this city preached from the sacred desk. I must not be suspected of exaggerating in the least degree. I read, therefore, the following passage from a sermon preached and published in this city:

"Let me suppose a case which may happen here, and before long. A woman flies from South Carolina to Massachusetts to escape from bondage. Mr. Greatheart aids her in her escape, harbors and conceals her, and is brought to trial for it. The punishment is a fine of one thousand dollars and imprisonment for six months. I am drawn to serve as a juror, and pass upon this offence. I may refuse to serve, and be punished for that, leaving men with no scruples to take my place, or I may take the juror's oath to give a verdict according to the law and the testimony. The law is plain, let us suppose, and the testimony conclusive. Greatheart himself confesses that he did the deed alleged—saving one ready to perish. The judge charges that, if the jurors are satisfied of that fact, then they must return that he is guilty. This is a nice matter. Here are two questions. The one put to me in my official capacity as juror is this: 'Did Greatheart aid the woman?' The other, put to me in my natural character as man is this: 'Will you help punish Greatheart with fine and imprisonment for helping a woman to obtain her unalienable rights?' If I have extinguished my manhood by my juror's oath, then I shall do my official business and find Greatheart guilty, and I shall seem to be a true man; but if I value my manhood I shall answer after my natural duty to love a man, and not to hate him; to do him justice, not injustice; to allow him the natural rights he has not alienated, and shall say, 'not guilty.' Then men will call me forsworn and a liar, but I think human nature will justify the verdict.

"The man who attacks me to reduce me to slavery, in that moment of attack alienates his right to life, and if I were the fugitive, and could escape in no other way, I would kill him with as little compunction as I would drive a musquito from my face."—*A Sermon of Conscience, by Rev. Theodore Parker.*

I should like to ask the Rev. Preacher, when he goes into court and holds up his hand, and calls on his Maker to attest the sincerity of his vow to render a true verdict according to the law and the evidence, whether he does *that* as a man or in some other capacity?

Is it not time that they who love their country and respect the laws should come together and soberly ponder these things?

If a case exists which demands a breach of a fundamental law of the Government, and justifies armed resistance by individuals, it is a case for revolution, and it is time we knew and acted upon it.

If there is not such a case, then this language, and the feelings that prompt it, and the conduct which accompanies it, disgrace our community, and endanger its safety and peace, and should receive the rebuke of every good citizen. There is no middle ground between these two alternatives. If there is a case for forcible resistance of law, for refusal to execute one article in the compact which constitutes the Government, for vilifying this compact by names which I should be unwilling to repeat, for stirring up the angry passions of men, and arraying one part of the country against another part, it can be nothing less than a case of revolution, and in a revolution it must end, if its progress be not checked.

Now, I understand that those who act in concert on this subject are divisible into two classes. One class openly avow that this is a case for a revolution. They say the constitution of the United States contains an article which is immoral, and must not, under any circumstances, be obeyed; that as honest men they cannot undertake to abide by this compact, with a mental reservation that they will break an important part of it; and therefore they reject the whole, and hold it to be the duty of this Commonwealth to withdraw itself instantly from this whole compact, and thus revolutionize the Government. This is the ground of action and the end of one class—the ground of action being that there is a fundamental error in the constitution of the Government, and the end that the Government must be destroyed.

Whatever else may be said of this, it cannot be denied that it is open, definite, tangible, capable of being seen and understood in its true proportions. They do not profess one thing and mean another. They do not move blindly towards the gulph of civil discord and national destruction. They do not lead their followers towards it with boastful assurances that the ground is safe and clear. They are treason, and they honestly say so, and give their reason for it.

In my humble judgment, it is time that reason was examined. You may say it needs no examination; the bare statement of the proposition carries its own refutation with it. So I had supposed until recent events changed my opinion. I do not think it important to examine their reason because I entertain any hope of influencing any of this class of men whom I have mentioned. I believe their passions are too much excited. But there is another larger class who are now acting with them, many of whom, I verily believe, do not see whither they are going. These have not thrown off their allegiance to the constitution. On the contrary, many of them hold or have held public office, and have sworn to support the constitution. Many more, if we may judge from the recent elections, desire earnestly to take that oath. [Great laughter.] I am bound to think, and do think, they have taken this oath without any mental reservation. They do not hold it in that article which promises that fugitives from service escaping into this State shall be given up. But, ask your Free-Soil neighbors, "will you give your support to a law which shall fairly and fully execute this article? You are dissatisfied with the present law; but, laying aside all questions about means and details, do you mean that Massachusetts shall keep this promise or break it?" And, depend upon it, if you get any answer at all, it will be that it is a promise not fit to be kept.

I do not mean to say that all would so answer. Some have not sufficiently probed their own conscience to know what lies at the bottom, and some who have may be willing to have this article executed. I hope there are many such. But I do believe that, when it comes to the practical question whether the promise shall be kept, many will be found in the condition in which Sir William Blackstone says he was in respect to a belief in witchcraft: for, says he, in substance, inasmuch as both the scriptures and the laws of England recognize the crime of witchcraft, I cannot take it upon myself to deny that there has been such a thing, though I cannot give credit to any particular modern instance of it.

So it is with some of these gentlemen. Inasmuch as the constitution, which many of them have sworn to support, contains an express promise that fugitives from service shall be given up, they cannot take it upon themselves to deny, in the general, that the promise is to be kept; but as to its being done in any particular way, or by any particular means, or in any modern instance, they cannot consent, and to prevent it they are ready to join their best and utmost exertions to those of the first class whom I have named, though these latter all the time declare that the distinction between the abstract and the concrete is too thin for their eyes to see.

Now, the real difficulty with both these classes of persons is the same. The difference between them is that one sees it and avows it; the other does not see it, or is too prudent to avow it.

Is it not fit, then, that this supposed difficulty should be brought out into the light of day and steadily looked at? There ought to be no reluctance to do this. If the difficulty be real it should be acknowledged, and due effect given to it. If it be unreal it should be dissipated. If the constitution under which we live is, as is expressed in the calm language of this resolve, shall be trifling with the existence of a people to become the discussion of a subject deeply involving the welfare of so many millions of people, if it be "*a bond of hell*," which it is the duty of every just man to break, we ought to know it and act on it.

I hope you will bear with me, therefore, fellow-citizens, while I attempt to discuss this question.

I am a Massachusetts man—born on her soil, bred in her schools, partaking, from my infancy to this hour, of the blessings which, under Providence, flow from and are secured by her laws—and I hope I am not unmindful of the honor and the duty which I owe to the State. And I feel, with you, a common interest to inquire whether this Commonwealth entered into this compact and agreed that it should be the supreme law, it made a covenant of iniquity?

Let me say, at the outset, that this is not a question to be approached with calmness, and solved by the reason and judgment of sober men. I shall endeavor so to treat it, as well as I can, that course of reasoning which has satisfied my own mind.

Let me begin by asking you to keep in view that we are considering the rights and duties of a civilized state. The question is, whether this Commonwealth acted within the bounds of right, in 1788, when it entered into the compact of the constitution?

At that time Massachusetts was an independent sovereign State, possessing, of course, all the powers over its own citizens, in reference to foreign States, which constitute and arise from sovereignty.

Among these powers two only are important here—the power to make binding compacts with other States, and the power to determine what persons from abroad shall be admitted to or excluded from the territorial limits of the State, and on what terms and conditions any such persons shall be allowed to come or be required to depart. Both these powers are unquestionable. For centuries a succession of great minds have been employed upon this subject of public law. Beginning with Grotius, in the 16th century, and ending with our countryman, Wheaton, who died in this city two years ago, or with Lieber, if you please, who still lives, I believe there cannot be found any where a set of more profound, wise, humane christian moralists than these—men of great boldness of mind, restrained by no positive rules, seeking the moral truth of the great subjects they have discussed by the best lights of divine and human wisdom.

Yet not one of them, so far as I know, has ever doubted that the powers which I have mentioned rightfully exist, and are necessary for the preservation of every civilized State.

There is another principle equally clear, and that is, that every State may and should exercise its powers for its own preservation and the advancement of the welfare of its own citizens.

Indeed, outside of this exciting subject, all these principles are not only unquestioned, but they have been acted on by this Commonwealth over and over again, to the acceptance of every body.

As early as 1793 this Commonwealth passed a law prohibiting, under a severe penalty, any shipmaster from landing in this State any foreign convict; and this has ever since been, and is now, the law. What right had the State to pass this law? The right to protect its public peace, and the persons and property and morals of its citizens, and to exercise its own discretion as to what persons from abroad might prove injurious to either.

In 1830 it was found Ireland was pouring upon our shores a tide of pauperism and disease. The victims of centuries of oppression and wrong came hither to seek relief and succor. Poor-houses and hospitals were crowded with them, and, in consequence, at the public expense, were transported hither. Did any man doubt the rightful authority of the Legislature to put a stop to this; to say that these persons, however ground down by oppression and distress at home, must not be thrown upon our hands? No one, that I ever heard of, doubted it. On the contrary, very stringent laws were passed, which we have been struggling ever since to maintain against the encroaching power of Congress over commerce. What right has the State to pass these laws? I answer again, the right of self-protection; the right to determine what persons from abroad shall be admitted to its territory; the right to use its own discretion, and consult the safety and welfare of its citizens, in admitting or excluding them.

Let me borrow an illustration out of this very subject of slavery. Suppose that in every slaveholding State there are thousands of slaves who, from age, disease, or infirmity, are mere burdens. Now, we have heard some angry talk about retaliatory legislation. Suppose Carolina and Georgia should pass laws that if any such aged, diseased, or infirm slaves desired, with the consent of their masters, to come to Massachusetts, they should be transported hither at the public expense. I wonder if a Free-Soil Legislature would consider itself powerless to prevent this State from being overwhelmed by such an irruption?

I have been attempting to illustrate what really requires no illustration. The principles are clear. Every sovereign State has and must have the right to judge what persons from abroad shall be admitted, and this and all other powers the State is bound to use for the safety and welfare of its own citizens. Taking along with us these principles, I ask you to go back with me to that Convention, which assembled in this city on the 9th day of January, 1788, to consider whether this State should adopt the proposed constitution. We are in the presence of no ordinary assembly. In the chair is John Hancock, the man who in 1775 threw his name and his fortune into the scale of the Colony, at the beginning of its contest with the Crown, and who, whatever else may be said of him, was always true to the revolution. There is Theophilus Parsons, who has sounded all the depths of public and private law. There was Samuel Adams, not improperly called the Cato of America, his whole soul filled with the ideas of human liberty and popular rights, upon whose ears the sounds of the guns at Lexington fell with sweeter tones than any other music on that morning of spring. There, too, were Gerry and Varnum, and Gore, Ames, and Bowdoin, and Sedgwick of Stockbridge, the soldier, the jurist, the ardent patriot, the true philanthropist, who by his own professional exertions had just before struck the last blow at negro slavery in Massachusetts, and a crowd of able, just, and wise associates, fresh from the deep and intensely interesting discussions concerning political and civil liberty, which originated and accompanied and followed the war of the revolution. The question is whether they were so ignorant or so blind to their duty as legislators, as citizens, and as men, or so mean, in behalf of this Commonwealth, a compact so grossly immoral that their children may not fairly execute it, but must now overthrow and destroy the work of their hands. Let us see:

In the first place, it was known to them and is certain, that the Union could not be formed and the constitution adopted without this article.

In the next place, they believed, and we know, that it was impossible to over-estimate the importance of this Union and this Constitution to the people whom they represented. The Confederation had proved powerless for good. The public debt of the country, due chiefly to the officers and soldiers of the Revolution, of whom this State furnished so large a part, could not be paid. The commerce of the country was in disorder. Each State had its own navigation laws and imposts, and was already using these powerful and exciting instruments in a manner hostile to each other. An insurrection against the laws in this State, known as Shay's rebellion, which seriously threatened not only the existence of our own Government, but the general peace of the country, and was connected with things both in New Hampshire and Connecticut, had just been quelled with great difficulty. Great Britain, from whose grasp we had escaped in open contest, was now waiting to see us prostrated by internal struggles, and from the great heart of Washington was extorted the exclamation, "What, gracious God, is man! that there should be such inconsistency and perfidiousness in his conduct? It is but the other day we were shedding our blood to obtain the constitutions under which we live—constitutions of our own choice and making; and now we are unsheathing the sword to overturn them. The thing is so unaccountable that I hardly know how to realize it, or to persuade myself that I am not under the illusion of a dream."

This was the state of public affairs under which, in January, 1788, this Convention assembled. They foresaw that this great instrument, presented for their adoption, would accomplish what it has accomplished—that it would form a more perfect union—that it would establish justice—that it would insure domestic tranquillity—that it would provide for the common defence—that it would promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to the people of this Commonwealth and their posterity.

On the one hand were the evils, on the other the benefits, and they were called upon to choose between them for the people of this Commonwealth during countless generations.

Now, let us suppose that some one had been bold enough to rise in that Convention and say, "I see these evils; they are great now, and threaten to become intolerable. I see these benefits; I believe this constitution will perform for Massachusetts all that it promises. But I deny that Massachusetts, as a sovereign and civilized State, has the rightful power to make this compact; for there is a stipulation in it that persons held to service in States from which they have escaped, and who take refuge within our borders, shall be given up to be carried back again."

I cannot pretend, fellow-citizens, to give any idea of the treatment which such an objection would have received from the great and powerful minds of that Convention. I believe they would not have left a vestige of it on earth—no, nor the material to make a ghost of, to rise from regions below and frighten some of their descendants. But it needs no uncommon ability and discernment to see sufficient answers to this objection.

In the first place, are not these persons foreigners as to us? And what right have they to come here at all against the will of the legislative power of the State? And if their coming here or remaining here is not consistent with the safety of the State and the welfare of the citizens, in the manner of all that is rational may we not prohibit their coming, or send them back if they come?

If we have a right to say to those who have been ground down by the oppression of England, you must not land on our shores because your presence here is injurious to us, have we not a right to avoid enormous evils and secure incalculable benefits, not otherwise attainable, by a compact, one article of which should be that our State shall not be an asylum for fugitives from service?

To deny this is to deny the right of self-preservation to a State. It strikes at the heart of every civilized community. It makes its preservation impossible, and throws us back at once into a condition below the most degraded savages who have a semblance of government.

No sane man can reflect, and then make such a denial; so that there can be but one possible question, and that is simply whether this was a case which called for the exercise of the power. Upon this question also, unless we overturn principles necessary to the existence of civil society, it is impossible to doubt that we are precluded and justly bound by the action of the State in 1788. Has not a State the right to carry out such obligation, for it is the sovereign power, and if it is to be exercised by a State? But in truth there is no occasion to go very far—it is enough to say that the power which this Commonwealth in 1788 had the rightful power to assent to the constitution, there cannot be two opinions among those who know the facts that the requisite emergency existed.

I am not about to repeat what I have already said respecting that emergency. You know what it was. You know that the great duty of justice could not otherwise be performed; that our peace at home and our safety from foreign aggression could not otherwise be ensured; and that only by this means could we obtain the blessings of liberty to the people of Massachusetts and their posterity. I may add what has since happened—a great and glorious motive, which our fathers anticipated, and our eyes have seen, in no other way could we become an example of, and a security for, the capacity of man, safely and peacefully and wisely, to govern himself, under free and popular constitutions. But I wish to ask your attention particularly to one thing, which is more intimately connected with this subject.

I undertake to say that men of forecast must then have foreseen, and subsequent events have demonstrated, and it is now known, that without an obligation to restore fugitives from service, constitution or no constitution, Union or no Union, we cannot live in peace with the slaveholding States.

You may break up the constitution and the Union to-morrow; you may do it by a civil war, or by what I could never understand the method or the principle of—what is called a peaceable secession; you may do it in any conceivable or inconceivable way; you may draw the geographical line between slaveholding and non-slaveholding *any where*; but when we shall have settled down, they will have their institutions, and we shall have ours. One is as much a fact as the other. One engages the interests, and feelings, and passions of men as much as the other. And how long can we live in peace, side by side, without some provision, by compact, to meet this case? Not one year. Any reflecting man can satisfy himself of this by turning his mind upon the facts; and history proves it. As early as 1643, when the country was a wilderness, and the movement of persons from one part to another unfrequent and exceedingly difficult, the colonies of Massachusetts and Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven, found it necessary, even in that primitive and imperfect union which they founded to stay themselves against destruction, to insert an article substantially like this one: "That if any servant run away from his master, into any of the confederate jurisdictions, that in such case (upon certificate from one magistrate in the jurisdiction out of which the servant fled, or upon other due proof) the said servant shall either be delivered to his master, or any other that pursues and brings such certificate and proof."

But we need not pause upon the very early experience of our New England ancestors. The Government of the United States had not been in operation two years when the necessity of some such provision, in some form, to preserve the peace of bordering independent States, was clearly proved. You know that in 1789, Florida belonged to Spain, and stretched along the southern border of Georgia. Well, General Washington had not been two years in office when the people of Southern Georgia became so uneasy on account of the escape of their slaves across the border into Florida as to make very urgent representations to the National Government demanding redress; and thereupon orders were obtained from the Spanish court to arrest the further reception of the fugitives, and to make restitution; and President Washington sent a special messenger into Florida to see to the execution of these orders.

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon this. If any one in this age expects to live in peace, side by side with the slaveholding States, without some effectual stipulation as to the restoration of fugitives, he must either be so wise as to foresee events in no way connected with human experience, or so foolish as to reject experience and probabilities as guides of action.

I know it may be said, "Let the contest come. We are ready for it. Let the blood of the slaughtered be upon the heads of those who are in the wrong." But when I look abroad over a hundred thousand happy homes in Massachusetts, and see a people such as the blest sun has rarely shone upon—so intelligent, educated, moral, religious, progressive, and free, to do every thing but wrong; when I call to mind the admirable constitution of government—and it comes as near to perfection as the lot of humanity permits—when I remember that both these things are the free gifts of that awful Being who holds peoples and nations in the hollow of his hand, I fear to say that I should not be in the wrong to put all this at risk because our passionate will impels us to break a promise our wise and good fathers made not to allow a class of foreigners to come here, or to send them back if they come.

With the rights of those persons I firmly believe Massachusetts has nothing to do. It is enough for us that they have no rights to be *here*. Our peace and safety they have no right to invade; whether they come as fugitives, and being here act as rebels against our law, or come as armed invaders. Whatever natural rights they have, and I admit those natural rights to their fullest extent, this is not the *soil* on which to vindicate them. This is our soil, sacred to our peace—on which we intend to perform *our* promises, and work out for the benefit of ourselves and our posterity and the world, the destiny which our Creator has assigned to *us*. So far as He has supplied us with the means to succor the distressed, we, as christian men, will do so, and bid them welcome, and thank God that we have the means to do it. But we will not act beyond these means: we will not violate a solemn compact to do it; we will not do it by holding up our hands and swearing to render a verdict according to the law and evidence, and then knowingly violate that oath; we will not plunge into civil discord to do it; we will not shed blood to do it; we will not so throw away the rich gifts which He has conferred upon us, not for our benefit alone, but in trust for countless generations his children.

In my judgment these are not means which He has commanded to us to enable us to succor the needy and the oppressed of other States, and, so far as depends upon me, these means shall never be used.

[During the speech of Mr. Curtis, a slight disturbance was caused by the Rev. Theodore Parker, who attempted to interrupt and reply to Mr. Curtis's review of the sermon of a "certain reverend preacher;" this, however, was of but a moment's duration. The audience were not inclined to grant Mr. Parker a hearing, although his friend Garrison attempted likewise to put in his oar. Mr. Curtis said—"At a proper time I shall be pleased to hear what the gentleman in the gallery has to say; but at present I beg to be permitted to proceed with the course of my remarks." Mr. Curtis experienced no further interruption, and "the gentleman in the gallery" was silenced for the remainder of the evening. This occurrence was the only thing that interrupted the general harmony of the proceedings of the evening.

Mr. Curtis's speech was listened to with great attention, and repeatedly elicited enthusiastic applause.]

B. F. Hallet, Esq., was the next orator, and he spoke thus:

Mr. President and Fellow-Citizens: In the presence of this strong, and calm, and energetic meeting; after the resolutions that have been read, the clear and eloquent argument which we have heard, and have been enforced by the gentleman who has just left you your greetings, and the unmistakable expression of your sentiments, we can now say at home and abroad that there is no law of these United States which cannot be executed in Massachusetts.

There is no doubt there never has been; and if there be any wild enough hereafter to resort to a fancied higher law to put down law, they will find in your determined will a stronger law to sustain all the laws of the land.

It is good, then, for us to be here to-day. There are occasions, and assuredly this is one, when it is well to forget that we belong to parties or sections, and to remember only that we are citizens of the United States.

The purpose of this meeting and the spontaneous call of five thousand names which combines so much of the moral, physical, pecuniary, and intellectual strength of this community, all point to the Union, its preservation, and the supremacy of its laws.

Though no man severs himself from his party by coming here to-day, nor pledges himself to any new one, yet every right-minded citizen must feel that there are occasions in which his country rises above all party, and the time when men of all parties are bound to unite in an expression of public sentiment that shall give renovated strength to the bonds of our Union, and renew the solemn vows and engagements we have made, and which our fathers entered into for us, that whenever and wherever a question arises between union and disunion, law or no law, a section of the country or the whole country, we will be found on the side of the Union, the laws, and a united country.

Such occasions have presented themselves before to-day to test the strength of the Union and the supremacy of an unpopular law over a popular sentiment. I mean unpopular in one section and popular in another section of these States, and in all these crises the laws and the Union have triumphed over all local or sectional interests arrayed against them.

Mr. President, it is just about eighteen years ago when one of the most numerous and weighty assemblages that ever gathered in this hall since the revolution came together to pledge themselves to the support of the constitution and of the laws for the collection of the tariff revenue, then threatened with nullification by a single Southern State. Then Massachusetts insisted on the enforcement of a law which she regarded as essential to her property and industry, but which South Carolina detested.

Now, the threatened nullification comes from Massachusetts upon a law which she may dislike, just as she does not only South Carolina, but the whole South insist is vital to the protection of their property and industry. And shall Massachusetts nullify that law in the question?

But it is said that there is no crisis and no call at present for a demonstration of the friends of the Union, and that there are no disunionists in New England! If, indeed, there be none, then are we all unanimous for the Union and for upholding its laws, and it certainly can do no harm to proclaim to the world and from Faneuil Hall that we are the friends of the Union, ready to abide by and sustain the laws of the Union, and anxious to remove all distrusting doubts that may here or elsewhere tend to its dissolution. In a word, that we go not only for the integrity of the Union, but for the peace of the Union. But are we sure that the Union is safe while extremes North and South continue to agitate and indulge in mutual criminations, and especially while we see in our midst a strong attempt making to direct public opinion in the course of what is termed by its advocates a peaceful resistance to the law, but which can be peaceful only just so long as all who do not oppose a certain law permit these peaceful mobs and meetings to have their own way in prostrating that law, and substituting for all laws they happen to dislike an undefined "higher law," of which every man is to be his own expounder, and to act as judge, jury, and executioner?

Sentiments that have gone forth from this hall, or from any place or meeting in Massachusetts, adverse to the Union or the supremacy of law, should not be allowed unrebuked to form one jot of the public opinion of this Commonwealth, and should be met with an unequivocal expression of the friends of the Union, who mean by the Union the *whole* Union, and by the laws we are sworn to maintain the *whole* laws. And we are here to-day for the purpose of calmly and resolutely giving that expression as citizens of the thirty-one United States and as lovers of the Union, without distinction of party. This alone is a sufficient reason for the call that has brought together this large assemblage.

If it be said that the Whig party is the party of Union, and that alone can preserve it, that the Democratic party is the party of Union, and that only can uphold it, so much the better for the country. Then the Union will be safe whichever party may predominate in the nation, and surely, if both the great parties have the same aim and end in view in preserving the Union, they will have more strength when both unite together in that sacred purpose, and they will present an impregnable barrier, in every section and in every State, against the encroachments of those who may seek to undermine the constitution or divide the Union into sectional, conflicting, geographical parties. But, on the other hand, if a Democratic sectional party, or a Whig sectional party, or an exclusively sectional Southern or sectional Northern party should predominate, or even hold the balance of power in the Union, who would guaranty its endurance for a single session of Congress?

If ever the legacy of Washington to his countrymen had meaning and purpose, it now comes home to us in his solemn warning to "indignantly frown upon the first dawning of every attempt to *alienate one portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which bind together the various parts*."

Who that loves his country can conceal from his judgment the conviction that there has come upon us not only the dawning of this attempt, but its open progress to the meridian; and if it is suffered to reach the point of its political culmination before its decline, that decline can only happen with the decline and fall of the American republic?

It was to give strength to these States and to make us one people that Washington left his retirement in 1787, when he was chosen a delegate from Virginia to the Convention to form the constitution; and, in his own language on that occasion, he "reluctantly consented to serve," in order to assist in averting the consequences of that contemptible figure which the American communities were about to make in the annals of mankind, with their separate, independent, jealous State sovereignties.

The question comes home to us to-day whether, by acquiescence in measures that the best wisdom of Congress has devised to quiet and settle the Union, we shall lend our aid to avert the like catastrophe, which must happen now if the constitution of our fathers, framed by the best men the country ever saw, is lost to us, to freedom, and to the world, by the sectional divisions that have already strained it to its utmost tension?

Mr. President, it is a singular fact that we are here to-day deliberating upon an issue which threatens the Union and endangers the supremacy of its laws, that had no place in the deliberations or the apprehensions of the wise men who formed and adopted the constitution.

The fourth article of the constitution, which provides for the delivery of fugitives from labor, was scarcely discussed in the Convention, and was adopted by the unanimous vote of every State, and without a dissenting vote from the North. In the Massachusetts Convention of 1788, upon whose action then depended the ratification of the constitution by the requisite number of States, not a word was uttered by the most jealous opponents of the constitution against that provision. The whole and only discussion touching slavery turned upon the provision permitting the importation of slaves for twenty years, (a measure much more repugnant than that we are called on to permit to be enforced,) and the enumeration of slaves in the representation.

And yet, when all was considered, it met the approbation of the wisest men that ever lived among us. Judge Dana said: "From a survey of every part of the constitution, I think it the best that the wisdom of men could devise;" and the Rev. Mr. Backus, an apostle of that day and generation, declared that "such a door is now opened for the establishment of righteous government, and for securing equal liberty, as was never before offered to any people upon earth."

It is instructive too to recall the fact that the only common principle, the only union platform upon which our fathers could meet and make that constitution, was the identical ground upon which the friends of the Union of all parties now agree to stand, viz: non-intervention with the domestic concerns of each State, and a full recognition of the only safe republican doctrine of free government, viz: the right of every free State to establish its own form of government, provided it be republican, and to regulate its own modes of labor, and all its internal concerns.

As a single instance, permit me to quote the language of Major General Heath, in the Massachusetts Convention, one who had fought bravely for the liberties he knew so well how to preserve. Upon this very question of slavery, he said: "If we ratify the constitution, shall we do any thing by our act to keep the blacks in slavery, or shall we become the partakers of other men's sins? I think neither of them. Each State is sovereign and independent to a certain degree, and they have a right and will regulate their own internal affairs as to themselves appears proper; and shall we refuse to eat, or drink, or be united with those who do not think or act just as we do? Surely not."

Now, if one extreme at the South claim more than is in the constitution for their peculiar institution of slavery, and if another extreme at the North deny and resist what is plainly in the constitution, in order to sustain their peculiar institution of abolitionism, where shall the friends of union take their stand but on the middle ground, the broad platform of the rights of the States in their domestic relations, and good faith in carrying out the pledges of the constitution and the laws made to enforce them.

Allow me to remark on one point, for it is only one that I intend to touch upon in the provisions of the fugitive law, which some of our fellow citizens have avowed in this hall is to be treated like the stamp act, and never to be enforced in Massachusetts.

If that means any thing it means just what our fathers meant when they resisted the stamp act and threw the tea overboard—*Revolution*. It is revolution or it is treason. It is revolution if it puts down one government, and by carrying in another; but if it is only resistance to the United States law frames another. That is the only American theory of the higher law that is not rebellion, but a sacred right of the people. If it only resists law, and obstructs its officers, while it seeks no new organic form of government, and is in collision with will of the people, it is treason, rebellion, mobism, and anarchy, and he who risks it must risk hanging for it.

It is the higher law of Daniel Shays in the rebellion of 1786, who with thirteen with his head for debt, assembled an armed mob to stop the courts, and sent his message to the judges of the Supreme Court then about to hold their session in Springfield, ordering them not to open their court, not to indict the rebels. The judges of that day answered, as I am sure the judges of this day, and the commissioners too, if need be, (I am sure of one of them,) would answer a like message from the modern higher law party, "*they would faithfully execute the laws of the country agreeably to their oaths*."

But the point to which I would refer in the fugitive bill, and the one which is insisted on as repugnant to New England feeling, is that it calls upon the citizen to aid the slave-taker in capturing the fugitive. I do not so understand it. No man is called upon or can be called upon unless there is resistance to the execution of a process of law. If no citizen resists the law, no other citizen except the officer with his warrant will be called on to lift a finger. Now suppose the officer is resisted, the prisoner rescued, the court invaded, the witnesses assaulted, the magistrate thrust from his seat, and are you called on to sustain the supremacy of the law or the despotism of the mob. Which side will you take, law or anarchy; the magistracy or the mobocracy? That is the practical question, and that you must answer.

Mr. Hallett's remarks (of which the preceding is but an imperfect sketch) were greeted with repeated expressions of general applause.

The Hon. Rufus Choate then rose amid the resounding cheers of the immense multitude. He delivered a speech which in our judgment (says the *Courier*) must be ranked as the very highest effort of his masterly powers of eloquence. The chief topics were the perils of the Union at the present moment—the distinction between the Federal and State Governments—the sacredness of constitutional obligations—the mischief of pseudo philanthropy—the state of the public press—the agitation of the topic of slavery, and the duty of American citizens at the present moment—all of which were treated with the perspicuity, convincing logic, aptness of illustration, and brilliancy of style which characterize the happiest performance of this distinguished orator. His speech was fully equal to the great occasion which called it forth, and was listened to with the most earnest and profound attention, interrupted only by the deafening plaudits of the multitude from time to time. We shall not attempt to mar the beautiful proportions of this noble work by an abridgment, but shall prepare a full and accurate report of it for a subsequent number of our paper.

Mr. Choate concluded amid the loud and long continued cheers of the audience.

After which the resolutions were put to the vote and passed by acclamation.

The meeting then adjourned.