ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,

PREPARED BY

JOHN M. BERRIEN,

And reported by the Committee of Fifteen as a substitute for the Address reported by J. C. CALHOUN.

FELLOW-CITIZENS: We are desirous of communing with you on a subject which is, in our judgment, intimately connected with the peace and harmony of the Union. We make no apology for doing so—our justification will be found in the motive which induces this address, and in the object which it seeks to accomplish. That motive is to preserve, in its original freshness and vigor, the fraternal feeling which animated our fathers—that prompted them to "ordain and establish" a Constitution, which uniting us as one people, has enabled us to advance with a rapidity unexampled in the history of man, to our present eminent rank among the nations of the world. The object which we seek to accomplish is, to obtain from you a calm, dispassionate, and patriotic consideration of a series of measures, calculated we fear to alienate that feeling, and to beget animosities alike unfriendly to individual and to national prosperity. We make no sectional appeal. We address ourselves to the whole American people, as to those who have a common and an equal interest in preserving and perpetuating the friendly relations which happily subsist between the different States of the Union. If our right thus to present ourselves to your notice be questioned, we answer, that it is the privilege of freemen to confer with their fellows on matters of public concern. If it be asked, why has the present moment been chosen for this address, when (as it is said) no decisive measure has been perfected, the answer is, that the moment most propitious to conciliation, is that which precedes, not that which follows, decisive action on the subject in controversy. If again it be asked, what are our qualifications for the task in which we have engaged, it seems obvious to reply, that the prolonged attendance at the seat of Government, which our official duties demand, and the part which we are required to take in the administration of public affairs, necessarily make us familiar with the course of political events. But we invoke no aid from official station. We do not address you in our representative character. We speak to you as American freemen, and ask to be heard in the spirit in which we address you.

The subject to which we would call your attention is the controversy unhappily existing between portions of our fellow-citizens in the two great sections of the Union, resulting from a diversity of feeling and of opinion concerning the relation which exists between the European and African races who dwell in its Southern section. We invite your attention to a brief narrative of this controversy, its origin and progress, and to that series of measures to which it has given rise, which by a large portion of the American people are deemed injurious to the interests of the South, aggressive upon their rights, and alike inconsistent with the true spirit, intent, and purpose of our Constitutional compact. This controversy had its origin at an early period of our history. It began shortly after the acknowledgment of our independence, and has progressively increased until it has arrayed in opposite ranks two great portions of the American people; and that on a subject which is as to one, an opinion, a sentiment, or at most a question of political power in the councils of the nation, while to the other it is confessedly, of all subjects of policy, the most vital. In its progress, it has given rise to a series of measures which have been more recently multiplied with a degree of rapidity that manifests the determined purpose and extraordinary activity of those with whom they originate. These measures are all tending to the same result. If carried into execution, we think their certain effect would be to inflict an injury, the extent of which it is difficult to estimate, on the Southern States of

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the Confederacy—to unsettle the political relations between the several United States, as these were adjusted by the Constitution—to destroy the fraternal feeling which now unites us more firmly than the paper bands of that instrument—and necessarily, therefore, to disturb the peace and harmony of the Union.

Our purpose in making the statement which we propose is not to excite, but rather to allay the apprehensions which existing circumstances are calculated to create, to confront the dangers which threaten to disturb our peace, and to avert them (if by the blessing of God it may be so) by just, temperate, and united counsels, conceived and executed in the spirit of patriotism. In the moment of apprehended peril, it is the part of prudence to ascertain the nature and extent of the danger which threatens us, with a view to provide and to call into action our means of defence. If the body politic is afflicted by disease, a true conception of its character can alone enable us to effect its cure.

We have called your attention to the origin of this controversy, and ask you to keep in mind the fact, that it existed for a length of time before the Constitution was formed; that those who framed that instrument were thoroughly aroused to the fact of the existence of domestic slavery in several States of the Confederacy, had well considered its character, and were aware of the determination of those States to continue the use of slave labor in the new position which they were about to assume as members of the Federal Union. The framers of the Constitution were thoroughly advised of the resolve of the people of those States, to enter into no compact which would jeopard this their peculiar interest, or reduce them, because of the existence of slavery among them, to an inequality with their co-States. Notwithstanding this, the controversy was introduced into the Convention, and formed one of its greatest difficulties in framing the Constitution. After many efforts, it was overcome by an agreement, which provided in substance—

1. That representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the States according to their respective numbers, and that in ascertaining the number of each, five slaves shall be estimated as three.

2. That slaves escaping into States where slavery does not exist, shall not be discharged from servitude in consequence of any law or regulation of such State, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom their labor or service is due.

3. That Congress shall not prohibit the importation of slaves before the year 1808; but a tax of ten dollars may be imposed on each one imported.

4. That no capitation or direct tax shall be laid but in proportion to federal numbers, and—

5. That no amendment of the Constitution which may be made prior to 1808 shall affect the last preceding provision, or that relating to the importation of slaves.

So satisfactory were these provisions to the framers of the Constitution, that the second, relating to the delivery of fugitive slaves, was adopted unanimously, while the rest, except the third, relative to the importation of slaves, and to prolonging the time from 1800 to 1808, passed with almost equal unanimity; and even that was sustained by the votes of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

These provisions of the Constitution affect the existence of slavery in the Union which was about to be formed, and make a specific provision for its protection where it was supposed to be most exposed. They go further—they recognize slavery as an elementary principle of the Constitution, regulating or influencing the Government created by it, in the two most important particulars of representation and taxation. Whoever will examine the records of the proceedings of that day, will be perfectly satisfied, that these provisions, thus intended to be conservative of the domestic institutions of the South, were indispensable to the adoption of the Constitution—that without it, this Union could never have existed. The debates of the Convention show that this was perfectly understood by the representatives from the non-slaveholding States—and that with this understanding, they ratified the Constitution. The act of ratification was a solemn pledge for themselves, and in behalf of their constituents, for the observance of these stipulations, according to their letter and spirit. How far that pledge has been redeemed is an inquiry not to be answered by denunciation of the conduct of any portion of our countrymen. It is a simple narrative of events which we offer to your consideration, by the perusal of which, our fellow-citizens, in whatever portion of the Union they may dwell, may decide for themselves the question of its observance or violation.

For thirty years after the adoption of the Constitution, these provisions were so far respected as to give no serious cause of complaint to anybody. Passing for the present the pretensions set forth, and the agitations created by the Missouri controversy,

we proceed to consider the provision in relation to fugitive slaves, its operation, and the resistance which it has been doomed to encounter.

That provision is in the following words: "No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another State, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the person to whom such labor or service may be due." This provision is clear. There is not an uncertain or equivocal word to be found in it. What shall be, and what shall not be done, are fully and distinctly set forth. It provides that the fugitive slave shall not be discharged from his servitude, but shall be delivered up on the claim of his owner. This constitutes an essential part of the constitutional compact—is part and parcel of the supreme law of the land—as such, it is binding on the Federal and State Governments—on the States, and on all the individuals composing them. The sacred obligation of compact, and the solemn injunction of the supreme law, which legislators and judges, both Federal and State, are bound by oath to support, all unite to enforce its fulfilment, according to its plain meaning and its true intent. As to what that meaning and intent are, there was no diversity of opinion in the earlier days of the Republic. Congress, the State Legislatures, Federal and State Judges, and Magistrates, all spontaneously placed the same interpretation upon it. During that period, none interposed impediments in the way of the master seeking to recover his fugitive slave, nor did any deny his right to have even proper facility for the enforcement of his claim to have him delivered up. It was then almost as easy to recover one found in a non-slaveholding State, as one found in a neighboring slaveholding State. But this state of things has passed away, and to all practical purposes the provision may be said to be almost defunct. Now, when we take into consideration the importance of this provision, and the clearness with which it is expressed, we submit to all those to whom we address ourselves, in whatever portion of the Union they may dwell, that any evasion of it is alike injurious and unjustifiable. This idea cannot be more correctly, concisely, and impressively stated, than in the language of two of the Judges of the Supreme Court. In the case of Prigg *vs.* the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Judge Story said: "Historically, it is well known, that the object of this clause was to secure to the citizens of the slaveholding States, the complete right and title of ownership in their slaves, as property, in every State of the Union, into which they might escape from the State wherein they were held in servitude. The full recognition of this right and title was indispensable to the security of this species of property in all the slaveholding States; and, indeed, was so vital to the preservation of their interests and institutions, that it cannot be doubted that it constituted a fundamental article, without the adoption of which the Union would not have been formed. Its true design was to guard against the doctrines and principles prevalent in the non slaveholding States, by preventing them from intermeddling with, or restricting or abolishing the rights of the owners of the slaves."

Again: "The clause was therefore of the last importance to the safety and security of the Southern States, and could not be surrendered by them without endangering their whole property in slaves. The clause was accordingly adopted in the Constitution by the unanimous consent of the framers of it—a proof at once of its intrinsic and practical necessity.

Again: "The clause manifestly contemplates the existence of a positive, unqualified right on the part of the owner of the slave, which no State law or regulation can in any way regulate, control, qualify, or restrain."

The opinion of the other learned Judges was not less emphatic as to the importance of this provision, and the unquestionable right of the South under it. In the case of Johnson *vs.* Tompkins and others, Judge Baldwin, in charging the jury, said: "If there are any rights of property which can be enforced—if one citizen have any rights of property which are inviolable under the protection of the supreme law of the State and the Union, they are those which have been set at nought by some of these defendants. As the owner of property, which he had a perfect right to possess, protect, and take away—as a citizen of a sister State, entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens of any other States, Mr. Johnson stands before you on ground which cannot be taken from under him—it is the same ground on which the Government itself is based. If the defendants can be justified, we have no longer law or goverment." Again: after referring more particularly to the provision for delivering up fugitive slaves he said: "Thus, you see, that the foundations of the Government are laid and rest on the right of property in slaves. The whole structure must fall by disturbing the corner stone."

These are grave, and solemn, and admonitory words from a high source. They state, with great force, the clearness, importance, and fundamental character of this provision, and the disastrous consequences which must follow from its violation. Yet, in despite of these solemn warnings, the citizen of the South, seeking the recovery of his fugitive slave, instead of receiving the aid provided for by the Constitution, and which the learned Judges referred to have endeavored to enforce, is doomed to encounter resistance in every form which ingenuity can devise—from Legislative acts—from Judges and Magistrates, and when these fail, from mobs of whites and blacks, who by force or threats rescue the fugitive slave from his rightful owner; while he is subjected to insult, to the hazard of imprisonment, of heavy pecuniary loss, and even of life itself. A citizen of Maryland, Mr. Kennedy, of Hagerstown, it is well known has lost his life in an attempt to recover his fugitive slave under this provision.

But this provision of the Constitution is violated indirectly, as well as directly, by organized combinations of individuals in many of the States, whose object is to entice slaves from their masters, and to pass them secretly and rapidly, by means previously arranged, into Canada, where they are beyond the reach of this provision; a process which all will agree is as directly repugnant to its injunctions as its open or even forcible violation would be; and yet it is believed that not one of the States, within whose limits they exist, have adopted any measure to suppress them.

We commend this statement of facts, relating to this provision concerning fugitive slaves, to the serious consideration of our fellow-citizens in every portion of the Union—to the forbearance of our Southern brethren—to the patriotism and respect for the Constitution of those of the North.

It is impossible, in a communication like this, to avoid noticing the continued assaults upon the domestic institutions of the South, which are made in so many various forms. Without striking at any express and specific provision of the Constitution, they aim directly at the destruction of the relation existing between the slave and his owner, by means subversive in their tendency, of one of the chief ends for which the Constitution was established. We refer to the systematic agitation of abolitionists, which, commencing in 1835, are still continued. The avowed intention is to bring about a state of things which would force emancipation upon the South. To unite the North in fixed hostility to the South, on the subject of slavery, is one means employed to accomplish it. For this purpose societies are formed, newspapers are established, debating clubs are opened, lecturers are employed, pamphlets and other publications, pictures, and petitions to Congress are circulated, while the continued agitation of the subject of abolition, in one or other form, in Congress, and the employment of emissaries to distribute incendiary publications in the South, are relied on to excite discontent among the slaves.

No one doubts that slavery is a domestic institution, which it belongs exclusively to the State in which it exists, to establish, to regulate, and to abolish. Any attempt, therefore, on the part of the Federal Government, or of any State, or of the people of any State, by direct or indirect means, to interfere with this institution as it exists in any State, to diminish its value, or to force its abandonment, would be a plain and palpable violation of the sovereign rights of such State. Such an interference would not be tolerated between independent sovereignties. It would be met by remonstrance, and if necessary by force. Between States connected as we are in fraternal bonds, under a Constitution ordained and established "to ensure domestic tranquility," it is still more unjustifiable; and yet associations formed for this purpose, and openly avowing their object, exist in States within whose limits there is nothing upon which they can operate, whose sole occupation, therefore, is to disturb the domestic tranquility of other States, and who are nevertheless uncontrolled by the authorities of the States in which they are established. We will not dwell on this subject. In the same friendly spirit that dictates this address, we submit the statement which truth compels us to make to the calm, dispassionate, patriotic consideration of our countrymen.

We now return to the question of the admission of Missouri into the Union, and shall proceed to give a brief sketch of the occurrences connected with it, and the consequences to which it has directly led. In the latter part of 1819, the then Territory of Missouri applied to Congress, in the usual form, for leave to form a State Constitution and Government, in order to be admitted into the Union. A bill was reported for the purpose, with the usual provisions in such cases—amendments were offered, having for their object to make it a condition of her admission, that her Constitution should have a provision to prohibit slavery. This brought on the agitating debate which, with the

effects that followed, has done so much to alienate the South and North, and endanger our political institutions. Those who objected to the amendment rested their opposition on the high grounds of the right of self-government. They claimed that a Territory, having reached the period when it is proper for it to form a Constitution and Government for itself, becomes fully vested with all the rights of self government, and that even the condition imposed on it by the Federal Constitution, relates not to the formation of its Constitution and Government, but to its admission into the Union. For that purpose, it provides, as a condition, that the Government must be republican.

They claimed that Congress has no right to add to this condition, and that to assume it would be tantamount to the assumption of the right to make its entire Constitution and Government; as no limitation could be imposed as to the extent of the right, if it be admitted that it exists at all. Those who supported the amendment denied these grounds, and claimed the right of Congress to impose, at discretion, what conditions it pleased. In this agitating debate the two sections stood arrayed against each other; the South in favor of the bill without amendment, and the North opposed to it unless it was amended. The debate and agitation continued until the session was well advanced, but it became apparent towards its close, that the people of Missouri were fixed and resolved in their opposition to the proposed condition, and that they would certainly reject it, and adopt a Constitution without it, should the bill pass with the condition. Such being the case, it required no great effort of mind to perceive that Missouri, once in possession of a Constitution and Government, not simply on paper, but with Legislators elected and officers appointed to carry them into effect, the grave question would be presented whether she was of right a State or Territory; and, if the former, whether Congress had the right, and, if the right, the power to abrogate her Constitution, and disperse her Legislature, and to remand her back to the territorial condition. These were great, and under the circumstances, fearful questions—too fearful to be met by those who had raised the agitation. From that time, the only question was, how to escape from the difficulty. Fortunately a means was afforded. A compromise (as it was called) was offered, based on the terms that the North should cease to oppose the admission of Missouri on the grounds for which the South contended, and that the provisions of the ordinance of 1787, for the government of the Northwestern Territory, should be applied to all the territory acquired by the United States from France, under the treaty of Louisiana, lying north of 36° 30', except the portion lying in the State of Missouri. The Northern members embraced it; and, although not originating with them, adopted it as their own. It was forced through Congress by the almost united votes of the North, against a minority, consisting almost entirely of members from the Southern States. Such was the termination of the first conflict between the two sections, in reference to slavery, in connection with the Territories. On this subject we propose to offer to you a few brief remarks.

Waiving the consideration of the question, whether Congress can constitutionally prohibit the introduction of slaves into the Territories acquired by the United States, and the other question, whether in the actual condition of these Territories, slaves can be carried within their limits and held as such without the sanction of an act of Congress, we desire to submit to you the considerations on which the claim of the South to participate in the benefit resulting from Territories acquired by the United States, may, we think, be safely rested.

For the purpose of immigration, the Territories of the United States are open to all the world—to citizens and foreigners, without discrimination as to character, profession, or color. All, whether savage or civilized, may freely enter. Shall the people of the South alone be excluded, or permitted on conditions that deny to them the use of those means which habit has rendered necessary to their comfortable subsistence? Before they are permitted to enter these Territories, must they be divested of the character in which they were invited and admitted to enter into the Union? They entered the Convention as slaveholders, shared in its deliberations as such, as slaveholders they ratified the Constitution. In the same character they have been and continue to be represented in the national councils. As slaveholders, they have contributed to the expenses of the Government, which they thus assisted to create, by the payment of taxes on the specific property which gives to them that peculiar character. Will you deny to their people the right to participate in the acquisitions of that Government, which, in conjunction with their co States, they have thus created and supported, unless you are first permitted to strip them of the character in which they created and have supported it? These Territories were acquired by the common treasures and united efforts of all the States. The South contributed her due pro-

portion of money, and much more than her due proportion of men, to the war in which they were acquired, as the following brief statement will show.

Statement of the number of Volunteers.

From the *South*—Regiments,	- - - - -	33
Battalions,	- - - - -	14
Companies,	- - - - -	120
Total number of Volunteers from the *South*,		45,640.
From the *North*—Regiments,	- - - - -	22
Battalions,	- - - - -	2
Companies,	- - - - -	12
Total number of Volunteers from the *North*,		23,084.

Thus it is seen that, of the volunteers in the war with Mexico, furnished by the Northern and Southern States, the proportion contributed by the South is nearly two to one. And when it is considered that the population of the Northern States is nearly two-thirds greater than that of the Southern States, it is obvious that the latter has furnished more than three times her due proportion of volunteers. Apart from all questions of constitutional power, or of international law, can it consist with right and justice to deny to them a participation in Territories thus acquired?

But again. Ours is a Federal Government, an association of States, united, and yet preserving their individuality. To them, as members of the Federal Union, these Territories belong—not to the Federal Government, consisting of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial departments of that Government. Hence they are said to be Territories belonging to the United States—to the States composing the Union. The States, then, are joint owners of this property. Now, it is conceded by all writers on the subject, that in such governments, the members are all equal—equal in rights, and equal in dignity. If elsewhere this was a disputed point, we could safely appeal to our constitutional compact for the proof, that with us, it is undeniably true, that the equality of the States is an elementary principle of that compact, one which lies at the foundation of our Government. To destroy this equality, then, is to change the character of the Government which rests upon it as its basis. The exclusion of the Southern States, and their citizens, from their full share in Territories thus declared to belong to them, in common with the other States, would therefore be to deprive them of a right; it would derogate from the equality which is inseparable from their condition as members of the Union, would sink them from their rightful position as equals, into a dependant and subordinate condition. Nor can the people of the South be insensible to the consequences which must result from the establishment and continued enforcement of the principle on which the proposed exclusion would rest. That principle, openly avowed, is, that the domestic institutions peculiar to the Southern States shall never be transferred to any Territories now, or hereafter to be acquired, by the United States. The institution, as it now exists, and in the States where it now exists, (it is said,) may not be disturbed by the Federal Government, because it is secured by the compromises of the Constitution. If this were not so, if this guarantee were not found in that instrument, even in the States it would not be secure. An institution which is declared to be sinful, in violation of natural right, contrary to the law of God, to our own Declaration of Independence, and disgraceful to any people who tolerate it, would not be suffered to exist, if those who thus denounce it had the power to abolish it. If the constitutional impediment were removed, they would feel themselves bound to obey the dictates of conscience, and these, they tell us, forbid its continuance. The continued enforcement of the principle which forbids the transfer of the domestic institutions of the South, to any Territory now or hereafter to be acquired, combined with other causes in constant operation, tends inevitably to the removal of this constitutional impediment. Several of the States of this Union are in a transition state, from the condition of slaveholding to that of non-slaveholding States. When that change shall have been accomplished, and they shall have taken their position among the non-slaveholding States, and when to these are added the new States to be formed out of Territories, now or hereafter to be acquired, the aggregate will constitute the requisite majority of States to remove the constitutional impediment to an interference with slavery in the States. And how can they abstain from the exercise of the power which they will thus have acquired, consistently with principles avowed and acted upon at this moment, to the full extent of their capacity to enforce them? Can the people of the South be insensible to the danger which thus

menaces their own peculiar and cherished institutions? Ought not the sound intelligence and conservative feeling of the American people in every portion of the Union, alike independent of and superior to party or sectional divisions, to be exerted to avert it?

It remains to present to you a brief view of a series of measures introduced into the Representative branch of Congress during the present session, and connected with the subject of this address. The first of these is a resolution introduced by a member from Massachusetts, the object of which is to repeal all acts or parts of acts which authorize the existence of slavery or of selling and disposing of slaves in this District. On the question of granting leave to bring in a bill, the vote stood 69 for and 82 against it. The next was a resolution offered by a member from Ohio, instructing the Committee on Territories to report forthwith bills for excluding slavery from New Mexico and California. It passed by a vote of 107 to 80; and the bill has since been reported. That was followed by a bill introduced by another member from Ohio, to take the votes of the inhabitants of this District, whether slavery, within its limits, should be abolished. The bill provided, according to the admission of the mover, that free negroes and slaves should vote. On the question to lay the bill on the table, the votes stood 106 for and 79 against the motion. To this succeeded the resolution proposed by a member from New York, in the following words: "Whereas the traffic now prosecuted in this metropolis of the Republic, in human beings as chattels, is contrary to natural justice, and the fundamental principles of our political system, and is notoriously a reproach to our country throughout Christendom, and a serious hindrance to the progress of republican liberty among the nations of the earth: Therefore, *Resolved*, That the Committee on the District be instructed to report a bill, as soon as practicable, prohibiting the slave-trade in said District." On the question of adopting the resolution, the votes stood 98 for and 88 against it. He was followed by a member from Illinois, who offered a resolution for abolishing slavery in the Territories, and all places where Congress has exclusive power of legislation; that is, in all forts, magazines, arsenals, dock yards, and other needful buildings purchased by Congress with the consent of the Legislature of the State. This resolution was passed over under the rules of the House. These various propositions have not been finally acted upon. Indeed the resolution offered by the member from New York, has been reconsidered, and remains now on the Speaker's table, as a resolution presented but not acted upon by the House. To this indication of a more conservative feeling, it ought to be added, that while the support of these several measures was confined to the representatives of non slaveholding States, and consisted of those of both parties, there were patriotic individuals from those States who refused their support to measures which they believed were uncalled for by the occasion, and unfriendly to the peace and harmony of the Union.

We have now brought to a close the narrative of measures connected with the subject of this address, including those which are consummated, as well as those which are in progress, and we think it will not be denied that the consummation of the latter would afford just cause of apprehension to the people of the slaveholding States. If slavery were abolished in the District of Columbia, and in the numerous and dispersed places in the South over which Congress has exclusive jurisdiction—if to these measures be added the exclusion of the people of the Southern States from the Territories of the Union, now or hereafter to be acquired, every outpost and barrier would be carried, and even in the States themselves the institution of domestic slavery would be at the mercy of those who had so far successfully prosecuted their assault upon it.

We forbear to present to you a detailed view of the evils which must result from these measures, even in their progress, and yet more in their consummation, operating first on the people of the South, and eventually on the American people at large. Happily these measures are not consummated. There remains a *locus penitentiæ*—there is yet time to pause—a moment of which intelligent, patriotic, conservative men in every quarter of the Union, aloof from the influence of party on such a subject, and effacing all sectional lines of division, may avail themselves to consider, if there be any duty to be fulfilled, if there be any interest to be advanced, if there be any object to be attained by the prosecution of these measures, which will justify the hazard (however remote they may believe it to be) of jeoparding the peace and harmony of the Union. All will admit that the institution of domestic slavery is one which it belongs exclusively to the States in which it exists, to establish, to regulate, to continue, or to abolish. Any and every interference with it by the citizens of other States, whether direct or indirect, is therefore a wrong which becomes aggravated when it is committed by those with whom we are for certain purposes united as one people, and who avail themselves of this relation to make that in-

terference more hurtful. If slavery is a sin, he who is not a slaveholder is free from the guilt of it. Why should he desire to become his brother's keeper! Is there no feeling, no thought, no act of his own, which requires his care, and which would better reward his vigilance? Is an opinion, a sentiment, a measure of sectional policy, to be urged and enforced at the hazard of disturbing the peaceful relations of twenty millions of people? Why may not this controversy be adjusted? Does the District of Columbia present the obstacle? Cannot some mode be devised to withdraw this disturbing question from the National Legislature? Is it the question in relation to the Territories? Why should we not profit by experience? The wisdom of those who have gone before us was competent to the restoration of harmony in 1820, why should we not follow in their steps? The intense excitement of that day was allayed by it, and its beneficial influences were felt during the next twenty years of our political existence.

When the questions connected with the annexation of Texas seemed likely to revive that excitement, the same American feeling prevailed, and the danger was averted. Why should it not be equally efficacious now? Has our love of country diminished—is it limited to a section—or does it not embrace our whole country? If the Territories which we have acquired are unfitted to the institutions of the South—if they cannot exist there, why the denunciation of them? If it be said that the South is contending for an abstraction, because the right which she claims, if it were conceded, could not be exercised in these Territories, is it not yet more obvious that those who insist upon the express denial of the right are themselves pursuing a phantom? Are they not insisting upon the solemn legislative denial of a right, which (they themselves being the judges) whether it be affirmed or denied, can never be exercised? But the denial is not confined to the Territories now held by the United States; it extends also to those which may be hereafter acquired, however peculiarly such Territories may be adapted to slave labor, nay even although they should be Territories in which slavery exists. Is the claim of the South to participate in such Territories an abstraction? And again: The assertion of that right, even where it cannot be exercised, cannot be an abstraction, unless the political equality which lies at the foundation of our Government may be deemed so. But can the peace and harmony of the Union be jeoparded by considerations like these?

We have done. Our desire has been to place before the American people the facts necessary to enable *them* to stay this controversy—to exercise the restraining influence which they alone possess to give harmony to our counsels, and prosperity to our country. We too constitute a portion of that people, and speedily resuming our places among them, will unite our efforts for the accomplishment of this beneficent result.