

Go read the record of his shameless surrender of the interests and rights of free labor to the rebels against the law, the conspirators against the national prosperity. I commend that page which records his conflict with honest John Davis, of Massachusetts. Hear this, our present complacent counsellor and adviser against "sectional hatred and strife," and urge the sectional demands of South Carolina, in words that should be remembered only to blast him: "Reduce," said he, "the standard of prices in this country, to the standard of prices in Europe, and you cover our country with blessings and benefits." That is, make your sons of honest toil, in your fields, and shops, and mines, work for the pittance of sixpence a day, as in plundered, oppressed, and fettered Spain, and France, and Austria, and you cover our country—that is, the non-laboring, non-producing few of the South—"with blessings and benefits." To allay this sectional strife, this demand was, to a great extent, complied with.

Notwithstanding this suicidal change of the national policy, avowedly, to enable the slaveholder to buy cheaper, and sell at an increased profit by obtaining a reciprocal reduction of duties upon his slave products in the foreign market; notwithstanding this blow dealt by the government upon the mighty brotherhood of free, intelligent industry in the North, the free States, though inferior in fertility and in climate and territorial extent and geographical position to the slave States, maintained the ascendancy in wealth, population, intelligence; and, unless further interfered with by additional sectional legislation, would inevitably soon assert such an influence in the administration of the government as would permanently restore the time-honored policy of protection to free labor, North and South. That fact was made

apparent by the great political revolution of 1840, and the protective enactment of 1842. To check this ever-increasing political influence of free labor—this triumph of freedom over slavery, of light over darkness, of right over wrong—these same pro-slavery sectionalists insisted upon the repeal of the protective act of 1842, and the maintenance by legislation of the political equilibrium of the slave with the free States. That was the proposition of Mr. Calhoun. I regret that an intellect so strong, and once so national as was his, could be cribbed and fettered by this sectional spirit which demanded legislation for the few, to the lasting injury of the many. He yielded to the demands of this sectional spirit, this slave interest, and, as its champion, insisted that the advancing column of free labor should be checked, and made to halt in its rapid and sublime march to await the lagging step of the fettered bondman.

To maintain this political equilibrium, having converted all the territory south of the thirty-sixth parallel into slave States, including Florida, all North was to be declared a trust held in common for the slave and free States, into which slavery was to go with the citizen of the slave States, and to be acknowledged and protected there under the constitution. This proposition involved the avoidance or repeal of all that legislation which had, by the consent of Monroe and Jackson, and Van Buren and Polk, forever excluded slavery from the national Territories between the compromise line of 1820 and the Pacific Ocean. It was but the announcement of that political blasphemy and atheism which declares that it is right to enslave labor, to take away by law from honest toil, and honest endeavor, and honest purpose its just reward—proclaiming that a man shall not reap where he has sown; that he shall not enjoy the fruit



of his own toil; that the roof-tree which his own hands have reared shall not be for shelter or defence to him or his children.

To maintain the equilibrium of the slave with the free States, the federal government must, by legislation, counteract the laws of population and growth; must essay to annul the great law of human progress, the law of civilization, that they who cultivate the land shall possess it. Intelligence, the central orb in our industrial, political, and social system, must pale its splendors in the darkening shadows of a perpetual and ever-increasing despotism, that the political equilibrium of the slave States may be maintained. To accomplish this end, this sectional party further demanded that a foreign slave State, as large in territorial extent as New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, should be annexed as a slave State to the Union, for the twofold purpose of furnishing to Virginia a new market in which to make merchandise of her children, and securing to a sparse slave population of two hundred thousand a senatorial representation equal to that of the Empire State with her three million freemen.

The proposition shocked right-minded citizens and patriots of all parties and of all sections. The great commoner of Kentucky opposed it as a violation of the nation's plighted faith, and, with the prescience of a seer, proclaimed that its accomplishment would involve the country in the two greatest of all national calamities — national dishonor and national war. That pure and noble man, Mr. J. Q. Adams, who for fifty years had stood a warder of civilization and liberty, denounced it as treason to the rights of man. The once chosen of the Democracy to the chief magistracy, Mr. Van Buren, also denounced it as dangerous to the peace and honor of the country. This proposition, sir, was the

very incarnation of that demon spirit of sectional strife. This sectional party banded together and trampled down the good men and true, who rejected, with honest scorn, the monstrous purpose. They hunted the noble and lion-hearted Kentuckian to his grave, and, aided by such traitors to the right in the North as the present chief magistrate, they hunted down the noble and patriotic Silas Wright.

In accomplishing this infamy, this party committed a wanton, deliberate violation of that constitution which the immediate actors in this wrong were sworn to support, that constitution which these same gentlemen have now the audacity to say is with them sacred as life itself! Where, sirs, was your reverence for the constitution when the treaty-making power — the only power under the constitution which can contract with foreign states — was struck down; its solemn rejection of the proposed contract of Texan annexation treated with contempt and set aside by the wicked and flagitious joint resolutions, sustained by a majority of one in the Senate, and by which Texas came into the Union? This perfidious act of aggression was no sooner done, your banner of liberty was no sooner advanced to wave in solemn mockery over a land of slaves in this newly-acquired domain, than this party took another step forward in this war of aggression, and asserted that the left bank of the Rio Grande was the western boundary of this new slave State, and, to establish it, sent the army of the United States forward, under the lead, but against the protest, of that brave man, Zachary Taylor. You did establish and mark that line, not only by the waters of that river, rolling in silent majesty from the mountains to the sea, but you marked it as well by an ineffaceable, crimson line of blood.

Having thus fixed the Texan boundary, this sectional



party demanded indemnity for the past and security for the future. Indemnity, sir, for what? Not for what we lost, but for what we took and held by force, and without color of right. Security for what? Not security for a violated constitution; not security for the rights of freemen and free labor, which had been cloven down; but security for the "great humanitarian fact," as the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. Curry] called the institution of slavery. To this end, this sectional party, by the national arm, conquered large portions of Mexico, and annexed them, softening the venality of the act by the formula of a constrained treaty of peace at Guadalupe Hidalgo. That these acquisitions were made for this purpose, let the subsequent conduct of this sectional party bear witness.

California, a portion of this Mexican acquisition, was rich in gold, in a genial climate, in a fruitful soil, and commanding in geographical and commercial position. Such a country was not without strong attractions to an ardent, energetic, and adventurous people. They forsook all the endearments, and burst away from all the ties of home and kindred, and took possession of the land of gold. A nation was born in a day. A new State was thus created as by magic, washed by the quiet waves and guarded by the Golden Gates of the great Pacific. The people of California, and also of New Mexico, formed each a free constitution, and hand in hand they came, in the white robes of freedom, asking for admission as free States into the Union. This constitutional exercise of the right of petition was made the occasion for a wild storm of sectional agitation.

In the midst of the tumult, the brave patriot, President Taylor, the chosen of the people, resident in the South, but not of this sectional party; full of years and full of honors; calm

and collected, just and honest, with a patriarchal simplicity, said, let these new free States come in; there is room for them in the paternal mansion—in that great Union built for freedom by those mighty men of old, whom God taught to build for glory and for beauty. No, cried this sectional party, we insist that the proposed constitutions embrace too much territory for perpetual freedom; those Territories must be divided; a part of these great regions at least must be kept in reserve for slavery; they, together with Utah, must be divided by the thirty-sixth parallel. That was the ultimatum; it must be acceded to, or the Union should perish.

These sectional partisans hissed like so many serpents upon the path of the brave old man, President Taylor, whose whole life had been spent in the camp or on the battle-field. He was denounced as a traitor—not to his country, but to the slave interest—and was hunted, with a relentless persecution, to his grave. He adhered, thank God—he adhered with more than an eastern devotion, to the right of the people and the highest interests of the country. Thus steadfast in his great purpose, the last summons came, not too soon for him, but too soon for us. Death laid his hand upon that manly form, and at its touch his great and noble spirit departed, articulating those grand words, noble as ever fell from hero's or patriot's lips before, "I have tried to do my duty." Sir, it was not in the field of poised battle; it was not when the earthquake and the fire led the charge; it was not when victory, with its lance-light and triumph singing, threw its splendors around the person of that heroic man, that his great character so fully revealed itself, as in that dread hour, and the near coming of the shadow of death, when he said, "I have tried to do my duty."

When all was over, when the strong arm which had con-



quered, and the clarion voice which had commanded in the storm of battle, were powerless and hushed, those who had assailed his motives — who had resisted his purposes of justice and fair dealing with the young Pacific States — those sectional agitators and aggressors took fresh courage, whispering, like gibbering ghosts, above his perished dust, “after life’s fitful fever he sleeps well.” The agitation, the aggression, the conspiracy against free principles, free labor, and equal rights, went on. California was admitted; but New Mexico was rejected, and remanded to the condition of a territorial organization, with the concession to the slave interest that Congress should not then exercise its admitted power of legislation for the protection of liberty and right, either in that Territory or in Utah.

Yes, sir; the free North, with her twenty million of freemen, for the sake of peace, submitted to the humiliation of the demand of this sectional party, that in those vast Territories the law of God should not be re-enacted, as Mr. Webster called the law of liberty. That great man, now sleeping in his tomb by the great sea, at the demand of this power, yielded up his own convictions, and not only consented to this, but joined with others in yielding a reluctant assent to the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 — a law which, in direct violation of the constitution, transfers the judicial power from judges duly appointed by the President, with the consent of the Senate, to irresponsible commissioners appointed by the circuit courts, tendering them a bribe of five dollars, if, upon *ex parte* evidence — the affidavit of some unknown man, taken in the rice swamps of Florida, it may be, before some justice of the peace — he shall adjudge a man brought before him on his warrant, a fugitive slave, guilty of the crime of preferring liberty to bondage.