

While earnest thou gazest,  
Comes boding of terror,  
Comes phantasm and error;  
Perplexes the bravest  
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the Voices,  
Heard are the Sages,  
The Worlds and the Ages:  
'Choose well; your choice is  
Brief, and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you,  
In Eternity's stillness;  
Here is all fulness,  
Ye brave, to reward you;  
Work, and despair not!'"

Work, and despair not: *Wir heissen euch hoffen*, "We bid you be of hope!"—let that be my last word. Gentlemen, I thank you for your great patience in hearing me; and, with many most kind wishes, say adieu for this time.

## HORACE MANN

**H**ORACE MANN, LL. D., a notable American educator and philanthropist, was born at Franklin, Mass., May 4, 1796, and died at Yellow Springs, O., Aug. 2, 1859. His father was a farmer in humble circumstances, and the son had to rely on his own exertions to procure an education. As a child he earned his school-books by braiding straw, and from the age of ten years to twenty he never had more than six weeks of schooling during any year. He, however, was able to graduate at Brown University, in 1819, and acted as tutor there in Latin and Greek until he entered the law school at Litchfield, Conn. In 1823, he was admitted to the Bar, and began the practice of law at Dedham, Mass. He was elected to the legislature in 1827, and while in that body was active in the interests of education, public charities, and in the suppression of vice. Mr. Mann established the State lunatic asylum at Worcester through his own personal exertions, and in 1833 was chairman of its board of trustees. In 1833, he was elected to the State senate from Boston, was its president in 1836-37, and for about a year was secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. In the latter post, he gave much aid to the cause of education, established normal schools, and brought about reform in the school system of the State. In 1848, he was returned to Congress as a Whig, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of John Quincy Adams, and while in that body zealously advocated the cause of anti-slavery. In September, 1852, he was nominated for Governor of Massachusetts by the Free-Soil party, but failed in his election, though on the same day he was chosen president of Antioch College, O. Accepting the presidency of the college he retained it until his death, hastened by his assiduous efforts in behalf of the institution. Among his writings are his "Lectures on Education" and a collection of papers, entitled, "Slavery, Letters, and Speeches." His life was written by Mary Peabody, his widow.

### ON THE THREATENED DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION

FROM SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
FEBRUARY 15, 1850

**S**IR, if a civil war should ensue between the North and the South (which may God, in his mercy, avert) in consequence of an attempt to dissolve this Union, and the certain resistance which would be made to such an attempt, it would be difficult to exaggerate the immediate evils which would befall the interests of New England and some other parts of the North. Our manufactures and our commerce

(215)

would suffer at least a temporary derangement. But we have boundless resources in our enterprise and our intelligence. Knowledge and industry are recuperative energies that can never long be balked in their quest of prosperity.

The people that bore the embargo of 1807, and the war of 1812, when all their capital was embarked in commerce, can survive any change that does not stop the revolution of the seasons or suspend the great laws of nature. And, when the day of peace again returns, business will return to its old channels. The South, notwithstanding any personal hostility, will be as ready to take Northern gold as though it had come from the English mint; and they will employ those first who will do their manufacturing or their commercial labor cheapest and best.

Gold is a great pacificator between nations; and, in this money-loving age, mutual interests will in the end subdue mutual hostilities. Our share, therefore, of the calamities of a civil war will be mainly of a pecuniary nature. They will not be intolerable. They will invade none of the securities of home; they will not associate poison with our daily food nor murder and conflagration with our nightly repose, nor black violation with the sanctities of our daughters and our wives.

Even in a pecuniary point of view a dissolution of our political ties would cause less immediate and intense suffering at the North than at the South. Our laws and institutions are all framed so as to encourage the poor man, and, by education, to elevate his children above the condition of their parents; but their laws and institutions all tend to aggrandize the rich and to perpetuate power in their hands. Were it not for the visions of horror and of bloodshed which Southern threats have so intimately associated with this controversy, one remarkable feature, which has hitherto been eclipsed, would have been

most conspicuous. With every philanthropic Northern man a collateral motive for keeping the new Territories free is that they may be a land of hope and of promise to the poor man, to whichever of all our States he may belong, where he may go and find a home and a homestead and abundance.

But the South, in attempting to open these Territories to slaveholders would give them to the rich alone—would give them to less than three hundred thousand persons out of a population of six millions. The interests of the poorer classes at the South all demand free territory, where they can go and rise at once to an equality with their fellow citizens, which they never can do at home. They are natural abolitionists, and unless blinded by ignorance or overawed by their social superiors, they will so declare themselves.

Every intelligent and virtue-loving wife or mother at the South, when she thinks of her husband and her sons, is forced to be an abolitionist. The attempt, therefore, to subject the new Territories to the law of slavery is not made in the name of one half of the people of the United States; it is not made for the six millions, more or less, who inhabit the slave States; but it is made for less than three hundred thousand slaveholders among more than twenty millions of people.

There is one other "hazard," sir, which the South invokes and defies, which, to her high-minded and honor-loving sons should be more formidable than all the rest. She is defying the Spirit of the Age. She is not only defying the judgment of contemporaries, but invoking upon herself the execrations of posterity. Mark the progress in the public sentiment of Christendom within the last few centuries on the subject of slavery and the rights of man. After the discovery of this continent by Columbus, the ecclesiastics of Spain held councils to discuss the question whether the aborigines of this country

had or had not souls to be saved. They left this question undecided; but they said, as it was possible that the nations of the New World might have an immortal spirit, they would send them the Gospel so as to be on the safe side; and the mission of Las Casas was the result.

In the time of Lord Coke, only a little more than two centuries ago, the doctrine was openly avowed and held, in Westminster Hall, that the heathen had no rights; and therefore that it was lawful for Christians to drive them out of their inheritance, and to despoil them, as the Jews despoiled the Egyptians and drove out the Canaanites. During the seventeenth century all the commercial nations of Europe engaged in the African slave trade without compunction or reproach. In the last, or eighteenth century, the horrors of that trade were aggravated by such demoniacal atrocities as, were it not for some redeeming attributes among men, would have made the human race immortally hateful.

Even when our own constitution was formed, in 1787, this dreadful traffic was not only sanctioned, but a solemn compact was entered into by which all prohibition of it was prohibited for twenty years. Yet in the year 1820, after the lapse of only thirty-three years, this very trade was declared to be piracy—the highest offence known to the law—and the felon's death was denounced against all principals and abettors.

We are often reminded by gentlemen of the South that, at the time of the adoption of that constitution, slavery existed in almost every State in the Union; and that some Northern merchants, by a devilish alchemy, transmuted gold from its tears and blood. But can they read no lesson as to the progress of the age from the fact that all those States have since abjured slavery of their own free will; and that, at the present day it would be more tolerable for any Northern merchant,

rather than to be reasonably suspected of the guilt of this traffic, to be cast into the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar seven times heated. In Europe the tide of liberty, though meeting with obstructions from firm-seated dynasties and time-strengthened prerogative, still rises and sweeps onward with unebbing flow. In France revolutions follow each other in quicker and quicker succession. These revolutions are only gigantic struggles of the popular will to escape from oppression; and at each struggle the giant snaps a chain.

Great Britain, which in former times sent more vessels to the coast of Africa to kidnap and transport its natives than all the other nations of the earth together, now maintains a fleet upon that same coast to suppress the trade she so lately encouraged. Three times during the present century has that government escaped civil commotion by making large concessions to popular rights. Since the year 1814 written constitutions have been extorted by the people from more than three fourths of all the sovereigns of Europe. What a tempest now beats upon Austria from all points of the compass because, during the last season, she attempted only to half-enslave the Hungarians,—because she attempted to do what, during the last century, she might have done without a remonstrance. The rights of individuals, not less than the rights of communities, have emerged from oblivion into recognition and have become law. Penal codes have been ameliorated and barbarous customs abolished. There are now but two places on the globe where a woman can be publicly whipped,—in Hungary and in the southern States! And the universal scorn and hissing with which the rules of the former country have been visited for their women-whipping and their execution of those whose sole crime was their love of freedom only foretokens that fiercer scorn and louder hissing with which, from all sides

of the civilized world, the latter will soon be visited. Let the high-toned and chivalrous sons of the South,—those “who feel a stain upon their honor like a wound,”—think of all this, as one in the long catalogue of “hazards” upon which they are rushing.

Sir, the leading minds in a community are mainly responsible for the fortunes of that community. Under God, the men of education, of talent, and of attainment, turn the tides of human affairs. Where great social distinctions exist, the intelligence and the wealth of a few stimulate or suppress the volition of the masses. They are the sensorium of the body politic, and their social inferiors are the mighty limbs which, for good or for evil, they wield. Such is the relation which the three hundred thousand, or less than three hundred thousand, slave-owners of the South hold to their fellow citizens. They can light the torch of civil war or they can quench it. But if civil war once blazes forth it is not given to mortal wisdom to extinguish or control it. It comes under other and mightier laws, under other and mightier agencies. Human passions feed the combustion; and the flame which the breath of a man has kindled, the passions of the multitude—stronger than the breath of the hurricane—will spread. Among these passions, one of the strongest and boldest is the love of liberty which dwells in every bosom. In the educated and civilized this love of liberty is a regulated but paramount desire; in the ignorant and debased it is a wild, vehement instinct. It is an indestructible part of the nature of man; weakened it may be, but it cannot be destroyed. It is a thread of asbestos in the web of the soul which all the fires of oppression cannot consume.

With the creation of every human being God creates this love of liberty anew. The slave shares it with his master, and

it has descended into his bosom from the same high source. Whether dormant or wakeful, it only awaits an opportunity to become the mastering impulse of the soul. Civil war is that opportunity. Under oppression it bides its time. Civil war is the fulness of time. It is literal truth that the South fosters within its homes three millions of latent rebellions.

Imbedded in a material spontaneously combustible it laughs at fire. Has it any barriers to keep the spirit of liberty which has electrified the old world from crossing its own borders and quickening its bondsmen into mutinous life?—not all of them; but one in ten thousand, one in a hundred thousand of them. If there is no Sparticus among them, with his lofty heroism and his masterly skill for attack and defence, is the race of Nat Turners extinct, who, in their religious musings, and their dumb melancholy, take the impulses of their own passions for the inspiration of God and, after prayer and the Eucharist, proceed to massacre and conflagration?

In ignorant and imbruted minds a thousand motives work which we cannot divine. A thousand excitements madden them which we cannot control. It may be a text of Scripture, it may be the contents of a wine-vault; but the result will be the same—havoc wherever there is wealth, murder wherever there is life, violation wherever there is chastity. Let but this wildfire of a servile insurrection break out in but one place in a State; nay, in but ten places, or five places, in all the fifteen States; and then, in all their length and breadth there will be no more quiet sleep. Not Macbeth, but the Angel of Retribution, will “murder sleep.” The mother will clasp her infant to her breast, and, while she clasps it, die a double death. But where will the slaves find arms? “*Furor arma ministrat.*” Rage will supply their weapons.

Read the history of those slaves who have escaped from

bondage; mark their endurance and their contrivance, and let incredulity cease forever. They have hid themselves under coverts, dug holes and burrowed in the earth for concealment, sunk themselves in ponds and sustained life by breathing through a reed until their pursuers had passed by; crushed themselves into boxes but of half a coffin's dimensions, to be nailed up and transported hundreds of miles as merchandise, and in this horrible condition have endured hunger and thirst and standing upon the head without a groan or a sigh; have wandered abroad, almost fasting for forty days and forty nights, like Christ in the wilderness; and will men who devise such things and endure such things be balked in their purposes of hope and of revenge when the angel of destruction, in the form of the angel of liberty, descends into their breasts?

The state of slavery is always a state of war. In its deepest tranquillity it is but a truce. Active hostilities are liable at any hour to be resumed. Civil war between the North and the South,—anything that brings the quickening idea of freedom home to the mind of the slave, that supplies him with facilities of escape or immunities for revenge,—will unleash the bloodhounds of insurrection. Can you muster armies in secret, and march them in secret, so that the slave shall not know that they are mustered and marched to perpetuate his bondage and to extend the bondage of his race? Was not Major Dade's whole command supposed to be massacred through the treachery of a slave?

A foray within your borders places you in such a relation to the slave that you are helpless without him and in danger of assassination with him. He that defends slavery by war, wars against the eternal laws of God and rushes upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler.

Such are some of the "hazards" which the leaders of pub-

lic opinion at the South, the legislators and guides of men in this dark and perilous hour, are invoking upon themselves and their fellows; not for the interests of the whole, but for the fancied interests of the slaveholders alone, and against the real interests of a vast majority of the people. May God give that wisdom to the followers which he seems not yet to have imparted to the leaders.

Sir, in these remarks I have studiously abstained from everything that seemed to me like retaliation or unkindness. I certainly have suffered no purposed word of recrimination to pass my lips. If I have uttered severe truths I have not sought for severe language in which to clothe them. What I have said, I have said as to a brother sleeping on the brink of a precipice, where one motion of his troubled sleeping or of his bewildered awaking might plunge him into remediless ruin.

In conclusion, I have only to add that such is my solemn and abiding conviction of the character of slavery; that, under a full sense of my responsibility to my country and my God, I deliberately say, better disunion,—better a civil or a servile war,—better anything that God in his providence shall send, than an extension of the bounds of slavery.

---

#### THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AUGUST 17, 1852

**W**HEN before, since the "Mayflower" crossed the ocean with her precious burden, has any one minister of the Puritan stock ever dared or ever desired to put on priestly robes and enter the house of God to defend slavery or to palliate it?

Sir, such things were never known before. It is a new

spectacle for men and angels. It must give a new joy in the world of darkness.

Another collateral effect which slavery has produced, is the promulgation from the halls of Congress, and also from—what in such cases, is not the sacred, but the profane desk—that there is no “higher law” than the constitution, or than any interpretation which any corrupt Congress may put upon it. Such a doctrine is nothing less than palpable, and flagrant atheism.

If I am bound to obey any human law or constitution as my paramount rule of duty, thenceforth that rule becomes my supreme arbiter, judge, and god; and I am compelled, by logical necessity, to abjure, renounce, and depose all others. There cannot be two supreme rules of right. If I acknowledge myself bound by the divine law, and that comes in conflict with the human law, then I must disobey the latter.

But if the human law be the higher law, and if it conflicts with God’s law, then I am bound to disobey the law of God. If the constitution be the “higher law,” then we, on taking our seats in this House, and all magistrates and legislators, when entering upon the duties of their respective offices, ought not to take an oath before God to support the constitution, but ought to swear by the constitution to support that first, and God afterward, provided it is convenient.

I say, then, that this doctrine—which is one of the offshoots of slavery—that there is no higher law than the law of the State, is palpable and practical atheism. And yet it is perfectly well known to all who hear me, and to all who frequent the purlieus of Congress, that there is no butt of ridicule so common here, nothing which so readily and so frequently raises the “loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind,” as a fling or jeer at the “higher law.”

Sir, it is of fearful omen when the laws of men are made, even in theory, to take precedence of and override the laws of God. And the last aggravation is added to this iniquity when the politician disguises himself beneath the garb of a priest and cloaks his wickedness under the show of religion.

No person feels a profounder reverence, or would pay a sincerer homage to a godly, sin-avoiding, sin-exposing priesthood than myself. But I have no adequate words to express my abhorrence for the clerical hypocrite, with whom religion is neither a sanctification of the soul nor a purification of the body, but only a kind of policy of insurance against the retribution in another world for sins committed in this, accompanied all the while by knavish tricks on the part of the insured to cheat the divine insurer out of his premium.

[Here Mr. Mann was interrupted by Mr. Sutherland, who charged him with getting up an issue upon an immaterial question of morality, which simply tends to excite men without any practical benefit. Mr. Mann continued:]

I hope the gentleman will not interrupt me further. His argument would have answered just as well in the time of Herod, the Tetrarch, when he issued the order for the murder of all the children under two years of age. The murderers doubtless got ten-dollar commission fees for the deed. So those who massacred thirty-six thousand Protestants on St. Bartholomew’s Day at the ringing of a signal-bell went by the “higher law” of the pope, or of his vicegerent, the king; and had not they their “Union” to save by it? And our Pilgrim Fathers were driven into exile by the “higher law” of a hierarchical Parliament. And so if you admit this doctrine, there is no enormity, actual or conceivable, which may not be perpetrated and justified under it?