

fully at present of that king that he spoke of. They defy you to exercise your power over them. They tell you that they sympathize in this controversy with what you call the black Republicans. Therefore, I hope that, so far as Europe is concerned at least, we shall hear no more of this boast that cotton is king, and that he is going to rule all the civilized nations of the world, and bring them to his footstool. Sir, it will never be done.

But, sir, I wish to inquire whether the Southern people are injured by, or have any just right to complain of that platform of principles that we put out, and on which we have elected a President and Vice-President. I have no concealments to make, and I shall talk to you, my Southern friends, precisely as I would talk upon the stump on the subject. I tell you that in that platform we did lay it down that we would, if we had the power, prohibit slavery from another inch of free territory under this government. I stand on that position to-day. I have argued it probably to half a million people. They stand there, and have commissioned and enjoined me to stand there forever; and, so help me God, I will. I say to you, frankly, gentlemen, that while we hold this doctrine, there is no Republican, there is no convention of Republicans, there is no paper that speaks for them, there is no orator that sets forth their doctrines, who ever pretends that they have any right in your States to interfere with your peculiar institution; but, on the other hand, our authoritative platform repudiates the idea that we have any right or any intention ever to invade your peculiar institution in your own States.

Now, what do you complain of? You are going to break up this government; you are going to involve us in war and blood, from a mere suspicion that we shall justify

that which we stand everywhere pledged not to do. Would you be justified in the eyes of the civilized world in taking so monstrous a position, and predicating it on a bare, groundless suspicion? We do not love slavery. Did you not know that before to-day, before this session commenced? Have you not a perfect confidence that the civilized world is against you on this subject of loving slavery or believing that it is the best institution in the world? Why, sir, everything remains precisely as it was a year ago. No great catastrophe has occurred. There is no recent occasion to accuse us of anything. But all at once, when we meet here, a kind of gloom pervades the whole community and the Senate chamber. Gentlemen rise and tell us that they are on the eve of breaking up this government, that seven or eight States are going to break off their connection with the government, retire from the Union, and set up a hostile government of their own, and they look imploringly over to us, and say to us: "You can prevent it; we can do nothing to prevent it; but it all lies with you." Well, sir, what can we do to prevent it? You have not even condescended to tell us what you want; but I think I see through the speeches that I have heard from gentlemen on the other side. If we would give up the verdict of the people, and take your platform, I do not know but you would be satisfied with it. I think the Senator from Texas rather intimated, and I think the Senator from Georgia more than intimated, that if we would take what is exactly the Charleston platform on which Mr. Breckenridge was placed, and give up that on which we won our victory, you would grumblingly and hesitatingly be satisfied.

Mr. Iverson—I would prefer that the Senator would

look over my remarks before quoting them so confidently. I made no such statement as that. I did not say that I would be satisfied with any such thing. I would not be satisfied with it.

Mr. Wade—I did not say that the Senator said so; but by construction I gathered that from his speech. I do not know that I was right in it.

Mr. Iverson—The Senator is altogether wrong in his construction.

Mr. Wade—Well, sir, I have now found what the Senator said on the other point to which he called my attention a little while ago. Here it is:

“Nor do we suppose that there will be any overt acts upon the part of Mr. Lincoln. For one, I do not dread these overt acts. I do not propose to wait for them. Why, sir, the power of this Federal Government could be so exercised against the institution of slavery in the Southern States, as that, without an overt act, the institution would not last ten years. We know that, sir; and seeing the storm which is approaching, although it may be seemingly in the distance, we are determined to seek our own safety and security before it shall burst upon us and overwhelm us with its fury, when we are not in a situation to defend ourselves.”

That is what the Senator said.

Mr. Iverson—Yes; that is what I said.

Mr. Wade—Well, then, you did not expect that Mr. Lincoln would commit any overt act against the Constitution—that was not it—you were not going to wait for that, but were going to proceed on your supposition that probably he might; and that is the sense of what I said before.

Well, Mr. President, I have disavowed all intention

on the part of the Republican party to harm a hair of your heads anywhere. We hold to no doctrine that can possibly work you an inconvenience. We have been faithful to the execution of all laws in which you have any interest, as stands confessed on this floor by your own party, and as is known to me without their confessions. It is not, then, that Mr. Lincoln is expected to do any overt act by which you may be injured; you will not wait for any; but anticipating that the government may work an injury, you say you will put an end to it, which means simply that you intend either to rule or ruin this government. That is what your complaint comes to; nothing else. We do not like your institution, you say. Well, we never liked it any better than we do now. You might as well have dissolved the Union at any other period as now, on that account, for we stand in relation to it precisely as we have ever stood; that is, repudiating it among ourselves as a matter of policy and morals, but nevertheless admitting that where it is out of our jurisdiction we have no hold upon it, and no designs upon it.

Then, sir, as there is nothing in the platform on which Mr. Lincoln was elected of which you complain, I ask, is there anything in the character of the President-elect of which you ought to complain? Has he not lived a blameless life? Did he ever transgress any law? Has he ever committed any violation of duty of which the most scrupulous can complain? Why, then, your suspicions that he will? I have shown that you have had the government all the time, until, by some misfortune or maladministration, you brought it to the very verge of destruction, and the wisdom of the people had discovered that it was

high time that the sceptre should depart from you, and be placed in more competent hands; I say that this being so, you have no constitutional right to complain; especially when we disavow any intention so to make use of the victory we have won as to injure you at all.

This brings me, sir, to the question of compromises. On the first day of this session, a Senator rose in his place and offered a resolution for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the evils that exist between the different sections, and to ascertain what can be done to settle this great difficulty. That is the proposition substantially. I tell the Senator that I know of no difficulty; and as to compromises, I had supposed that we were all agreed that the day of compromises was at an end. The most solemn compromises we have ever made have been violated without a whereas. Since I have had a seat in this body, one of considerable antiquity, that had stood for more than thirty years, was swept away from your statute books. When I stood here in the minority arguing against it; when I asked you to withhold your hand; when I told you it was a sacred compromise between the sections, and that when it was removed we should be brought face to face with all that sectional bitterness that has intervened; when I told you that it was a sacred compromise which no man should touch with his finger, what was your reply? That it was a mere act of Congress—nothing more, nothing less—and that it could be swept away by the same majority that passed it. That was true in point of fact, and true in point of law; but it showed the weakness of compromises. Now, sir, I only speak for myself; and I say that, in view of the manner in which other compromises have been heretofore treated, I should hardly think any

two of the Democratic party would look each other in the face and say "compromise" without a smile. [Laughter.] A compromise to be brought about by act of Congress, after the experience we have had, is absolutely ridiculous. . . .

I say, then, that so far as I am concerned, I will yield to no compromise. I do not come here begging, either. It would be an indignity to the people that I represent if I were to stand here parleying as to the rights of the party to which I belong. We have won our right to the Chief Magistracy of this nation in the way that you have always won your predominance; and if you are as willing to do justice to others as to exact it from them, you would never raise an inquiry as to a committee for compromises. Here I beg, barely for myself, to say one thing more. Many of you stand in an attitude hostile to this government; that is to say, you occupy an attitude where you threaten that, unless we do so and so, you will go out of this Union and destroy the government. I say to you for myself, that, in my private capacity, I never yielded to anything by way of threat, and in my public capacity I have no right to yield to any such thing; and therefore I would not entertain a proposition for any compromise, for, in my judgment, this long, chronic controversy that has existed between us must be met, and met upon the principles of the Constitution and laws, and met now. I hope it may be adjusted to the satisfaction of all; and I know no other way to adjust it, except that way which is laid down by the Constitution of the United States. Whenever we go astray from that, we are sure to plunge ourselves into difficulties. The old Constitution of the United States, although commonly and frequently in direct opposition to what I could wish, nevertheless, in my judgment, is the wisest and best

Constitution that ever yet organized a free government; and by its provisions I am willing, and intend, to stand or fall. Like the Senator from Mississippi, I ask nothing more. I ask no ingrafting upon it. I ask nothing to be taken away from it. Under its provisions a nation has grown faster than any other in the history of the world ever did before in prosperity, in power, and in all that makes a nation great and glorious. It has ministered to the advantages of this people; and now I am unwilling to add or take away anything till I can see much clearer than I can now that it wants either any addition or lopping off. . . .

The Senator from Texas says—it is not exactly his language—we will force you to an ignominious treaty up in Faneuil Hall. Well, sir, you may. We know you are brave; we understand your prowess; we want no fight with you; but, nevertheless, if you drive us to that necessity, we must use all the powers of this government to maintain it intact in its integrity. If we are overthrown, we but share the fate of a thousand other governments that have been subverted. If you are the weakest then you must go to the wall; and that is all there is about it. That is the condition in which we stand, provided a State sets herself up in opposition to the general government.

I say that is the way it seems to me, as a lawyer. I see no power in the Constitution to release a Senator from this position. Sir, if there was any other, if there was an absolute right of secession in the Constitution of the United States when we stepped up there to take our oath of office, why was there not an exception in that oath? Why did it not run “that we would support the Constitution of the United States unless our State shall secede before our

term was out?” Sir, there is no such immunity. There is no way by which this can be done that I can conceive of, except it is standing upon the Constitution of the United States, demanding equal justice for all, and vindicating the old flag of the Union. We must maintain it, unless we are cloven down by superior force.

Well, sir, it may happen that you can make your way out of the Union, and that, by levying war upon the government, you may vindicate your right to independence. If you should do so, I have a policy in my mind. No man would regret more than myself that any portion of the people of these United States should think themselves impelled, by grievances or anything else, to depart out of this Union, and raise a foreign flag and a hand against the general government. If there was any just cause on God's earth that I could see that was within my reach of honorable release from any such pretended grievance, they should have it; but they set forth none; I can see none. It is all a matter of prejudice, superinduced unfortunately, I believe, as I intimated before, more because you have listened to the enemies of the Republican party and what they said of us, while, from your intolerance, you have shut out all light as to what our real principles are. We have been called and branded in the North and in the South and everywhere else, as John Brown men, as men hostile to your institutions, as meditating an attack upon your institutions in your own State—a thing that no Republican ever dreamed of or ever thought of, but has protested against as often as the question has been up; but your people believe it. No doubt they believe it because of the terrible excitement and reign of terror that prevails there. No doubt they think so, but it arises from false in-

formation, or the want of information—that is all. Their prejudices have been appealed to until they have become uncontrolled and uncontrollable.

Well, sir, if it shall be so; if that "glorious Union," as we call it, under which the government has so long lived and prospered, is now about to come to a final end, as perhaps it may, I have been looking around to see what policy we should adopt; and through that gloom which has been mentioned on the other side, if you will have it so, I still see a glorious future for those who stand by the old flag of the nation. . . .

But, sir, I am for maintaining the Union of these States. I will sacrifice everything but honor to maintain it. That glorious old flag of ours, by any act of mine, shall never cease to wave over the integrity of this Union as it is. But if they will not have it so, in this new, renovated government of which I have spoken, the 4th of July, with all its glorious memories, will never be repealed. The old flag of 1776 will be in our hands, and shall float over this nation forever; and this capital, that some gentleman said would be reserved for the Southern republic, shall still be the capital. It was laid out by Washington, it was consecrated by him; and the old flag that he vindicated in the Revolution shall still float from the Capitol.

I say, sir, I stand by the Union of these States. Washington and his compatriots fought for that good old flag. It shall never be hauled down, but shall be the glory of the government to which I belong, as long as my life shall continue. To maintain it, Washington and his compatriots fought for liberty and the rights of man. And here I will add that my own father, although but a humble soldier, fought in the same great cause, and went through

hardships and privations sevenfold worse than death, in order to bequeath it to his children. It is my inheritance. It was my protector in infancy, and the pride and glory of my riper years; and, Mr. President, although it may be assailed by traitors on every side, by the grace of God, under its shadows I will die.