

1867

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
OF THE
HON. W. R. W. COBB,
OF
ALABAMA.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 7, 1861.

Mr. COBB. The second time in my life I feel compelled to make an appeal to the House, to allow me a few moments to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER. If there is no objection, the gentleman will have leave to proceed. The Chair hears no objection. The gentleman will proceed.

Mr. COBB. In the outset, let me express the hope that I may not be interrupted in the few remarks I propose to submit. And, before I proceed, Mr. Speaker, to make my personal explanation, I want to say to every member of this House that I do not propose to reflect upon them, or any one of them, for anything they may have done. They are responsible for their own acts; and while I act according to the dictates of my own judgment, I shall not call in question the integrity of those who choose to act differently from me.

Mr. Speaker, in the Baltimore Sun, of this morning, I see it announced that the Alabama and Mississippi delegations held a conference last evening, and afterwards telegraphed to the conventions of their respective States, advising them to secede immediately, saying that there is no prospect of an adjustment of differences, but that they have resolved to remain here and await the action of their States.

Now, I want to say that I happen not to be one of those in that dispatch mentioned. While I represent the State of Alabama in part—a humble representative though I may be—and whilst it is rarely that I am consulted in relation to what the policy of Alabama should be, yet I represent a people who, I think, are capable of speaking for themselves; and while I know their wishes, unless they come in conflict with what I believe to be my constitutional duty, I shall endeavor to carry them out.

Mr. HOUSTON. Will my colleague allow me a word in this connection? I understand that the consultation to which the telegraph refers, was a consultation upon the part of Senators alone; that no member of this House from any of those States was in the caucus, if indeed, there was any, and they had nothing to do with it. The meeting, if I understand it correctly from rumor, was a meeting for consultation among the Senators from a few of the southern States. Nobody else had anything to do with it.

Mr. COBB. That was their privilege; but I did not happen to be with them. It is well known that I send no telegraphic dispatches. I trust to the wisdom, discretion, and ability of my constituents to direct the policy of Alabama according to their own wishes; and I am always satisfied that those wishes will reflect what I believe to be the true policy of the country. This House, and you, Mr. Speaker, are well aware that I have labored diligently ever since the commencement of this session of Congress to heal, if possible, the difficulties which distract the two sections of the country. God knows my heart, and He knows my prayers are continually for the restoration and continuance of harmony in this country; that the stars and stripes which have so often floated in victory over our enemies, and which have floated over us in peace, shall still continue to be our protection as long as we can remain united as equals. This Congress may decide the basis upon which we are to stand. A majority of the people of Alabama believe that they will not be permitted to remain as equals in this Confederacy; and I, as one of the Representatives of the State of Alabama, am anxious to ascertain whether we can or not. I am one of her Representatives who have all along believed that a consultation should be had by the southern States, to arrive at a determination at what the South intend to demand; or, to use more respectful terms, what they will ask shall be granted to them as rights which they are clearly entitled to. I, for one, was in favor of waiting until the committee of thirty-three should determine what policy they should pursue.

I will say, in all frankness, that I have very little hope in what they will do. True, I have met several gentlemen within the last four or five days who, to use their own language, said they felt it in their bones that something would be done to quiet this distracted country. I wish I could feel in my bones that it would be so. If I could I would, departing from my usual custom, telegraph to my country that a star had begun to rise that, in all probability, would illuminate the dark and clouded minds of a portion of our country, and that peace would reign and justice be administered to the whole land. Yes, sir, I would ask all conventions that meet to-day to stay their action. Alabama meets in solemn convention to-day; and it may not be inappropriate for me to stand before this body to-day and plead that they may do what is right, in order that Alabama may not be compelled, in vindication of the principles of justice and right, to go out of the Union. I would call upon the Republicans in this House, and also in the Senate if I had the power, and admonish them of the danger, and ask them to come forward and do something, if they intend to do it, that will relieve the country, which stands to-day upon the very brink of dissolution. Shall I stand here to-day, while the country is upon the brink of dissolution, and not raise my voice and call upon those who have the power, to arrest the evil? We know that if the present state of things continue for any considerable length of time, an adjustment and reconstruction between these States can never be accomplished. You have this question in your own hands, and if you are to do anything, do it quickly.

But gentlemen say they cannot do anything. They say that the edict went forth on the sixth day of November last; that the people decided such and such questions involving certain principles in reference to the slavery question. I deny that the jury empaneled at that time gave any such verdict. There were other questions in issue which entered into that canvass. I tell you what I believe is the truth, and I tell the country what I believe is right; and I say I do not believe the question of slavery was the only question that was submitted to the people, but that other questions entered into that contest which went far to influence the result. Is that so? Have you Republicans got a majority of the people of this vast country to endorse your principles?

[Interrupted by Mr. McKEAN.]

Mr. COBB. I was remarking that you Republicans say that the edict has gone forth: that the jurors of the country have been empaneled, and that their judgment has been made up and submitted to the country. I deny it emphatically. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, as a fair-minded man—as I believe you are disposed to be, and I trust I shall never have occasion to think otherwise—in your State do you not recollect that there were other questions brought into this controversy besides the negro question? I call upon the Pennsylvania delegation to respond to me, and say if there was not another question brought into the controversy there besides the negro question? I call upon the men of the Northwest to say if the slavery question was the only question brought into the controversy in their country? And I would call upon men even from the slave States to answer me that question.

Mr. HINDMAN. I rise to a point of order.

Mr. JOHN COCHRANE. I trust the gentleman from Alabama will be allowed to proceed.

Mr. COBB. I ask no favor but what the House has granted me. I stand here upon my rights; and, if I violate the rules of the House, stop me.

Mr. HINDMAN. My point of order is, that the remarks made by the gentleman are not in the nature of personal explanation, and I shall therefore object to his proceeding. [Cries of "go on, COBB."]

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from Alabama has the floor.

Mr. COBB. I am speaking in relation to my position; and, as I am not much in the habit of speaking, I hope I shall not be interrupted. I was stating that, when I ask a Republican why he does not do something, he says his people have passed upon the question and he cannot do it. I am endeavoring to show them that they can do it, and that their pretext is not predicated on what I believe to be sound reasoning.

[Interrupted by Mr. McKEAN.]

The SPEAKER. The Chair thinks the gentleman from Alabama is entitled to go on.

Mr. COBB. Let me go on without interruption.

Mr. HOUSTON. If I can get my colleague's ear, I will appeal to him, under the circumstances, the point of order having been made upon him, to let his explanation be of a personal character, or abandon the floor and let other gentlemen occupy it.

Mr. COBB. I am very much obliged to my worthy colleague; but I must be governed in this matter by my own sense of duty.

After the sage advice given to me by my distinguished colleague, I shall endeavor to confine myself, as nearly as possible, to what I intend to be personal explanation. I

have a different manner, perhaps, of arriving at conclusions than other gentlemen have, and I cannot reach them as suddenly as gentlemen who are more in the habit of speaking. I am sometimes, therefore, obliged to take a little latitude, in order to bring the application of my remarks to the question I am discussing.

I was going on to say, sir, that I did not regard the slavery question as having been settled by the majority at the late presidential election, as shown by the following vote :

THE POPULAR VOTE OF THE NORTHERN STATES.					THE POPULAR VOTE OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.				
States.	Lincoln.	Breck'dge.	Bell and		States.	Lincoln.	Breck'dge.	Douglas.	Bell and
			Fusion.	Everett.					
California	38,036	31,424	37,836	7,942	Alabama,	—	30,653	8,329	20,589
Connecticut,	43,792	16,493	17,374	3,097	Arkansas,	—	25,000	4,000	11,000
Illinois.	172,595	2,399	160,823	4,951	Delaware,	3,813	7,345	1,069	3,868
Indiana,	122,073	11,812	102,216	5,157	Florida,	—	8,500	800	5,500
Iowa,	46,014	741	34,812	944	Georgia,	—	51,893	11,580	42,855
Maine,	62,370	6,588	29,476	2,008	Kentucky,	1,466	52,836	25,644	66,018
Massachusetts,	106,486	6,728	34,703	22,641	Louisiana,	—	25,000	10,000	13,000
Michigan,	78,000	7,000	45,000	5,000	Maryland,	2,293	42,185	5,874	41,460
Minnesota,	27,000	1,500	14,500	2,000	Mississippi,	—	48,000	1,000	32,000
N. Hampshire,	37,406	2,112	25,953	402	Missouri,	17,024	30,690	58,798	58,320
New Jersey,	58,341	242	4,458	62,508	North Carolina,	—	48,539	2,701	44,990
New York,	361,367	—	—	313,640	South Carolina,	—	55,000	—	—
Ohio,	220,000	2,500	165,000	11,500	Tennessee,	—	63,317	10,970	67,650
Oregon,	4,000	2,500	4,300	1,000	Texas,	—	40,500	5,200	25,000
Pennsylvania,	270,170	—	17,350	189,290	Virginia,	1,500	73,862	16,221	74,168
Rhode Island,	12,244	—	—	7,787					
Vermont,	33,808	1,866	8,649	217	Total,	26,096	583,320	162,786	506,418
Wisconsin,	65,000	7,000	45,000	2,000					
Total,	1,758,702	100,705	747,450	642,084	Breckinridge's plurality in Southern States,				76,902
Lincoln's majority in Northern States.....				268,463					

AGGREGATE VOTE.

Total vote in the Union.....	4,527,661
Total Union vote:	
For Breckinridge.....	684,025
For Douglas.....	910,236
For Bell and Fusion.....	1,148,502
Total vote for Lincoln.....	2,742,763
	1,784,798
Popular majority against Lincoln.....	957,965

The vote of Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, is estimated on the basis of the latest despatches from those States.

THE ELECTORAL VOTE.

NORTHERN OR FREE STATES.					SOUTHERN OR SLAVE STATES.				
States.	Bell and		Lincoln &		States.	Bell and		Lincoln &	
	Everett.	Douglas & Breck'dge				Johnson. and Lane.	Hamlin.			Everett.	Douglas & Breck'dge	Johnson. and Lane.	Hamlin.
California	4		Alabama	...	...	9	
Connecticut	6		Arkansas	...	...	4	...
Illinois	11		Delaware	...	...	3	...
Indiana	13		Florida	...	...	3	...
Iowa	4		Georgia	...	...	10	...
Maine	8		Kentucky	12	...	...	...
Massachusetts	13		Louisiana	...	...	6	...
Michigan	6		Maryland	8	...	...	...
Minnesota	4		Mississippi	...	...	7	...
N. Hampshire	5		Missouri	...	9	...	...
New Jersey	...	3	...	4	North Carolina	...	...	10	...
New York	35	South Carolina	...	...	8	...
Ohio	23	Tennessee	12	...	...	...
Oregon	...	3	...	...	Texas	...	...	4	...
Pennsylvania	27	Virginia	15	...	...	...
Rhode Island	4	Total	47	9	64	...
Vermont	5					
Wisconsin	5					
Total	...	6	...	177					
Lincoln over all in free States.....			171						
Breckinridge over Bell in Southern States.....									17
Breckinridge over Douglas in Southern States.....									55
Lincoln over Bell in the Union.....									130
Lincoln over Douglas in the Union.....									162
Lincoln over Breckinridge in the Union.....									113
Lincoln over all in the Union.....									51

AGGREGATE ELECTORAL VOTE.

Total electoral vote.....	303
Necessary to a choice.....	152
Lincoln received.....	177
All others.....	126

CONNECTICUT—[Official.]					NEW HAMPSHIRE—[Official.]					
Counties.	Lin.	Doug.	Breck.	Bell. Fusion	Counties.	Lincoln.	Douglas.	Breck.	Bell.	
Hartford	8,522	3,082	3,261	271	...	Rockingham	5,720	3,228	618	116
New Haven	8,669	2,929	4,358	666	10	Strafford	3,536	1,995	258	43
New London	5,473	2,596	1,197	211	...	Belknap	1,981	1,786	48	5
Fairfield	7,024	1,286	2,028	281	2,099	Carroll	2,148	1,993	42	8
Windham	3,618	1,456	304	21	...	Merrimac	4,794	3,813	276	56
Litchfield	5,113	1,735	1,669	48	...	Hillsborough	6,888	4,557	221	88
Middlesex	2,885	1,180	1,334	109	...	Cheshire	3,843	1,912	166	21
Tolland	2,494	1,130	479	18	...	Sullivan	2,437	1,763	97	30
Total	43,798	15,403	14,630	1,560	2,109	Grafton	4,823	3,504	343	42
Lincoln over Douglas					28,395	Coos	1,349	1,330	43	2
Lincoln over all					10,096	Total	37,519	25,881	2,112	411

Lincoln over Douglas, 11,638; over all, 9,115. In 1856, Fremont received 33,280 votes; Buchanan, 32,675; Fillmore, 411.

I was endeavoring to call upon the Republicans, as patriots and men who love their country, to do what they say they cannot do because the people have decided the question. I say that the tariff question entered into the controversy at the last election; I say that the internal improvement question entered into that controversy; I say that the homestead question entered into that contest; I say the Pacific railroad question entered into that contest; and I am ashamed to acknowledge that a question entered into that contest in relation to the corruptions of the Administration. I made no charges of corruption; on the contrary, I endeavored to defend the Administration; but I heard Democrats, who ought to have refrained from such things, charging the Administration with being corrupt. I did not believe the charge; but it is a well-known fact that it had its effect upon the mind of the country. They said that corruption stalked abroad, and that it ought to be put a stop to. I denied it: but that had something to do with the decision of the contest.

I now come to a personal explanation as to what my people want; what they expect of their representatives; and what they are going to demand. I know they are making no preparation to receive any proposition; but I am satisfied that if the House and Senate would do what is right, they would stay their movements until such time as the country could act upon the questions which now agitate the Union. My people say they have rights in the Territories; and I say they have. They say those rights must be recognized, or else we cannot remain together in this Government. That is one of the issues. They say that we have rights of property in slaves; and the North denies that we have any property in slaves. That is a question that must be settled. We hold that it was settled in the organization of this Government. We hold that the Constitution has settled it. We hold that the decision of the Supreme Court has been that property does exist in slaves. The right of property in slaves was recognized in the treaty of peace between Great Britain and this country, in 1782, by John Adams and other distinguished northern men who, I apprehend, had as much knowledge of what constituted property as their descendants have to-day.

That slaves are property, and regarded as such by the Constitution, has been determined by the highest authority, by every department of our Government, and the great mass of the prominent statesmen of our country.

The Supreme Court of the United States has decided that the Constitution makes no distinction between slaves and other property, and pledges the Government to protect it. This settled no new principle. The same doctrine was held by the Continental Congress under the Articles of Confederation, and by the administration of Mr. Madison and the United States Senate, under the Constitution, and in both instances by the wisest and purest men that the world has ever produced; men who "pledged their lives, their property, and sacred honors" to the maintenance of the rights of the country.

The terms and provisions of the treaty of Paris, which put an end to the war of the Revolution, and the treaty of Ghent, which terminated the British war of 1812, are direct and positive to the point, and admit of no cavil, as appears from the following sections:

"Provisional Articles between the United States of America and His Britannic Majesty.

"Agreed upon by and between Richard Oswald, esquire, the commissioner of his Britannic Majesty, for treating of peace with the commissioners of the United States of America, in behalf of his said Majesty, on one part, and John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and Henry Laurens, four of the commissioners of the said States, &c.

"ART. VII. * * * * All prisoners on both sides shall be set at liberty, and his Britannic Majesty with all convenient speed, and without causing any destruction, or carrying away any negroes or other property of the American inhabitants, withdraw all his armies, garrisons, and fleets from the said United States, and from every fort, place, and harbor within the same." * * * *

"Done at Paris, November 30, 1782.

"RICHARD OSWALD, [L. S.] "JOHN ADAMS, [L. S.] "B. FRANKLIN, [L. S.]
 "HENRY LAURENS, [L. S.] "JOHN JAY," [L. E.]

"Definitive Treaty of Peace between the United States of America and His Britannic Majesty.

"ART. VII. * * * * And His Britannic Majesty shall, with all convenient speed, and without causing any destruction, or carrying any negroes or other property of the American inhabitants, withdraw all his armies, &c.

"Done at Paris, September 3, 1783.

"D. HARTLEY, [L.S.] " JOHN ADAMS, [L.S.] " B. FRANKLIN, [L.S.] " JOHN JAY, [L.S.]"

"Treaty of Peace and Amity between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America.

("Ratified and confirmed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, February 11, 1815.")

"ART. I." * * * * "shall be restored without delay, and without causing any destruction, and without carrying away any of the artillery or other public property originally captured in the said forts or places, and which shall remain therein upon the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, or any slaves or other private property."

* * * * *
"Done, in triplicate, at Ghent, December 24, 1814.

"GAMBRIE,	[L.S.]	"JOHN Q. ADAMS,	[L.S.]	"JONA RUSSELL,	[L.S.]
"HENRY COULBURN,	[L.S.]	"J. A. BAYARD,	[L.S.]	"ALBERT GALLATIN,	[L.S.]
"WILLIAM ADAMS,	[L.S.]	"H. CLAY,"	[L.S.]		

Also, a further evidence that slaves are regarded by the General Government as property, they sell them for debts due the Government.

These treaties were signed by our wisest and best men. The former was ratified by the Continental Congress, and the latter by the Senate of the United States. In either body there was not an objection to the designation of slaves as property. There was no other idea at the time, or any other time, in the minds of our patriotic forefathers. Whoever will look at the names of the sublime patriots appended to the above-mentioned treaties, and names of the members of the Continental Congress, and of the United States Senate, who ratified them, will duly appreciate the counsels of the false, intriguing politicians, and the ghastly fanatics who have brought the country to the very brink of ruin; who have filled the land with bitterness and strife; prostrated every interest; beggared families, and, to add greater calamities to the bitter fruits of their labors, still persist in efforts, the direct tendency of which is to light the torch of civil war.

Is it not time for honest men—pious and moral-minded men—to pause and consider with candor and reason, whether they have not followed beyond the bounds of safety, the lead of weak, corrupt, and selfish politicians, and whether it is not better to return to the counsels and practices of the great and good men who lived for their country, and died breathing their last prayer for national fraternity and the perpetuity of the Union?

The admission that slaves were property admitted everything. It is easy to be perceived that the settlement of this fact, with due submission to the provisions of the Constitution, would settle all controversy between the North and the South, and terminate the ruinous feud which imperils the existence of the Union, is prostrating every interest, and reducing many honest and worthy families to beggary.

If, according to the American system of polity, slaves are recognized as property, it comes within the constitutional guarantee, and the Federal Government is bound to protect it the same as other property, wherever it has jurisdiction. Then, whether slaves are constitutionally recognized as property, is a question first to be settled by every one who would be earnest in his politics, or faithful in the discharge of his duty as a citizen. If the South have a constitutional right that slave property, the same as all other property, should be protected within the scope of the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, and the North will not submit to such a constitutional guarantee, in justice and fair dealing, the South ought not to be held to submit to the bonds of union. When it is determined that the North will not live by the Constitution, can it be claimed in fairness that the South shall? If not, then it becomes the North to grant everything that the Constitution secures, or submit with contentment to a dissolution of the Union, and disintegration of the whole national system of Government.

I call upon gentlemen to come forward and endeavor to save the country. I have long beheld the old ship of State coming in laden with prosperity. I have seen her make voyage after voyage, and bring in cargo after cargo of prosperity to the country. And now we see her dashing to pieces in the tempest. Have we not wreckers enough to go out and try to bring in that old ship, and let us see whether we can repair her and make her seaworthy again? I am one of those who will, if possible, engage in repairing her and putting her again on the bosom of the ocean, so that she may go on as before—prosperously. But if this cannot be done, if equality cannot be maintained between the States North and South, then my people will not remain in the Union, nor will I advise them to do so. I thank the House for the courtesy extended to me.

WITHDRAWAL
OF THE
HON. WILLIAMSON R. W. COBB.
OF ALABAMA.

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication addressed to him :

WASHINGTON, January 30, 1861.

DEAR SIR : Having just received the following :

An ordinance to Dissolve the Union between the State of Alabama and other States united under the compact styled " the Constitution of the United States of America."

Whereas the election of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin to the offices of President and Vice President of the United States of America, by a sectional party, avowedly hostile to the domestic institutions, and to the peace and security of the people of the State of Alabama, preceded by many and dangerous infractions of the Constitution of the United States by many of the States and people of the northern section, is a political wrong of so insulting and menacing a character as to justify the people of the State of Alabama in the adoption of prompt and decided measures for their future peace and security : Therefore,

Be it declared and ordained by the people of the State of Alabama in convention assembled, That the State of Alabama now withdraws, and is hereby withdrawn, from the Union known as " the United States of America," and henceforth ceases to be one of said United States, and is, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and independent State.

SEC. 2. *Be it further declared and ordained by the people of the State of Alabama in convention assembled,* That all the powers over the territory of said State, and over the people thereof, heretofore delegated to the Government of the United States of America be, and they are hereby, withdrawn from said Government, and are hereby resumed and vested in the people of the State of Alabama.

And as it is the desire and purpose of the people of Alabama to meet the slaveholding States of the South, who may approve such purpose, in order to frame a provisional as well as permanent government, upon the principles of the Constitution of the United States :

Be it resolved by the people of Alabama in convention assembled, That the people of the States of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri, be, and are hereby, invited to meet the people of the State of Alabama, by their delegates, in convention, on the 4th day of February, A. D. 1861, at the city of Montgomery, in the State of Alabama, for the purpose of consulting with each other as to the most effectual mode of securing concerted and harmonious action in whatever measures may be deemed most desirable for our common peace and security.

And be it further resolved, That the president of this convention be, and is hereby, instructed to transmit forthwith a copy of the foregoing preamble, ordinance, and resolutions, to the Governors of the several States named in said resolutions.

Done by the people of the State of Alabama in convention assembled at Montgomery, on this, the 11th day of January, A. D. 1861.

WILLIAM M. BROOKS,
President of the Convention.

I feel it my duty to decline any further participation in the business of the United States House of Representatives ; and in doing this, I need not express my deep regret that causes exist that renders it necessary. *God save the country.*

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

W. R. W. COBB.

HON. WILLIAM PENNINGTON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Mr. COBB. Mr. Speaker, I beg the House to indulge me for a few moments before I leave my seat in this Hall. [Cries of "Agreed!"]

The SPEAKER. The gentleman has unanimous consent.

Mr. COBB. Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House of Representatives, I feel it due to my country and my constituents, to this House and myself, before taking my departure, to give some reasons which have dictated the act which I now take. I have declined taking it before, resolved upon first receiving in form the ordinance of secession from the State of Alabama. My colleagues left some days ago. I did not go with them, believing it to be my duty to wait for the copy of the ordinance of secession of Alabama, which I have embraced in the communication just read from the Clerk's table. Yet, since the withdrawal of my colleagues, I have absented myself from the deliberations and business of this body; and from that time I have not drawn one cent of pay.

Under the action of my State, under that ordinance, which I received yesterday, I am, in my judgment, compelled to return to the land which gave me birth, to share its fate through weal and woe, through good and evil fortune. Profound, sir, is my feeling in leaving this House of Representatives of the United States, where I have served for the last fourteen years. Those with whom I have served, and with whom I have been associated, will bear witness with what fidelity I have ever endeavored to discharge my duties as one of the Representatives of the people. It has ever been my desire to do justice by all, and never to be forgetful of that courtesy which ought to characterize the intercourse of the members of the House. I depart from this presence reluctantly, because I had hoped from the beginning that something would have been done to preserve the integrity of this Union. Day after day, week after week, I have waited for something to be done by the Senate and this House in the way of compromise, predicated upon the Constitution and equitable principles, such as we have a right to expect: which would, sir, have been received by my constituents with gladness of heart.

It will be remembered that on the 11th of last month I advised members that Alabama would withdraw herself from the Union by the 15th of this month of January, unless something was done to restore peace and harmony to the country. My prediction has been fulfilled. Now, sir, when I return home, let me not go without hope. Let me have it within my power to say to my people that there is hope, however faint it may appear now. But my appeal to the House is that there shall be action; something done to restore confidence between the different sections of the Union, that there shall be peace, harmony, and prosperity once more restored to this now divided and distracted country. [Applause.]

Let me briefly recount some of the events which have transpired since my service here. I have seen acquisition after acquisition of territory by war and purchase. While I have been a member, men from the North and men from the South have fought together upon the same battle-fields, in defense of the standard of the Union. I have seen the eagles of the Republic sweep with proud wing across the snow-clad Rocky Mountains, and I have seen the stars and stripes planted upon the Gulf of California, and upon the shores of the far Pacific. I have seen more: I have seen our flag break down the selfish barriers of Oriental nations, and fly in triumph in China and Japan, a shield and a guard of protection for American citizens and American commerce. How grand a future had the Union only a few years back! With the planting interests of the South, and the manufacturing and shipping interests of the North, I looked to see ourselves the masters of the world. But, sir, in that I have been mistaken. I have seen savage nation after nation yield to the civilization of the white man. I have seen State after State, and Territory after Territory, constructed out of country annexed since I have been a member of this House. Yes, sir; and I have seen star after star fall from the galaxy of the brightest names in our country's history—a Clay, a Webster, a Calhoun, and others. Oh, that to-day some of those bright luminaries could raise their voices from the grave, and speak to those they have left behind, and tell them what their duty is! If we had them with us to-day, probably we might save this great and once happy country, by a settlement of these present difficulties. But they are not with us. Yet cannot we find others who, if not equal in ability, are as anxious to settle these unhappy difficulties, and to restore peace and harmony to our distracted country? I trust we shall find many such.

Sir, you must be well aware of the depth of my feeling when I take my leave of the councils of a country which has been a great country during the brief period of its existence, and which was destined to be the greatest country upon earth. You can imagine that a man of ordinary ability and feeling must feel deeply, when he sees a country, greater than any other the sun ever shone upon, distracted, and perhaps severed forever. I feel deeply; and I am not ashamed to confess it. I say, with uplifted hands, God save my country! Who will say the same? How many will say that they are

anxious to save the country? I trust, all. I have to leave the matter in your hands. When you send your messengers to us of the South, I trust you will not send messengers to coerce and subjugate us; but send us messengers of peace, and we will receive them with open arms and warm hearts. But, if you should deem it your duty to send persons to coerce and subjugate us, we must defend our rights, and protect our wives and little ones. We may not be able to erect a monument of victory to bequeath to them: though we can, and I trust we will, in such an emergency, erect a monument to our memory, with the inscription thereon, written in letters of blood, *we have faithfully defended our constitutional rights.*

And now, let me appeal to you to do something after I shall have gone, to satisfy the anxious mind of this nation; for I believe that prayer is going forth continually, from one end of the country to the other, that something may be done before the 4th of next month. On that day a convention of southern States assembles at Montgomery for the purpose of forming a provisional government. I beg you to do that which will make it unnecessary for them to take that step, and which will restore the country to a condition of peace and happiness.

Mr. Speaker, I ought not to trespass upon the courtesy of the House, nor consume its time longer; but I must say one word more. As I look around me, I see many vacant seats. What has become of those who have heretofore occupied them? The seats once occupied by my colleagues are vacant. And are not the seats occupied by the South Carolina delegation vacant? Yes. Do I not see the seats of the Georgia delegation vacant? Yes. And that of the member from Florida, and the members from Mississippi and Louisiana? Yes; all, all are vacant: and what does it mean? The rapidly occurring events of the day give us an answer not to be misunderstood. Will you not heed the warning contained in these portentous events?

And now, before I take leave of you, my northern friends, allow me, with a throbbing heart, to return to you my warmest thanks for the many efforts you have made to save the country. We have differed upon some minor matters—matters of less importance than the great question we have fought our battles upon; but when I leave you, I bear with me only fond recollections, and the consciousness that I leave behind me brave and patriotic hearts, able and willing to battle for our constitutional and equal rights, and the safety of our common country. And now, gentlemen of the Republican party, let me say that you have this question in your own hands, and that you can still this storm before the sun shall set to-day. Will you not do it, and allow your President to come into power as the President of the whole country, North, South, East, and West? I trust that you will do something; that peace and harmony may be restored; that your families and our families, that have mingled so long in social harmony, may not be called upon to shed each others' blood; and that peace may reign from the rising to the setting sun, and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Stand upon your assumed dignity and platform no longer; but come patriotically up to the call of your distracted country, and coming millions shall pronounce you blessed. I now thank the House for the many courtesies extended to me and the aid they have often given me in passing many important measures, and bid you adieu; to return, as I have said, to my dear Alabama, where the bones of my father and my mother rest; to defend their ashes, and to share the fate of those to whom I am closely bound, be it for weal or for woe. [Applause in the galleries.]

THE POPULATION OF THE COTTON STATES.—The white and black population of the five Cotton States, according to the census of 1850, was as follows:

	<i>White.</i>	<i>Black and Mulatto</i>
Alabama	426,514	442,844
Florida	47,203	39,310
Georgia	521,272	381,682
Mississippi	291,718	399,878
South Carolina.....	278,573	384,984
Total.....	1,565,570	1,458,898

