

Appendix

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Address of William L. Harris, commissioner from Mississippi, to the Georgia General Assembly, Dec. 17, 1860. This speech was published in pamphlet form as *Address of Hon. W. L. Harris, Commissioner from the State of Mississippi, Delivered before the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, on Monday, Dec. 17th, 1860* (Milledgeville, Ga., 1860), copy at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Georgia:

I am profoundly sensible of the delicate and important duty imposed upon me, by the courtesy of this public reception.

Under different circumstances, it would have afforded me great pleasure, as a native Georgian—reared and educated on her soil—to express to you fully, the views which prevail in my native State, in relation to the great measures of deliverance and relief from the principles and policy of the new Administration, which are there in progress.

I cannot consent, however, upon the very heel of your arduous and exciting session, to avail myself of your respectful courtesy to the State I have the honor to represent, as well as your personal kindness to her humble representative, to prolong the discussion of a subject which, however, important and absorbing, has, doubtless, been already exhausted in your hearing, by some of the first intellects of your State, if not of the nation.

I beg, therefore, to refer you to the action of Mississippi—already submitted to your Executive—to ask for her the sympathy and co-operation she seeks for the common good, and briefly to suggest to you some of the motives which influence her conduct.

I am instructed by the resolution from which I derive my mission, to inform the State of Georgia, that Mississippi has passed an act calling a convention of her people, “to consider the present threatening relations of the Northern and Southern sections of the Confederacy—*aggravated* by the recent election of a President, upon principles of hostility to the States of the South; and to express the *earnest* hope of Mississippi, that this State will co-operate with her in the adoption of *efficient measures* for their common defence and safety.”

It will be remembered, that the violation of our constitutional rights, which has caused such universal dissatisfaction in the South, is not of recent date. Ten years since, this Union was rocked from centre to circumference, by the very same outrages, of which we now complain, only now “*aggravated*” by the recent election. Nothing but her devotion to the Union our Fathers made, induced the South, *then*, to yield to a compromise, in which Mr. Clay rightly said, we had yielded everything but our honor. We had then in Mississippi a warm contest, which finally ended in reluctant acquiescence in the Compromise measures. The North pledged anew her faith to yield to us our constitutional rights in relation to slave property. They are now, and have been ever since that act, denied to us, until her broken faith and impudent threats, had become almost insufferable *before* the late election.

There were three candidates presented to the North by Southern men, all of whom represented the last degree of conservatism and concession, which their respective parties were willing to yield, to appease the fanaticism of the North. Some of them were scarcely deemed sound, in the South, on the slavery question, and none of

them suited our ultra men. And yet the North rejected them all; and their *united* voice, both before and since their overwhelming triumph in this election, has been more defiant and more intolerant than ever before. They have demanded, and now demand, equality between the white and negro races, under our Constitution; equality in representation, equality in the right of suffrage, equality in the honors and emoluments of office, equality in the social circle, equality in the rights of matrimony. The cry has been, and now is, “that slavery must cease, or American liberty must perish,” that “the success of Black Republicanism is the triumph of anti-slavery,” “a revolution in the tendencies of the government that must be carried out.”

To-day our government stands *totally revolutionized* in its main features, and our Constitution broken and overturned. The new administration, which has effected this revolution, only awaits the 4th of March for the inauguration of the new government, the new principles, and the new policy, upon the success of which they have proclaimed freedom to the slave, but eternal degradation for you and for us.

No revolution was ever more complete, though bloodless, if you will tamely submit to the destruction of that Constitution and that Union our fathers made.

Our fathers made this a government for the white man, rejecting the negro, as an ignorant, inferior, barbarian race, incapable of self-government, and not, therefore, entitled to be associated with the white man upon terms of civil, political, or social equality.

This new administration comes into power, under the solemn pledge to overturn and strike down this great feature of our Union, without which it would never have been formed, and to substitute in its stead their new theory of the universal equality of the black and white races.

Our fathers secured to us, by our Constitutional Union, now being

overturned by this Black Republican rule, protection to life, liberty and property, *all over the Union*, and wherever its flag was unfurled, whether on land or sea.

Under this wretched, lawless spirit and policy, now usurping the control of that government, citizens of the South have been deprived of their property, and for attempting to seek the redress promised by the compromise laws, have lost their liberty and their lives.

Equality of rights secured to white men, in equal sovereign States, is among the most prominent features of the Constitution under which we have so long lived.

This equality has been denied us in the South for years in the common territories, while the North has virtually distributed them as bounties to abolition fanatics and foreigners, for their brigand service in aiding in our exclusion.

Our Constitution, in unmistakable language, guarantees the return of our fugitive slaves. Congress has recognized her duty in this respect, by enacting proper laws for the enforcement of this right.

And yet these laws have been continually nullified, and the solemn pledge of the Compromise of 1850, by which the North came under renewed obligations to enforce them, has been faithlessly disregarded, and the government and its officers set at defiance.

Who now expects these rebels against the laws passed by their own consent and procurement—rebels against justice and common honesty—to become pious patriots by the acquisition of power? Who now expects Mr. Lincoln to become conservative, when the only secret of his success, and the only foundation of his authority, is the will and command of that robber clan, whose mere instrument he is, who have achieved this revolution in our government by treading under their unhallowed feet our Constitution and laws and the Union of our fathers, and by openly defying high heaven by wilful and corrupt perjury?

And, above all, who is it in the South, born or descended of Revolutionary sires, *who so loves such company*, as that he will long hesitate before he can obtain the consent of a virtuous and patriotic heart and conscience to separate from them *forever*?

Mississippi is firmly convinced that there is but one alternative:

This *new union* with Lincoln Black Republicans and free negroes, *without slavery*; or, slavery under our old constitutional bond of union, *without* Lincoln Black Republicans, or free negroes either, to molest us.

If we take the former, then submission to negro equality is our fate. If the latter, then *secession* is inevitable—each State for itself and by itself, but with a view to the immediate formation of a Southern Confederacy, under our present Constitution, by such of the slaveholding States as shall agree in their conventions to unite with us.

Mississippi seeks no delay—the issue is not new to her people. They have long and anxiously watched its approach—they think it too late, now, to negotiate more compromises with bankrupts in political integrity whose recreancy to justice, good faith and constitutional obligations is the most cherished feature of their political organization.

She has exhausted her rights in sacrificial offerings to save the Union, until nearly all is lost but her honor and the courage to defend it. She has tried conventions until they have become the ridicule of both our friends and our enemies—mere instruments of fraudulent evasion and delay, to wear out the spirit of our people and encourage the hopes of our common enemy. In short, she is sick and tired of the North, and pants for some respite from eternal disturbance and disquiet.

She comes now to you,—our glorious old mother,—the land of Baldwin, who first defiantly asserted and preserved your rights as to slavery, in the federal convention, in opposition to Messrs. Madison, Mason, and Randolph, and the whole Union except the two Caro-

linas,—the land of Jackson, who immortalized himself by his bold exposure and successful overthrow of a legislative fraud and usurpation upon the rights of the people,—the land of Troup, the sternest Roman of them all, who, single-handed and alone, without co-operation, without consultation, but with truth and justice, and the courage of freemen at home on his side, defied this National Government in its usurpations on the rights of Georgia, and executed your laws in spite of the threats of Federal coercion. It is to you we come,—the brightest exemplar among the advocates and defenders of State rights and State remedies,—to take counsel and solicit sympathy in this hour of our common trial.

I ask you, shall Mississippi follow in the footsteps of Georgia, when led by her gallant Troup? Or, is it reserved for this generation to repudiate and expunge the brightest page in the history of my native State? Impossible! God forbid it! Forbid it, ye people of all Northern and Western Georgia, who, to-day, owe your existence and unparalleled prosperity to the maintenance of your rights at the risk of civil war.

I see around me some gallant spirits who bore their share in the dangers, and now wear with honor, here to-day in this Hall the laurels won on the side of their State, under the banner, inscribed "Troup and the treaty" in that memorable struggle. Need I appeal to them in behalf of my adopted State, to know on what side they will range themselves in this struggle of right, against assumption of brute force, against the Constitutional rights of a sister of this confederacy of equal States? I make no such appeal; I *know* where you stand. To doubt it would be to offer you the grossest insult.

In this school of old republican orthodoxy, I drew my first breath. It was here, I first studied, then embraced, and next feebly advocated the principle of State Rights and State remedies of resistance to tyranny—of the supremacy and sovereignty of the people of a State, and the subserviency of governments to their peace and happiness and

safety. These principles will descend with me to the grave, when this frail tenement of dust must perish; but *they* will live on with time, and only perish when tyranny shall be no more.

I need not remind your great State, that thousands and thousands of her sons and daughters, who have sought and found happy homes and prosperous fortunes in the distant forests of her old colonial domain, though now adopted children of Mississippi, still cling with the fond embrace of filial love to this old mother of States and of statesmen, from whom both they and their adopted State derive their origin. It will be difficult for such to *conceive*, that they are not still the objects of your kind solicitude and maternal sympathy.

Mississippi indulges the *most confident expectation and belief*, founded on sources of information she cannot doubt, as well as on the existence of causes, operating upon them, alike as upon her, that every other Gulf State will stand by her side in defence of the position she is about to assume; and she would reproach herself, and every Georgia son within her limits, would swell with indignation, if she hesitated to believe that Georgia too, would blend *her* fate with her natural friends; her sons and daughters—her neighboring sisters in the impending struggle.

Whatever may be the result of your deliberations, I beg to assure her from my intimate knowledge of the spirit and affections of our people, that no enemy to *her* constitutional rights, may consider his victory won, while a Mississippian lives to prolong the contest. Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, the part of Mississippi is chosen, *she will never submit* to the principles and policy of this Black Republican Administration.

She had rather see the last of her race, men, women and children, immolated in one common funeral pile, than see them subjected to the degradation of civil, political and social equality with the negro race.