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"ERROR ceases to be dangerous, when REASON is free to combat it."

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ARKANSAS STATE GAZETTE AND DEMOCRAT.

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, SATURDAY MORNING, JANUARY 5, 1856.

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DEMOCRAT, NO. 76.

SPEECH OF THE HON. JOHN BELL.

Delivered at a Mass Meeting of the American Party, held at Louisville on the 23d of September, 1855.

Fellow Citizens—I regret that it has fallen to my lot to address you under circumstances so unfavorable to myself as will cause me, I am sure that, at this late hour, interesting, eloquent and instructive as the addresses of the gentlemen who have preceded me have been, your powers of endurance must be well nigh exhausted, and I therefore take your forbearance, especially at the instance of some of my too partial friends.

I accepted the invitation, with which I was honored, to attend this meeting, when my private interests required my attention much more, and I present myself before you to-day, influenced, mainly, by the extraordinary and threatening complexion of the political element of the times.

I have been in public life during a period of near thirty years, in which, more than one emergence, in public affairs arose, threatening civil convulsion. Yet, I confess, that I have never been so fearfully impressed by dangers which flagrant as they are, the country at the present time.

Can there be any mistake in the assumption that a great crisis is at hand—that our political system—our valuable Union—is in imminent peril—is to undergo the severest test, to which it is liable to be exposed? Amid clouds of the horizon, both North and South, I see the coming storm. The moral element—the power, simply physical, and passions of men, over whom seem to be dampened, excitable and explosive, is a most unusual degree; and no sagacious or conscientious statesman is able to see the horoscope of the future, or give any assurance of a happy termination of the contentions and controversies which are springing up, in every quarter of the Union.

Sorry, I am, that the unfavorable circumstances under which I address you, will scarcely allow me to narrate the causes which have contributed to bring our country into a condition, so full of peril, or, to do more than glance at the principles, interests, and passions of a more and fortunate decision of which alone, can the, the most fatal calamities which can befall the country, be averted, for, in my judgment, there is no safety or security, for the liberty, the rights, or the prosperity of any section, but in the general maintenance of the compromises of Union and the Union. For after this one shall be set aside or disregarded, and the fearful results all speculations as to the future, will be vain—the chaos will be complete and irreparable, to human reason or human calculation. Once discord and anarchy will succeed, and reign triumphant, it will cross Cæsar or Napoleon, shall unfurl the warring factions, and bind up the wounds inflicted by civil strife, in chains of despotism.

I have no wish to the delusive fancy that there can exist a peaceful or blandishment in one of these States, so that the rest may be left or civilization of the age, will forbid the attempt. Disunion, if it ever comes, will not be seriously made, it rend the bonds which bind them together; not by any one half or section, but by some of these citizens, who, from the, contrary to the lessons of all history—all experience—and the teachings of the, in the general fragments, the fugacious member, of the great republic, and many circumstances of the future, was a very, wide separate Union and independence, in peaceful security.

I am not alarmed, I confess, by idle, vague fears, by an overdrawn picture, either of the present, or the future; but I speak but the language of truth and soberness, when I say, that "manifest is about" is the land—that, however the leaders may, of the, be, or, or fearing, now mobbing or desire the destruction of the Union; yet there are many who have no settled purpose of contributing to, but, have not, yet, any thing their whence of intelligent and, will, with the most unfortunate act and all-reckoning blind, and indifferent to, the, consequences, however distasteful, they may be to the, country, and, the, consequences, of, the, very dividual aims. These gentlemen seem to regard this great country, and all its direct consequences and opportunities, as merely a field, on which, gains up for no greater or more valuable purpose, than the display of their dexterity in, the, skill in playing out their desperate games of political ambition. In such games, to influence or control, the, politicians and, the, leaders of, the, seek to, of, industry and, of, the, country, yet they are not indifferent to the possible results of their schemes, they are not, as, or, of, the, country, or, of, the, institution of, the, Union, they hope, to, the, success, of, their, schemes, that they, will, be, the, gainers, by, the, ruin, of, the, country, and, the, destruction, of, the, Union. They long cherished devotion to the Union may be revived, and their purpose, to maintain it, abandoned and, and, abandoned, they deem or that it is likely to fall a victim to the, schemes, of, political, aspirants.

But still, it must not be supposed, that all the, rights and, all, the, the, the, of, the, Union will be, lost, or, be, lost, in, the, ruin, of, the, sections, and, to, expose, the, madness, the, folly, of, the, politicians, and, leaders, of, various factions, which seek to rule the country. It must not be disguised, that a more, serious and, tremendous, of, patriotism, and, statesmanship, is needed, to inspire and fire up the great American heart, than, for, many, long, years, past, it has lived, if we shall avoid the threatened, disruption, to our system. Oh! for one spark of the fire that burned upon the altars of the great founders of our Republic.

Fellow-citizens! aside from the increased and still increasing, dangers of, the, hour, yet, at a time, very, from, of, society and government, free, either, of, the, political, or, moral, obstacle, growing, out of, the, institution of, slavery, to, the, influence, and harmonious operation, for, our, system, of, government, and, the, of, the, which, the, constitution, was, adopted, the, of, things, brought, the, leaders, and, founders, of, factions, and, the, sectional, disorders, from, all, sound, political, ties, to, the, condition, of, the, people, of, parties, of, the, country, prompted by their, ambition, and, disappointed, and, crossed, by, all, our, glorious, old, ship, of, State, is, wrecked, if, finally, go, down, for, such, causes, and, under, circumstances, of, political, folly, and, madness, the, adoption, of, the, constitution, a, political, disorder, of, disappointed, and, ambitious, and, prosperous, desiring, to, have, a, government, constitution, of, the, Union, and, the, constitution, and, the, government, of, a, government, constitution, or, combination, of, a, body, of, people, holding, a, very, small, portion, of, the, country, or, of, great, subjects, affecting, the, whole, country, and, holding, the, majority, of, the, people, of, the, country, in, the, legislature, and, constitution