

and acts is the deadliest curse that can afflict a nation. Let us not turn a deaf ear to her warning voice, by countenancing those who may rashly involve us in both, in the effort to accomplish political ends, by appealing to a morbid and fanatical zeal and thus stirring at their sources, the most inveterate passions and prejudices of the human heart. Indeed it may require a ready and most vigorous exercise of public virtue to turn back the tide of evil flowing upon us, from an improvident introduction of religious issues into the field of political agitation, and to restrain that proclivity to intolerance and proscription, which has recently been developed in different sections of the Country. We should ever guard the perfect freedom of the Citizen, in matters of religion of opinion, and the purity of the ballot box as we would our honor, and resent every invasion of either as a blow aimed at the very cornerstone of our political edifice. If on the one hand we permit brute force to control the ballot box and violence to deter the quiet and peaceably disposed Citizen from the exercise of his right of suffrage, or on the other, allow a Citizen to be proscribed on account of his religious faith, we "poison the very fountain of public security," our Constitution becomes a solemn mockery and the Republic a cheat and a delusion, whose very essence is despotism.

I herewith transmit all the Legislative resolves which since your last Session, I have received from other States, with a request that I would lay them before you.

Some of these resolutions very closely upon what may be termed an indirect interference with our domestic affairs, that my first impulse, on receiving them, was to doubt whether a proper regard for what was due to our own self respect, did not require that they should be sent back from whence they came, with an indignant refusal to be the means of communicating them to the Legislature of the State. Further reflection, however, and a manly desire to allay, rather than aggravate (so far as any action of mine might be conducive to either end) the irritation which the discussion of the topic, to which the objectionable resolutions relate, has already engendered, determined me to submit them to you, for such action as in your judgment might seem to be proper.

But five years ago the agitation of this subject brought us to the very verge of disunion; from the terrible consequences of which we were only saved by that profound love of Country which animated the hearts and directed the noble efforts of the choice spirits of both the National parties of the Country then in the Congress of the United States. These efforts resulted in the adjustment of this unhappy controversy, upon a basis to which we looked forward with a trusting faith to give quiet and repose to the Country. In this, however, we have been doomed to experience a bitter disappointment, and I fear there is but little now in the prospect from which we can gather much of hope or encouragement for the future. The rapid settlement of the Territory which lies north of the line of the Missouri restriction rendered necessary the organization of Territorial Governments for that Territory as Nebraska and Kansas. The Act of Congress organizing these Territorial Governments, in perfect consistency with the principles of non intervention established by the Legislation of 1850, known as the Compromise measures, repealed the restriction imposed by the Act admitting the State of Missouri into the Federal Union, by which Slavery was prohibited in the Territory lying North of the parallel of 36 degrees, 30 minutes; thus denying to Congress the power of either establishing or prohibiting Slavery beyond that line, and very properly leaving with the people by whom the Country might be settled, the power of determining for themselves, whether or not the institution of Slavery should be recognized within the limits of the States to be formed out of those respective Territories. And yet this measure of simple