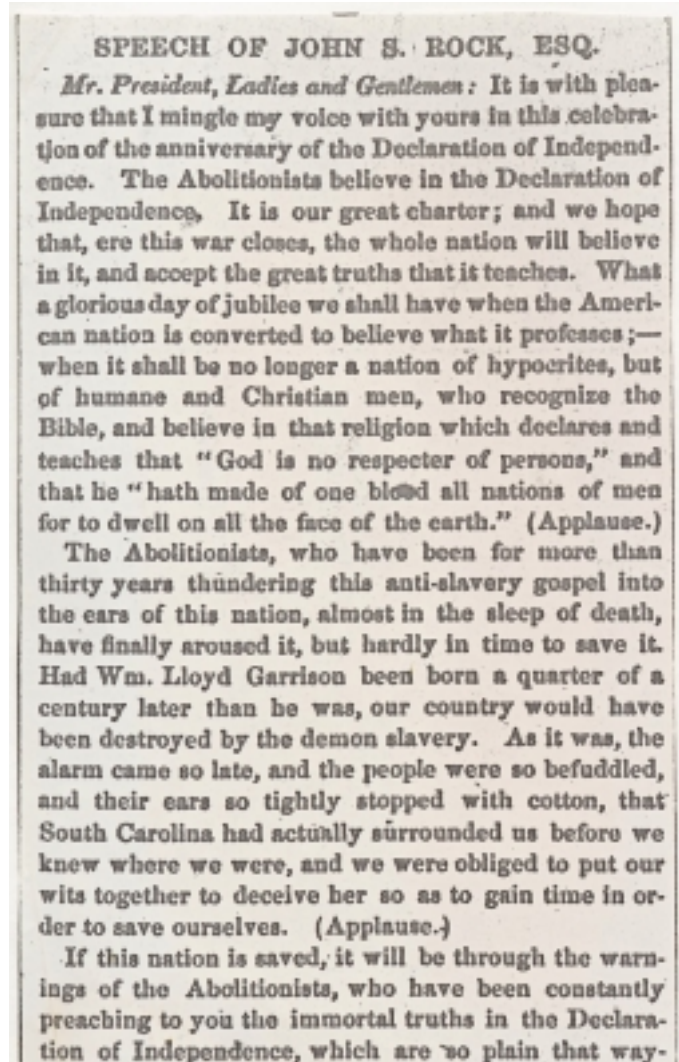


SPEECH OF JOHN S. ROCK, ESQ.

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:* It is with pleasure that I mingle my voice with yours in this celebration of the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Abolitionists believe in the Declaration of Independence. It is our great charter; and we hope that, ere this war closes, the whole nation will believe in it, and accept the great truths that it teaches. What a glorious day of jubilee we shall have when the American nation is converted to believe what it professes;—when it shall be no longer a nation of hypocrites, but of humane and Christian men, who recognize the Bible, and believed in that religion which declares and teaches that “God is no respecter of persons,” and that he “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” (Applause.)

The Abolitionists, who have been for more than thirty years thundering this anti-slavery gospel into the ears of this nation, almost in the sleep of death, have finally aroused it, but hardly in time to save it. Had Wm. Lloyd Garrison been born a quarter of a century later than he was, our country would have been destroyed by the demon slavery. As it was, the alarm came so later, and the people were so befuddled, and their ears so tightly stopped with cotton, that South Carolina had actually surrounded us before we knew where we were, and we were obliged to put our wits together to deceive her so as to gain time in order to save ourselves. (Applause.)

If this nation is saved, it will be through the warnings of the Abolitionists, who have been constantly preaching to you the immortal truths in the Declaration of Independence, which are so plain that way-



faring men, though fools, need not have erred therein. It is true, all did not see the tragic end so near. Many advocated emancipation as a matter of duty and of justice; but all saw and recognized slavery as a n [disa-] strous wrong, and knew that as the nation soed, so it must reap. Men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. The present rebellion, with its barbarities, is the natural fruit of slavery. The abolition trumpet has been heard around the world, and yet there are legions in our midst who will not hear. The Americans are, I fear, a case-hardened people, and will got to their last final account without the saving influence of anti-slavery grace. (Applause and laughter.)

There are some among us who regard the Anti-Slavery movement as a success, and think it of but little consequence whether or not we keep up our organization. This is a mistake. As to the final triumph of our principles, there is not the shadow of a doubt; but for a general to give up in the heat of a great battle, because he believes the enemy cannot stand before his forces, is worse than folly,—it is madness, and the best way in the world to lose his cause. Give up! No; never give up or compromise while the enemy holds one foot of soil, nor until every slave is free. (Applause.) We were never more in need of assistance, friends and counsel than we are [now. This is the time when we] look for every man to be at his post, and do his duty. The work has but commenced. We cannot spare a laborer, and we are but illy prepared to sustain the losses which have come upon us through the ordinary course of nature.

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During the last three or four years, we have lost some of our ablest and best men. Among these were Charles F. Hovey and Theodore Parker,—friends who used always to assemble with us, and give their time, their means, and their influence, to arouse this guilty nation. Though resigned to this our loss, which we know is their gain, we have felt it heavily, but never more than we do now. Mr. Hovey, out of his large wealth, did what he could to repair the loss of his presence, and unborn generations will bless him for it. Mr. Parker has left a record which even a saint might envy. A man so pure, so humane, so patriotic, so noble, and so impartial, is not the growth of every age. He was one of the noblest of Freedom's champions,—one who believed what he said, and practised what he preached. If he was with us now, would he not make our hearts burn while he exposed, in his inimitable way, the duty of this nation? It cannot be denied that he saw this day a little clearer than we saw it, and repeatedly warned us that either slavery or this nation itself must go down in blood. He is a loss that cannot be repaired. You knew him only to love him—no one could despise him; and many hated him only because they could not answer him. He was not only a philanthropist, but a scholar, a theologian, and a philosopher. He was a great pillar of reason: will be the study of learned men for ages, and the practical Christian world will be indebted to him forever. Indeed, he was far above the decoration of words. We have spared him because we could not help it; but we hope that it may so happen that the lives of those who have labored so

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long in this good cause may be spared to see the triumph of justice and humanity. (Applause.)

At our last celebration of this day, many of us hoped that, ere the next National Anniversary, we should all have occasion to meet to celebrate *another* day, which should inaugurate a new era, when the living truths laid down in the Declaration of Independence should be realized in our national life. But it seems as though we were too sanguine. We calculated without our host. God has not permitted this, the most guilty of nations to get off so easy. It must suffer still longer. The people are not penitent. The millions who have lived upon the hard earnings of the slave are unwilling to relinquish their unjust claims upon him. They had rather a thousand times that the country should go to ruin, than that the foundation of slavery should be shaken. On this account, the day of jubilee has been postponed, and the future of the country jeopardized. This is done because Northern men have mortgages on the slave property of the South, are dealers in slave produce, and emancipation will take from them the legal right to plunder the poor slaves who have sacrificed all that is dear in life to maintain them in idleness and luxury. Northern pro-slavery men, and the slaveholders in the States of Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri, have done more to protract the war than all other causes combined. To save these four States, we risk the whole, like the miserly merchant who loses his entire cargo in a tempest, sooner than throw a part of it overboard. To lose a part to save the whole is a policy that but few men will comprehend. As they

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are, what are these States worth to the Union? What have they been but a clog in the machinery of the government? These four States that you are sacrificing the country to save are not worth the charcoal and saltpetre, the fire and brimstone, to destroy them. (Applause.) Must this nation be totally destroyed because these Northern men and Southern States consent to be kept in subjection by the federal army? The country would have been far better off to-day if these States had gone with South Carolina and Georgia, and we have been obliged to cut our way through them. (Applause.) They never have had any sympathy with the Union cause. They go for the Union because they cannot help themselves. They would rise up against the government to-morrow if they believed they could succeed. They are only playing the hypocrite. They are by the South as the ancient Egyptians were by the Ichneumon—they adored it because it was supposed to destroy crocodiles, and they worshipped crocodiles lest they should destroy them. They are, at heart, with the South, because they sympathize with her in her efforts to destroy freedom and free institutions, but they unite with the North for fear it will destroy them. I repeat it, they never have had any sympathy with the North. Go into Maryland to-day, and you will find the railroads, bridges, and even the machinery on the ferry-boats, guarded by Federal soldiers! What is true of Maryland is true of all the loyal (?) slave States. Ever since the commencement of this rebellion, the National Capital has been in danger of assault from traitors in these so-called loyal slave States. The people

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of these States are no more loyal, and can be trusted no farther, than the people of South Carolina. Open enemies are always to be preferred to treacherous friends. To keep these four States loyal, we will not interfere with the cause,—will not strike at the heart of the rebellion. What are we doing? What are we fighting for? What means this wholesale sacrifice of blood and treasure at Richmond? Can it be true that it is generally believed that this rebellion can be crushed, and the Union restored, without carrying the war into Africa? Suppose this could be done, where would it leave us? Just where we were before, with a fair opportunity at an early day to have this farce re-acted on a much larger scale. The South must either conquer or be crushed. Neither a compromise nor a recognition of the Southern confederacy will answer. It is not probable that two nations, with a civilization so opposite, could remain long at peace in the same country. We would be like the Romans and Carthaginians, “between whom at all times,” says Paterculus, “there existed either a war, preparations for a war, or a deceitful peace.”

The South, unprincipled as she is, has a policy which she has the courage to state to the world, and this fact alone has won for her a respect that she otherwise would not have had. No one is in doubt as to her motives. She means to establish a separate independence,—a slaveholding government. She vindicates the right and duty of capital to own its labor. To accomplish her objects, she is mean and wicked enough to do anything.

The North is fighting for the Union as it was—a

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slaveholding Union. The difference between the North and South may be plain enough to us, and we may justly say and believe that the cause of the North is the cause of liberty, of free speech, of freemen—in a word, the cause of civilization; but without an avowed policy, save that to restore the Union as it *was*, we cannot expect civilized States to judge us as liberally as we may wish them to judge us. Our National Executive, a pure man as is to be found on this continent, is beset on every side by traitors in the shape of Northern capitalists, who have loaned their wealth to prosecute this war with the vain hope of perpetuating slavery. They seem to think, as they advanced the original expenses, they ought to have every thing their own way. They remind me of one of the many poor whites at the South who cannot read. One of them, being among a number of gentlemen in Baltimore who bought the *New York Tribune* on its arrival in that city, thinking that he must do like the rest, bought one too. A gentleman standing near by, observing him looking intently at the paper, said to him in a low tone, “I beg your pardon, friend, but you have got that paper wrong side up[.]” He replied, indignantly, “*That’s none of your business*; my money paid for it, and I will read it which way I please.” (Laughter and applause.) This is the way in which some men insist[t] on carrying on the war; they have advanced a portion of the expenses, which must finally be paid by the people; therefore the war must be conducted to suit them. If the country is to be sold out to Wall Street and State Street, the sooner the people

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know it, the better will it be for all. The most simple-minded have long since perceived that much of [the patriotism ... manifested has been] a [scandalous] game, played by the pretended public benefactors for private ends. Some think that the people are so enthusiastic and so patriotic that they will fight forever without an object: and some would-be Governor says that Massachusetts will not stop to see whether or no she is right, but will do as she is bid, and ask no questions. Perhaps so. This may be the sentiment of the cotton brokers and secession sympathizers of Boston, but the people of Massachusetts will do their own thinking. The Governor whom we have chosen understands this, and his reply to the President found a hearty response in every loyal man of this State. And no man who is not up to the sentiment of the people is likely to be chosen to represent them. The Governor is a true man—true to humanity, true to this Commonwealth, and true to the nation; and Massachusetts will be honored if he consents to occupy the gubernatorial chair another year. For the respectability of my color and the credit of my race, I am proud to know that the Mayor of Boston is a white man [Wightman]. (Laughter and applause.)

I suppose that next autumn all the bunkerism of the State will be rallied for the purpose of electing a conservative Legislature, to defeat the favorite Senator of this Commonwealth. It is, I understand, the determination of the pro-slavery element here, if possible, to prevent the reelection of Mr. Sumner. It is much easier to defeat than to elect a man; and I would ask the friends of [Mr.] Sumner to look well to it, and see

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that no man is nominated as a Republican representative who will not give him his entire support. Mr. Sumner is without doubt our ablest advocate in the Senate—a man always true and entirely fearless. We cannot spare him for many years yet. There is much work to be done, and we have no one so able and so willing to do it. When his work is finished, then we hope to have him President of the United States, with such a man as Owen Lovejoy for Vice President. (Applause.)

I do not wish to assail any one, but it seems to me the friends of the Union make a mistake in attempting to crush out free speech, even among secessionists. There are secessionists among us, and we all know it, but we know but little of them because they are afraid to speak: we only know that they exist. If they were allowed to express their sentiments, we should know the most of them, and would be put upon our guard. As it is, we know only the imprudent ones. When men are not allowed to express their sentiments, but are expected to utter those that they cannot approve of, we see secret societies springing up as in France, and, before we are aware, the revolution is transferred to our own doors, and in our efforts to extend, we crush out the vitality of our institutions. It is strange that our people do not see this. The stopping a man's mouth neither converts nor prevents him from acting—the freedom of speech is often a great safety-valve. I have learned that there are many secret organizations already established throughout the North who are ready to do their best to overthrow this government, and who hold constant correspondence with

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the rebels. A clerk in one of the Departments at Washington told me, only a few days ago, that he could count a hundred secession clerks in the Department, some of them slaveholders. Another gentleman informs me that there is but one loyal white church in Washington, and that is Rev. Mr. Channing's. We are completely surrounded by enemies, and yet we do not know them when we see them. Let them show themselves, and if they do nothing but talk, this will break no bones.

No one can doubt the presence of secessionists, else who would there be to defend the South? Who would there be to support such vile sheets as the *Washington Star*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *New York Herald*, the *New York Express*, and those in Boston too familiar to mention? The secession sympathy as seen in the Northern journals is formidable. Indeed, we have but few out-spoken papers, except the *National Republican*, *Boston Transcript*, and the greatest of all American newspapers, the *New York Tribune*. They have fearlessly opposed any concession to those who have tried to prostrate this government at the feet of the Slave Power. Let the true friends of the Union rally around them.

I have no doubt but that emancipation will be the end of this war, not that it will be decreed as a matter of justice to the slave, but because the nation cannot help herself. It must be done, and you may as well do it first as last. There is no use in going around Robin Hood's barn—emancipate the slaves, and let them help you fight the rebels. There is not much

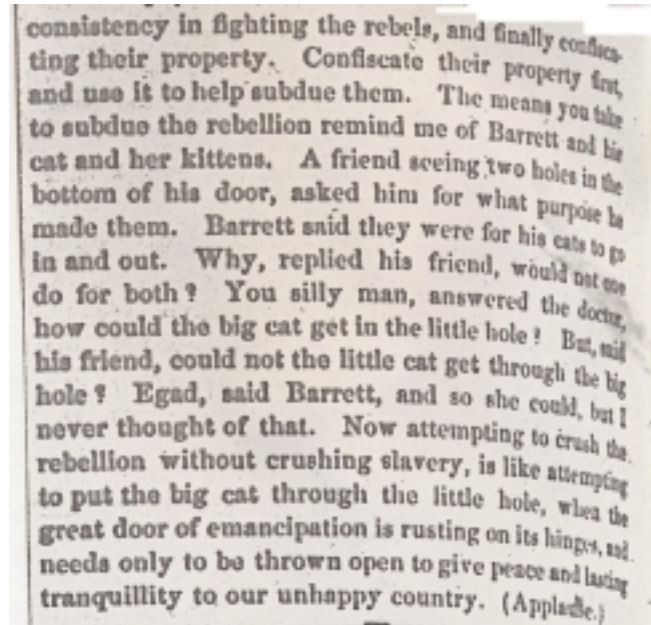
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consistency in fighting the rebels, and finally confiscating their property. Confiscate their property first, and use it to help subdue them. The means you take to subdue the rebellion remind me of Barnett and his cat and her kittens. A friend seeing two holes in the bottom of his door, asked him for what purpose he made them. Barrett said they were for his cats to go in and out. Why, replied his friend, would not one do for both? You silly man, answered the doctor, how could the big cat get in the little hole[?] But, [said] his friend, could not the little cat get through the big hole? Egad, said Barrett, and so she could, but I never thought of that. Now attempting to crush the rebellion without crushing slavery, is like attempting to put the big cat through the little hole, when the great door of emancipation is rusting on its hinges, and needs only to be thrown open to give peace and lasting tranquility to our unhappy country. (Applause.)



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