

John Quincy Adams Reflects on the “Missouri Question”

Introduction

John Quincy Adams served as the sixth President of the United States (1825-29), only one stop in a long and distinguished political career. His father, John Adams, served as the second President of the United States (between George Washington and Thomas Jefferson). As a result, Quincy Adams grew up among the political elite. He witnessed the American Revolution during his teens, and earned a law degree at Harvard during his father’s Presidency. Quincy Adams served as Secretary of State under President James Monroe, negotiating the treaty with Spain over Florida Territory. Negotiations with Spain took place at the same time as the debate over the expansion of slavery into Missouri.

Adams left behind an incredible written record of his personal and political life, including a detailed journal of the debates over slavery in Missouri, and negotiations with Spain over Florida and New Orleans. Adams records the heated debate regarding expansion of slavery in the House of Representatives and the eventual “compromise” over Missouri. During the debates, Adams met regularly with John Calhoun, then Secretary of War, and an ardent supporter of slavery (he owned over 40 slaves on his South Carolina cotton plantation). Calhoun spent his entire career fighting

By 1819, enough people lived in the Missouri territory to form a provisional government, write a state constitution, and submit it to Congress for approval for statehood. When the bill granting Missouri statehood made it to Congress, James Tallmadge, Representative from New York, proposed that Congress add an amendment prohibiting slavery in any states deriving from the Louisiana Purchase, including Missouri itself. The amendment also called for a mandated gradual end to slavery in Missouri as a requirement for statehood. Representatives from the southern states argued that Congress did not have the authority to restrict slavery in any states, especially new ones as the country moved west. Their argument went even further, claiming the Northwest Ordinances unconstitutional and only the states could regulate slavery. for the protection and expansion of slavery.

The fight in Congress got so nasty, they suspended debate until early 1820. Adams’ role as Secretary of State included advising President James Monroe about the debate over Missouri’s constitution and whether slavery would be protected or prohibited. Ultimately, the Congressmen reached a “compromise” regarding Missouri statehood, although a more accurate description would be “capitulation to slave owners.”^[1]

Primary Source

January 16, 1820

There was no preaching at the Capitol; and I passed the morning not profitably at home. I had some private business to which it was necessary that I should attend, and I wrote according to the President’s directions to Mr Middleton. In my walk for exercise before dinner, I paid several visits and called upon Mr. Lowndes^[2], with whom I had a long conversation upon public affairs— I told him the President wished that the Instructions to the late Commodore Perry should be communicated to him;

but thought there might be some inconvenience in making them public, which they must be, if given to Congress, or even to the Committee— Lowndes said that in that case it would perhaps be better that he should not see them; because it would be difficult to use any information contained in them in debate, without giving rise to suspicions and to allusions, which would rather counteract than promote the views of the Administration.[\[3\]](#)

We had also much conversation upon the Missouri or Slave-question— Lowndes, who is from South-Carolina, and a large Slave-holder is of course on the Slavery side of the question, which there is now every appearance will be carried by the superior ability of the Slavery party—for this much is certain that if Institutions are to be judged of by their results; in the composition of the councils of this Union, the Slave-holders are much more ably represented than the simple freeman— With the exception of Rufus King[\[4\]](#) there is not in either house of Congress a member from the free States, able to cope in powers of the mind, with William Pinkney or James Barbour[\[5\]](#)— In the House of Representatives the freemen have none to contend on equal terms either with John Randolph or Clay[\[6\]](#)— Another misfortune to the free party is that some of their ablest men are either on this question with their adversaries, or lukewarm in the cause.

The Slave men have indeed a deeper immediate stake in the issue than the partizans of freedom; their passions and interests are more profoundly agitated, and they have stronger impulses to active energy than their antagonists, whose only individual interest in this cause arises from its bearing on the balance of political power between North and South. Lowndes is a member of great weight and influence in the house, which he has acquired, and maintains as much by the urbanity of his manners as by his talents. He is a man of easy fortune, and entire independence, and the winter before last declined the offer of a mission either to Russia, or to Constantinople[\[7\]](#)— Yet, with various acquirements, and a character of perfect integrity, there is a want of energy and of activity in his mind. He has too much love of ease, and aversion to labour— As to the Committee of Foreign Relations, Clay the Speaker who appoints all the Committees, selected that one, with a view to prevent any thing's being done congenial to the views of the Administration.

Jan. 24

I walked with R. M. Johnson[\[8\]](#) to the Senate chamber and heard Mr. Pinkney close his Missouri speech. There was a great crowd of auditors. Many ladies, among whom several seated on the floor of the Senate. His eloquence was said to be less overpowering than it had been last Friday. His language is good, his fluency without interruption or hesitation, his manner impressive, but his argument weak, from the inherent weakness of his cause.

Feb. 11

I went up to the Capitol and heard Mr. King in the Senate, upon what is called the Missouri question. He had been speaking perhaps an hour before I went in, and I heard him about an hour. His manner is dignified, grave, earnest, but not rapid or vehement. There was nothing new in his argument, but he unravelled with ingenious and subtle analysis many of the sophistical tissues of the slave-holders. He laid down the position of the natural liberty of man, and its incompatibility with slavery in any shape. He also questioned the Constitutional right of the President and Senate to make the Louisiana Treaty; but he did not dwell upon those points, nor draw the consequences from them which I should think important in speaking to that subject. He spoke, however, with great power, and the great slave-holders in the House gnawed their lips and clenched their fists as they heard him...

We attended an evening party at Mr. Calhoun's, and heard of nothing but the Missouri question and Mr. King's speeches. The slave-holders cannot hear of them without being seized with cramps. They call them seditious and inflammatory, when their greatest real defect is their timidity. Never since human sentiments and human conduct were influenced by human speech was there a theme for eloquence like the free side of this question now before Congress of this Union. By what fatality does it happen that all the most eloquent orators of the body are on its slavish side? There is a great mass of cool judgment and plain sense on the side of freedom and humanity, but the ardent spirits and passions are on the side of oppression. Oh, if but one man could arise with a genius capable of comprehending, a heart capable of supporting, and an utterance capable of communicating those eternal truths that belong to this question, to lay bare in all its nakedness that outrage upon the goodness of God, human slavery, now is the time, and this is the occasion, upon which such a man would perform the duties of an angel upon earth!

Feb.13

Attended the divine service at the Capitol, and heard Mr. Edward Everett, the Professor of the Greek language at Harvard University, a young man of shining talents and of illustrious promise. His text was from I Cor. vii. 29: "Brethren, the time is short," and it was without comparison the most splendid composition as a sermon that I ever heard delivered...Mr. Clay, with whom I walked, after the service, to call upon Chief-Justice Marshall^[9], told me that although Everett had a fine fancy and a chaste style of composition, his manner was too theatrical, and he liked Mr. Holley's manner better.

Clay started, however, immediately to the Missouri question, yet in debate before both Houses of Congress, and, alluding to a strange scene at Richmond, Virginia, last Wednesday evening, said it was a shocking thing to think of, but he had not a doubt that within five years from this time the Union would be divided into three distinct confederacies. I did not incline to discuss the subject with him. We found Judges Livingston and Story with the Chief Justice.

February 23.

A. Livermore and W. Plumer, Junr, members of the House of Representatives from New Hampshire, called upon me, and, conversing on the Missouri slave question, which at this time agitates Congress and the Nation, asked my opinion of the propriety of agreeing to a compromise. The division in Congress and the nation is nearly equal on both sides. The argument on the free side is, the moral and political duty of preventing the extension of slavery in the immense country from the Mississippi River to the South Sea. The argument on the slave side is, that Congress have no power by the Constitution to prohibit slavery in any State, and, the zealots say, not in any Territory. The proposed compromise is to admit Missouri, and hereafter Arkansas, as States, without any restriction upon them regarding slavery, but to prohibit the future introduction of slaves in all Territories of the United States north of 36° 30' latitude. I told these gentlemen that my opinion was, the question could be settled no otherwise than by a compromise.

Feb. 24.

I had some conversation with Calhoun on the slave question pending in Congress. He said he did not think it would produce a dissolution of the Union, but, if it should, the South would be from necessity compelled to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Great Britain.

I said that would be returning to the colonial state. He said, yes, pretty much, but it would be forced upon them. I asked him whether he thought, if by the effect of this alliance, offensive and defensive, the population of the North should be cut off from its natural outlet upon the ocean, it would fall back upon its rocks bound hand and foot, to starve, or whether it would not retain its powers of locomotion to move southward by land. Then, he said, they would find it necessary to make their communities all military[10].

I pressed the conversation no further: but if the dissolution of the Union should result from the slave question, it is as obvious as anything that can be foreseen of futurity, that it must shortly afterwards be followed by the universal emancipation of the slaves. A more remote but perhaps not less certain consequence would be the extirpation of the African race on this continent, by the gradually bleaching process of intermixture, where the white portion is already so predominant, and by the destructive progress of emancipation, which, like all great religious and political reformation, is terrible in its means though happy and glorious in its end.[11]

Slavery is the great and foul stain upon the North American Union, and it is a contemplation worthy of the most exalted soul whether its total abolition is or is not practicable: if practicable, by what it may be effected, and if a choice of means be within the scope of the object, what means would accomplish it at the smallest cost of human suffering. A dissolution, at least temporary, of the Union, as now constituted, would be certainly necessary. The Union might then be reorganized on the fundamental principle of emancipation. This object is vast in its compass, awful in its prospects, sublime and beautiful in its issue[12].

Washington, March 2

The compromise of the slave question was this day completed in Congress. The Senate have carried their whole point, barely consenting to the formality of separating the bill for the admission of the State of Maine into the Union from that for authorizing the people of the Territory of Missouri to form a State Government. The condition that slavery should be prohibited by their Constitution, which the House of Representatives had inserted, they have abandoned. Missouri and Arkansas will be slave States, but to the Missouri bill a section is annexed, prohibiting slavery in the remaining part of the Louisiana cession north of latitude 36° 30'. This compromise, as it is called, was finally carried this evening by a vote of ninety to eighty-seven in the House of Representatives, after successive days and almost nights of stormy debate.

March 3

Went with Mrs. Adams, our Son Charles, and Mary Hellen to the Capitol Hill, and viewed Sully's Picture of the passage of the river Delaware by General Washington, 25 December 1776, now exhibited in the building lately occupied by the two houses of Congress.^[13] As a picture of men and especially of horses, as large as life it has merit; but there is nothing in it that marks the scene, or the crisis— The principal figure, is the worst upon the Canvas— Badly drawn, badly coloured; without likeness, and without character— While we were there Jeremiah Nelson, a member of the House from Massachusetts came in, and told us of John Randolph's motion this morning to reconsider one of the votes of yesterday upon the Missouri Bill, and of the trickery by which his motion was defeated; by the Speakers declaring it not in order when first made; the Journal of yesterday's proceedings not having been then read—and while they were reading the Clerk of the House carried the Bills as passed by the House, to the Senate; so that when Randolph, after the reading of the Journals renewed his motion, it was too late; the papers being no longer in possession of the house.^[14]

And so it is that a Law Perpetuating Slavery in Missouri and perhaps in North-America has been smuggled through both houses of Congress. I have been convinced from the first starting of this question that it could not end otherwise— The fault is in the Constitution of the United States, which has sanctioned a dishonourable compromise with Slavery. There is henceforth no remedy for it but a new organization of the Union, to effect which a concert of all the white States is indispensable^[15]. Whether that can ever be accomplished is doubtful— It is a contemplation not very creditable to human nature, that the cement of common interest produced by Slavery is stronger and more solid than that of unmingled freedom. In this instance the Slave-States have clung together in one unbroken phalanx, and have been victorious by the means of accomplices and deserters, from the ranks of Freedom. Time only can show, whether the contest may ever be with equal advantage renewed.

But so polluted are all the streams of Legislation in regions of Slavery, that this Bill has been obtained only by two as unprincipled artifices as dishonesty ever devised; one by coupling it as an appendage to the Bill for admitting Maine; and the other by this outrage, perpetrated by the Speaker upon the Rules of the house— When I came this day to my Office, I found there a Note requesting me to call at one O'Clock at the President's house— It was then one, and I immediately went over— He expected that the two Bills; for the admission of Maine, and to enable Missouri to make a Constitution, would have been brought to him for his signature; and he had summoned all the members of the Administration, to ask

their opinions in writing to be deposited in the Department of State; upon two Questions. 1. Whether Congress had a Constitutional right to prohibit Slavery in a Territory? and 2. Whether the 8th. Section of the Missouri Bill, (which interdicts Slavery forever in the Territory North of 36 1/2 Latitude, was applicable only to the territorial State, or would extend to it, after it should become a State.

As to the first question, it was unanimously agreed that Congress have the power to prohibit Slavery in the Territories; and yet neither Crawford, Calhoun, nor Wirt^[16] could find any express power to that effect given in the Constitution; and Wirt declared himself very decidedly against the admission of any implied powers— The progress of this discussion, has so totally merged in passion all the reasoning faculties of these Slave holders, that these Gentlemen in the simplicity of their hearts had come to a conclusion in direct opposition to their premises; without being aware or conscious of inconsistency— They insisted upon it that the clause in the Constitution, which gives Congress power to dispose of, and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory and other property of the United States, had reference to it, only as land, and conferred no authority to make rules, binding upon its inhabitants; and Wirt added the notable Virginian objection, that Congress could make only needful rules and regulations—and that a prohibition of Slavery was not needful— Their argument, as Randolph said of it in the House covered the whole ground, and their compromise, measured by their own principles is a sacrifice of what they hold to be the Constitution— I had no doubt of the right of Congress to interdict Slavery in the Territories and urged that the power contained in the term dispose of, included the authority to do everything that could be done with it as mere property, and that the additional words authorising needful rules and regulations respecting it, must have reference to persons connected with it, or could have no meaning at all— As to the force of the term needful, I observed it was relative, and must always be supposed to have reference to some end— Needful to what end— Needful in the Constitution of the United States to any of the ends for which that compact was formed, those ends are declared in its preamble—to establish justice for example. What can be more needful to the establishment of Justice, than the interdiction of Slavery where it does not exist.

As to the second question my opinion was that the interdiction of Slavery in the 8th. Section of the Bill, forever, would apply and be binding upon the State, as well as upon the Territory; because by its interdiction in the Territory, the People when they come to form a Constitution, would have no right to sanction Slavery— Crawford said that in the new States, which have been admitted into the Union upon the express condition that their Constitutions should consist with the perpetual interdiction of Slavery, it might be sanctioned by an ordinary act of their Legislatures— I said, that whatever a State Legislature might do in point of fact, they could not by any rightful exercise of power establish Slavery— The Declaration of Independence, not only asserts the natural equality of all men, and their unalienable right to Liberty; but that the only just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed.

A power for one part of the people to make slaves of the other can never be derived from the consent, and is therefore not a just power^[17]. Crawford said this was the opinion that had been attributed to Mr King. I said it was undoubtedly the opinion of Mr. King; and it was mine. I did not want to make a public display of it, where it might excite irritation, but if called upon officially for it, I should not withhold it— But the opinion was not peculiar to Mr King and me— It was an opinion universal in the States where there are no Slaves— It was the opinion of all those members of Congress who voted for the restriction upon Missouri, and of many of those who voted against it— As to the right of imposing the restriction

upon a State, the President had signed a Bill with precisely such a restriction upon the State of Illinois— Why should the question be made now, which was not made then— Crawford said that was done in conformity to the compact of the Ordinance of 1787: and besides the restriction was a nullity, not binding upon the Legislatures of those States[18].

It was sickening to my Soul to hear the assertion; but to have discussed it there would have been useless, and only have kindled in the bosom of the Executive the same flame which has been raging in Congress; and in the Country— Its discussion was unnecessary, to the decision of the questions proposed by the President— I therefore only said that the Ordinance of 1787 had been passed by the old Congress of the Confederation, without authority from the States, but had been tacitly confirmed by the adoption of the present Constitution, and the authority given to Congress in it to make needful rules and regulations for the territory— I added that in one of the numbers of the federalist, there was an admission that the old Congress had passed the Ordinance without authority, under an impulse of necessity—and that it was used as an argument in favour of the enlarged powers granted to Congress in the Constitution. Crawford said it could therefore have little or no weight as authority— I replied that it was not wanted as authority— That when the old Confederation was adopted the United States had no territory. Nor was there in the Act of Confederation, in which the powers of Congress under it were enumerated a word about territory. But there was a clause interdicting to Congress the exercise of any powers not expressly given them.[19]

I alluded to the origin of the Confederation with our Revolution— To the revolutionary powers exercised by Congress, before the Confederation was adopted— To the question whether the Northwestern territory belonged to the United States or the separate States— To the delays occasioned by that question in the acceptance of the Confederation; and to the subsequent cessions of Territory by several States, to the Union, which gave occasion for the ordinance of 1787. To all which Crawford said nothing. Wirt said that he perfectly agreed with me that there could be no rightful power to establish Slavery where it was *res nova*[20]— But he thought it would not be the force of the Act of Congress that would lead to this result— The principle itself being correct, though Congress might have no power to prescribe it to a sovereign State. To this my reply was, that the power of establishing Slavery, not being a Sovereign power, but a wrongful and despotic power, Congress had a right to say that no State undertaking to establish it *de novo* should be admitted into the Union; and that a State which should undertake to establish it would put herself out of the pale of the Union, and forfeit all the rights and privileges of the connection.

Mr. Thompson, the Secretary of the Navy cautiously avoided giving any opinion, upon the question of natural right, but assented to the Slave sided doctrine that the eighth Section of the Bill, word forever, and all, applied only to the time and condition of the territorial Government— I said therefore that if required to give my opinion upon the second question, standing alone, it would be necessary for me to assign the reasons upon which I entertained it— Crawford saw no necessity for any reasoning about it, but had no objection to my assigning my reasons— Calhoun thought it exceedingly desirable that no such argument should be drawn up and deposited— He therefore suggested to the President, the idea of changing the terms of the second question, so that it should be, whether the 8th. Section of the Bill was consistent with the Constitution?

Which the other members of the administration might answer affirmatively, assigning their reason, because they considered it applicable only to the territorial state; while I could answer it, also affirmatively: without annexing any qualification— To this the President readily assented, and I as readily agreed— The questions are to be framed accordingly— This occasion has remarkably manifested Crawford's feelings, and the continually kindling intenseness of his ambition.

I have had information from the Governor of the State of Indiana, that there is in that State a party countenanced and supported by Crawford whose purpose it is to introduce Slavery into that State, and there is reason to believe that the same project exists in Ohio and Illinois^[21]— This avowed opinion that in defiance of the Ordinance of 1787 and of the Laws admitting those States into the Union, Slavery may be established in either of those States by an ordinary act of its Legislature strongly confirms the impressions of him communicated to me by the Governor of Indiana. It is apparent that Crawford is already aware, how his canvass for the Presidency may be crossed by this Slavery contest^[22]— The violence of its operation upon his temper is such that he could not suppress it.

After this meeting, I walked home with Calhoun, who said that the principles which I had avowed were just and noble: but that in the Southern country, whenever they were mentioned, they were always understood as applying only to white men. Domestic labor was confined to the blacks, and such was the prejudice, that if he, who was the most popular man in his district, were to keep a white servant in his house, his character and reputation would be irretrievably ruined.

I said that this confounding of the ideas of servitude and labor was one of the bad effects of slavery: but he thought it attended with many excellent consequences. It did not apply to all kinds of labor - not, for example, to farming. He himself had often held the plough, so had his father. Manufacturing and mechanical labor was not degrading. It was only manual labor—the proper work of slaves. No white person could descend to that. And it was the best guarantee to equality among the whites. It produced an unvarying level among them. It not only did not excite, but did not even admit of inequalities, by which one white man could domineer over another.^[23]

I told Calhoun I could not see things in the same light. It is, in truth, all perverted sentiment—mistaking labor for slavery and dominion^[24] for freedom. The discussion of this Missouri question has betrayed the secret of their souls. In the abstract they admit that slavery is an evil, they disclaim all participation in the introduction of it, and cast it all upon the shoulders of our old Grandam Britain^[25]. But when probed to the quick upon it, they show at the bottom of their souls' pride and vainglory in their condition of masterdom. They fancy themselves more generous and noble-hearted than the plain freemen who labor for subsistence. They look down upon the simplicity of a Yankee's manners, because he has no habits of overbearing like theirs and cannot treat negroes like dogs. It is among the evils of slavery that it taints the very sources of moral principle. It establishes false estimates of virtue and vice: for what can be more false and heartless than this doctrine which makes the first and holiest rights of humanity to depend upon the color of the skin?^[26]

I have favored this Missouri compromise, believing it to be all that could be effected under the present Constitution, and from extreme unwillingness to put the Union at hazard. But perhaps it would have been a wiser as well as a bolder course to have persisted in the restriction upon Missouri, till it should have terminated in a convention of the States to revise and amend the Constitution. This would have produced a new Union of thirteen or fourteen States unpolluted with slavery, with a great and glorious object to effect, namely, that of rallying to their standard the other States by the universal emancipation of their slaves. If the Union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question upon which it ought to break. For the present, however, this contest it laid asleep.[\[27\]](#)

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[\[3\]](#) William Lowndes, Representative from New York

[\[4\]](#) Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry was a decorated Navy officer best known for leading the American victory at the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. After the War, Perry had a few questionable incidents (like slapping a lower-ranking officer) that led President Monroe to send him to South America to negotiate trade terms with Simon Bolivar, the leader of the South American independence movement. Commodore Perry died on the trip back to the United States, but his report (referenced here) helped shape the “Monroe Doctrine.”

[\[5\]](#) Senator from New York. King was also a delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

[\[6\]](#) William Pinkney was a Senator from Maryland; James Barbour was a Senator from Virginia and would serve as Secretary of the Navy after John Calhoun.

[\[7\]](#) John Randolph was a Representative from Virginia. Henry Clay should be in your notes. He served as a Representative from Kentucky during the Missouri debates, and went on to become Secretary of State after John Quincy Adams. Clay owned 60 slaves, yet opposed the expansion west of slavery. He is credited with designing the Missouri/Maine component of the “Compromise.”

[\[8\]](#) Constantinople was the capitol city of the Ottoman Empire in 1820. Adams refers to diplomatic missions to Russia and modern-day Turkey - Istanbul was Constantinople.

[\[9\]](#) Senator from Kentucky.

[\[10\]](#) John Marshall served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1801-1835, the longest serving chief justice in Supreme Court history. His most influential case, *Marbury vs. Madison*, established judicial review, meaning the Court has the authority to rule a federal law unconstitutional (and thus has the final word on Congressional Legislation). It’s the reason every major piece of legislation prompts an immediate lawsuit from those opposing the legislation.

[\[11\]](#) What is Calhoun saying here? If slavery is restricted, the South will do what?

[12] Adams considers the options for the northern states should the country divide. What does he mean by the “extirpation of the African race?” What movement does he reference here?

[13] Adams is pretty serious here. The issue of slavery should break the Union.

[14] Thomas Sully was an American painter from Virginia. His 1819 painting, [*The Passage of the Delaware*](#), was commissioned by the North Carolina State Legislature to hang in the state’s Senate Chambers. The painting was too large, so Sully sold it to a private collector, who then took the painting on tour. Adams and his family saw the painting while on display in Washington DC, although he doesn’t seem to like it very much. It’s now on display at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, not to be confused with Emmanuel Leutze’s 1851 painting, [*Washington Crossing the Delaware*](#).

[15] Basically, while the House was voting on the Missouri statehood bill, now with the “compromises,” the southern Congressmen took the bill to the Senate and started procedures despite the fact that the House had not technically voted on the bill yet.

[16] What do you think he means by the “white states?”

[17] William Wirt, Attorney General and slave owner.

[18] What is Adams arguing here? What does he mean by “a power for one part of the people to make slaves of the other can never be derived from the consent, and is therefore not a just power?”

[19] As you know, the Northwest Ordinances prohibited slavery north of the Ohio River.

[20] What is this argument between Adams and Crawford about? Why does Crawford think the Northwest Ordinances are invalid? How does Adams respond?

[21] Legal term meaning an issue or case that has not been previously decided.

[22] What’s happening in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio?

[23] William Crawford lost his bid for the Presidency in 1824 to John Quincy Adams.

[24] We heard this argument during the Constitutional Debates over Slavery: “The poor despise labor when performed by slaves.”

[25] If you don’t know what dominion means, please look it up, it will only take a minute.

[26] We have seen this before in the Constitutional Debates over Slavery: “this infernal traffic originated in the avarice of British Merchants.” What is Calhoun’s point here?

[27] Remember the *Constitutional Debates over Slavery*: Slaves “produce the most pernicious effect on manners. Every master of a slaves is born a petty tyrant...”

And remember your Jefferson: “There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other.” These men knew exactly what they were doing when they continued protecting slavery decade after decade.

[28] Despite his deep opposition to slavery, Adams agrees to the compromise because of his “unwillingness to the Union at hazard.” Then he immediately tells us that slavery is the question that will break the Union. These men knew exactly what was going to happen.

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