



**JAMES W. GRIMES**

Governor of Iowa 1855-58; U. S. Senator from Iowa 1859-71.

From "Diary of Gideon Welles," published by Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911.

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# ANNALS OF IOWA

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THIRD SERIES

## JAMES W. GRIMES VERSUS THE SOUTHRONS

*Being some account of the clash between Mr. James W. Grimes of Iowa and Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina and Mr. Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia on the hustings in Iowa in the gubernatorial campaign of 1854 when the "Oppositor," or the nascent Republican party, secured possession of the seats of authority in the first free state of the Louisiana Purchase and in its representation in the national Senate at Washington.*

BY F. I. HERRIOTT

Professor in Drake University

(Concluded from July, 1926, number)

### VII

Before *The Washington Union* had turned its batteries against Mr. Grimes, Senator Dodge had forwarded (April 24) to Messrs. Harvey and McKenny, publishers of the *State Gazette* of Burlington, copies of the correspondence with Senator Butler denying that he had used the expression anent Iowa and the Germans ascribed to him. The *Valley Whig* (May 11) in a short, sharp editorial comments caustically upon the course of "our senators" and in rebuttal of Senator Butler's denial cited his original assertion in the Senate (February 24) and submits that if that "did not sustain Mr. Grimes we do not understand the force of language," and thereupon "commended the correspondence to all continental comers to Iowa, and especially to Germans."

On May 19 Mr. Howell reprinted in the *Valley Whig* the article of the *Washington Union* of April 29, and in a long editorial entitled "War of the Slaveholders on Mr. Grimes," he denounced the course of Senators Dodge and Jones in the matter

in a vigorous fashion. The editorial as a whole is not very effective. There is more fury than argument, more prejudice than point.

No sooner had Mr. Grimes read the leader of *The Daily Union* attacking him than he realized the powerful effect such a broadside would have in Iowa where he apprehended it would be given extensive circulation, unless he took prompt and effective measures to counteract it. He knew that correspondence would for the most part be futile, and further that neither friends nor partisan editors, however able and well disposed, could effectually conduct his defense or overcome the effects of the broadside from the Administration organ, because they were not so familiar with the facts, nor so likely to apprehend the subtle points of the *Union's* argument. He acted with energy and dispatch, deciding at once to alter his plans, forego the adjustment of his personal affairs in New Hampshire and return to Iowa.

On reaching the state Mr. Grimes did three things. He penned a vigorous rejoinder to the *Union's* article, issuing it at Burlington May 23, again publishing it in pamphlet form and addressing it "To The People of Iowa." He arranged an extensive itinerary with a schedule of thirty-one speeches in as many different cities and towns, ranging from eastern to western border, from southern to northern line of the state. And he challenged his competitor to meet him at "any and all" the places and jointly to discuss with him the issues before the electors.

In his rejoinder to the *Union* Mr. Grimes returned blow for blow. He charged that "the article was evidently furnished by or prepared at the instance of the Iowa senators." Such a proceeding, however, he concedes to be "a matter of taste"; but unwittingly thereby they have forced "a dangerous issue" that must be decided in August, to wit:

*Whether the freemen of this state shall be represented in the United States Senate by men who regard the interests of South Carolina and Mississippi more than the interests of Iowa. Whether on every question affecting the rights of free labor and free territory, the extreme South shall find its most willing and devoted supporters in the senators from this free state.*

To Senator Butler's charge that he, Grimes, had misrepresented him in respect of the Germans and Iowa, Mr. Grimes reiterates his original assertion and, to avoid all quibbles, he re-

prints entire the correspondence of Messrs. Dodge, Jones, and Butler, in which the latter denies that he ever "said anything which could authorize such a remark," with which he couples his disclaimer in the Senate of Friday, February 25, already given.

Mr. Grimes retorts with force—first, with the query, Why a disclaimer if he had said nothing which suggested or warranted such a conclusion from his words? Apparently his own friends had drawn such an inference. Hence his disclaimer. And second, he quotes the paragraph of his speech on Friday afternoon in which he first made reference to Iowa's possible preference of a population of slaveholders and their slaves over an inundation of those men coming as "emigrants from a foreign country totally unacquainted with the institutions of this country—and nearly all comers are of this class."

There was, and is, Mr. Grimes contends, just one conclusion. "The emigrants referred to are Germans." He takes pains to point out and emphasize that Senator Butler's "declaration was uttered in the United States Senate, *in the presence of the Iowa senators,*" and moreover, it was duly reported in the *Globe* newspaper, the official reporter of the Senate, that "it has never been denied, questioned, or rebuked by those senators." In *fine*, he submits that the language of Senator Butler was stronger than his (Grimes's) Address had alleged.

Then follows the correspondence between Messrs. Dodge and Jones with Messrs. Toombs and Dawson in which the latter deny positively that they had ever asserted that within fifteen years, slavery would prevail in Iowa. Mr. Grimes repeats his first statement and counters by saying that he did not say that "a senator of Georgia" had made the declaration but that a "representative" of that state had so stated. "The opinion was expressed by the Hon. Alexander H. Stephens in the presence of and to the Hon. Charles Mason, commissioner of patents. It was publicly expressed, and I doubt not, conscientiously believed. The remark was repeated by Judge Mason to several citizens of Burlington." Thereupon follows a specific denial that he was or that he had recently been opposed to the organization of the territory of Nebraska as the *Union* had alleged. Mr. Grimes then delivers two body blows.

The *Union* attempts to excuse Messrs. Dodge and Jones for voting

for the bill with the anti-alien clause, because they knew it would be stricken out in the House. How did they know it? How could they know it? The only question for them to decide was, Is the bill just and right as it stands? Was it proper for them to vote for a bill containing a manifestly inequitable provision with the expectation that a co-ordinate branch of the government would correct their wrong? Is this the way senators would shirk the responsibility? Is a wrong to be justified in one man because another may possibly rectify that wrong?

The *Union* or the Iowa senators in the *Union* very softly attempt to change the responsibility of the Clayton amendment from Mr. Atchison and to fasten it entirely upon Mr. Clayton. Is it possible that they suppose that they can deceive any one in relation to the history of the amendment? Is it possible they imagine that the people of Iowa do not know who was the prime mover and principal advocate of this anti-alien restriction? Do they suppose that there is a German in the country who does not know that it originated with Mr. Atchison of Missouri, the President pro tem of the Senate? The amendment was drafted, as is well known, by Mr. Atchison, and was carried by slaveholders' votes in the Senate against non-slaveholding votes, and after it was incorporated in the bill was supported and endorsed by the Iowa senators, *but under the supposition, they say, that another body would strike it out.* As to Mr. Atchison's authorship of the Clayton amendment, the *Missouri Democrat* says:

"We have in type the speech of Mr. Atchison, pending the amendment of Mr. Clayton, which Mr. A. says he wrote out and gave to him to offer, excluding foreigners, who have declared their intention of becoming citizens and taken oath to support the Constitution of the United States, from voting or holding office in the territories of Nebraska and Kansas, and shall lay it before our readers next week, in order that the people may understand the motive which influenced Mr. A.'s course. He says in his remarks that he objects to foreigners moulding and forming the institutions of those territories. Hear him:

"The first legislature may decide the question of slavery forever in these territories (Nebraska and Kansas) and decide as to the right of the people of one half of the states of the Union to go there or not."

A correspondent of the *Missouri Republican*, a journal favorable to the Nebraska bill, thus speaks of Mr. Atchison's support of this amendment:

"Atchison addressed the Senate with great earnestness and ability on the same side of the question. He contended that the admission of unnaturalized foreigners to vote would overcome the voice of American settlers, and banish slavery before southern men could have a fair expression of the popular feeling on the subject. The first vote was of the greatest importance. It would decide the whole question. He wished that issue to be left to American citizens, and not to persons having no stake in the country. The amendment was adopted—yeas 22, nays 20.

The Address closes with an acknowledgment that he had changed his mind respecting the wisdom of electing judges, "the only true allegation" in the *Union's* attack, and he indulges in some strong comments adverse to the bench of that day that strongly resemble the present day comment upon the bench. A telling quotation from Colonel Benton's then recent speech on Kansas-Nebraska bill concludes his arraignment of the Senator from Iowa.

### VIII

A close scrutiny of the argument of Mr. Grimes's address to the people of Iowa in 1854, of the rejoinder and the counter argument of his rebuttal produces a split conclusion. The leader of the Opposition clearly had the advantage at the outset and he scored easily and heavily in defense, and, as the event demonstrated, won the goal he sought. His plea, however, was made on grounds that in part either misapprehended or misrepresented the assertion of the Senator from South Carolina that was the *causa causans* of the rencounter—in part upon a questionable citation of a remark made in a private conversation, and in part upon nonappreciation of the constitutional or legal premises on which the Kansas-Nebraska bill was founded in the pleas of its advocates.

In the rationale of citizenship and in the principles that guide statesmen in determining the conditions of political status, especially in conceding non-natives access thereto, the presumption, both in law and in ethics is always in favor of the native citizen and against the alien immigrant. Other things being equal our own citizens, resident and rooted in our soil and life, are to be preferred to outsiders unfamiliar with our institutions and perhaps ill adapted to or ill disposed towards our public policy and methods of government. Under the Constitution and the law antecedent thereto, and in sound ethics thereunder, slaveholders enjoyed complete equality with their non-slaveholding brethren of the North in such presumption. The fact that hideous barbarities were often incident to the institution of slavery did not abrogate, nor contract by a hair's breadth, this presumption of the law, although the canons of absolute ethics might declare the institution obnoxious. The owners of dumb brutes often mistreat them abominably, the possessors of wealth frequently put it to

unspeakable uses, but the fact when and however often it may be, in no wise disturbs the status or the rights, or the presumptions of the law in favor of the possessors of such property.

Stated in gross, no man in his right mind or in cool judgment would for a moment dispute the assertion that intelligent, educated, law-abiding, well-to-do natives are unqualifiedly preferable in our national life and polity to the vicious and vitiated classes, the criminals and paupers, the "riff-raff and offscourings" of the Old World. Nor does any sane man deny or doubt that with universal suffrage and easy access to the ballot box inundations of such classes, or of the ignorant, untutored and undisciplined of the lower strata of Europe, would soon place life and property, liberty and law, in jeopardy, and eventually overwhelm our institutions. On the other hand, few statesmen and fewer publicists dispute that a constant infusion of new blood from foreign lands, when the integrity of the stock is properly safeguarded, is desirable—nay necessary—in order to invigorate native stocks and counteract the normal deterioration that results from inbreeding, or from lack of competition with livelier stocks.

Such sentiments had been uttered in countless forums by innumerable statesmen before 1854 and they have been repeated in learned and popular phrase *ad infinitum* since that epoch-making year. In what Judge Butler said in the Senate on February 24, there was nothing at variance with them. His assertion was neither extravagant nor indefensible. He and nearly one half of the senators represented slaveholding constituencies (fifteen states had slavery and sixteen were free states). He and nearly all those senators owned slaves themselves, or were served by slaves in their own domestic establishments, whether living in their respective states or in the city of Washington. They, and the dominant classes of the South which they particularly represented, were men of culture and refinement, as well as of achievement in industry and the arts; indeed for the most part they were educated in northern colleges, notably at Harvard and Princeton. His remark, it should not be forgotten, was made in just resentment of the stinging criticisms of Chase and the insulting speech of Sumner. Furthermore, it was as a part of an irrefutable argument in which he said that Washington and

Greene and Captain Ingraham, the rescuer of Martin Koszta, would have to give precedence to the newly arrived alien in the new territories of Kansas and Nebraska, if the logic of Senator Chase was valid.

Moreover, Senator Butler in his original statement qualified it in such wise as to anticipate and bar most of the ensuing objections. He did not include, or rather he specifically excluded, the English and the Irish, because they had lived under the common law and were familiar with our institutions. Even with this exclusion his statement was further qualified; he referred only to those "totally unacquainted" with the institutions of this country. Thus limited, none could object to it. Controversy could arise only with the declaration following, to wit, "and nearly all continental comers are of this class." The language at first flush is sweeping and all-inclusive as to immigrants from the continent of Europe; but a second scrutiny discovers that he says "nearly all"—*not* all.

Further, Senator Butler did not compare or assimilate Germans to Negroes, bond or free. He spoke only of "the slaveholder with his slaves well-governed," precisely as one might refer to a householder with his family—children, servants, and live stock, well-governed. He referred to the slaveholder, and he was the person in comparison with the Germans—not Negroes with the Germans. Slaves were then mere chattels, just as horses were the chattels of the western pioneers.

Furthermore, Senator Butler in his initial statement did not particularize Germans by name, and there was no warrant for such a broad or particular inference that he himself had Germans in mind. It was either heedless or malevolent deduction from his statement. He said "emigrants from a foreign country" and "continental comers." Those descriptives neither imply nor suggest Germans, and it was a violent inference for any one so to assert. Bulgarians, Czechs, Danes, French, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Norwegians, Slavs, Spaniards, Swedes, indeed any and all nationalities no less than Germans were equally comprehended in Senator Butler's actual words. Only the fears of partisans or the unjust and selfish designs of partisan opponents could conceive of injecting "German" into or substituting in lieu of his actual words. Such substitution, unwarranted as it was, meant



that the party leaders, both in Washington and in Iowa, were keenly alive to the fact that the Germans held the strategic political centers in the campaign then progressing.

Senator Butler, as most men are wont to do, in the heat and rush of angry discussion, expressed himself in terms that swept wide and clear. In the fervor of flowing speech, and especially in an effort to counteract unjust aspersions on himself and his constituents which he properly resented, he used terms that comprehended more than he intended. He was thinking of continental immigrants in the mass. Particular peoples, or certain classes thereof, he would not decry because of their intelligence, industry, and integrity. As soon as friends called his attention to the adverse implications of his first utterance, he immediately took pains to guard himself against invidious criticism, and therefore added his supplemental statement that he did not mean to reflect upon the character of Germans hailing from such ports as Bremen. Ordinarily in normal private relationships his explanation would have sufficed to close the incident; but among partisans pressing towards a political goal and seizing upon any and all coignes of vantage, it did not suffice.

In the highly charged atmosphere of the day Senator Butler's "playful remark" acted as an electric spark that produced a lurid zigzag flash of light through the prosaic arguments for and against the repeal of the celebrated pact of 1820. In particular it seemed to signalize the antagonism between free and slave labor. Calhoun's "venerable and staid" colleague had, apparently, in the open Senate, deliberately placed Bohemians, Danes, Finlanders, Frenchmen, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Poles, Norwegians, Swedes, and Swiss, below the bound slaves of the South in intelligence and social character—at least no more desirable. His letter to Senator Dodge denying that he had ever said anything that warranted the interpretation put upon his original statement by Mr. Grimes, seemed upon superficial examination—the extent usually of partisan scrutiny—little else than the tergiversation of the pettifogger; and at best a "confession and avoidance," as lawyers would phrase it.

However intended "by way of episode," Judge Butler's initial remark was not, from any point of view, very flattering, or even tolerable to the *amour propre* of Germans, which traditionally is

intense and easily disturbed. Germans were, as we have seen, just then becoming very sensitive to adverse criticism. Nativistic prejudice was already running rampant in the North, and was a rapidly growing force in political discussion and decision in Iowa. The remark seemed to smack of that prejudice. Southern senators, with few exceptions, had steadily and systematically thwarted the hopes of Germans in the matter of European intervention and in liberal land legislation; Judge Butler's remark seemed but part and parcel of the slaveholder's prejudice against the Germans. Within two weeks this prejudice was incorporated into both the Kansas-Nebraska and the Homestead bills. Partisans naturally suspected concerted action, and in the heated state of the public mind it was difficult to overcome this presumption.

#### IX

The condemnation of Senators Dodge and Jones for their votes on the Clayton amendment, or rather for the Douglas bill with that amendment attached, while natural by partisan opponents and "good politics," was not fair as the situation and the result proved. Those senators voted their real sentiments on the amendment when they voted "No" against its adoption. When it was adopted, nevertheless, they did what statesmen must ever and anon do when major matters, which they sanction, comprehend minor matters which they disapprove; they sought to accomplish what they conceived to be the major good, regretting the minor evil involved. At first glance Mr. Grimes would seem to have struck without possibility of a return in condemning them for voting for a provision, expecting or hoping that the obnoxious section would meet with a negative in the lower house. If senators cast their votes wholly as pawns in a game, merely as moves in partisan maneuvers, condemnation should, of course, ensue; but such is not necessarily the case. The exigencies antecedent to and collateral with legislation involve much strategy and endless and intricate tactics that exact generous presumptions of honest purpose to promote the public welfare. And Senators Dodge and Jones were entitled to these presumptions.

Again, Mr. Grimes, in attempting to shift the responsibility for the Clayton amendment affecting aliens from the Whigs to the Democrats, achieved a very doubtful point, if any. In as-

serting that Senator Atchison was the Mephistopheles, or Devil's advocate, operating behind the scenes to secure its passage, he placed a distinguished Whig in an unenviable position, of necessity assigning him to the class of statesmen known as puppets. Senator John M. Clayton was a man of character and reputation and high achievement. His distinguished career entitled him to protection against such a charge. Moreover, his views on the question of the privileges of aliens in our polity had been a matter of notoriety for some time.

The evidence which Mr. Grimes offers in proof of his charge, namely, his citations from the *Missouri Democrat* and the *Missouri Republican*, seems substantial *prima facie*. He might have cited in further proof similar evidence from the *Anzeiger des Westens* wherein the same charge was asserted and animadverted upon. Nevertheless, the charge is not thereby conclusively demonstrated. Senators Atchison and Clayton took notice, May 24, of the current rumors when the Kansas-Nebraska bill was on its final passage in the Senate, the Senator from Missouri bluntly and unqualifiedly and specifically denied the allegation; and the Senator from Delaware no less explicitly and emphatically denied the charge. The latter declared, "I never had any communication with him [Senator Atchison] in reference to the subject before I moved the amendment in the Senate, nor do I remember to have spent a moment in conversation about it while it was under consideration."

Curiosity will persist doubtless as to the warrant for the assertions of the *Democrat* and the *Republican* that their respective editors had seen, or were cognizant of a speech or proposition in writing, of Senator Atchison proposing such an amendment excluding aliens from the franchise in the new territories and declaring his purpose to introduce and secure the passage of such a provision. There is no necessary contradiction between their allegations, and the denials of collusion or conference made by Senators Atchison and Clayton in the Senate. The probabilities are that it was with the anti-alien clause, as it was with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise itself, with which he is nowadays charged with plotting and forcing, that he had such a measure in contemplation before he started to Washington before the opening of that session of Congress, that he conferred

with friends and party associates respecting the matter, exhibiting his arguments and proposals to them to ascertain to what extent they were satisfactory to them and advantageous to them in the pending struggle between him and ex-Senator Benton for supremacy in the politics of Missouri. That he did not proceed with the matter as planned when he reached Washington was probably the result of the rapid developments after he reached the city; it was not necessary for him to take the initiative; others were ready and willing and already active in promoting what he wanted. Any one familiar with the maneuvers of the lobbies and committee rooms of legislatures knows that such a conclusion does no violence to facts of common occurrence in the politics of legislative halls and precincts.

The critics of Mr. Grimes in *The Union*—be they Senators Dodge and Jones, or Attorney General Cushing, or the editors proper—had him on the hip in the matter of the established practice of Congress in providing for the franchise and conditions of officeholding in newly organized territories. Beginning with the organization of the Northwest Territory and with the celebrated Ordinance of 1787, Congress had confined the exercise of the franchise to citizens of the United States and, with the exception of Oregon, had not deviated from that policy up until the introduction of Douglas' bill, January 4, 1854. Under the Ordinance of 1787 and collateral acts providing for the government of the Northwest, an elector had to be a freeholder in possession of 50 acres and a resident for at least two years preceding, as well as a citizen of the United States; and in case of a representative he had to qualify with three years' residence and 200 acres of land. These provisions were applied to the territories of Indiana and Illinois. When Missouri was organized in 1812 the requirement was lessened slightly—electors had to be residents of the region at least one year, taxpayers non-delinquent and citizens of the United States. On the organization of Arkansas in 1819 the same provision was applied. In the act organizing Wisconsin in 1836, and in the act creating the territory of Iowa it was declared that the suffrage "shall be exercised only by citizens of the United States." The first exception in the case of Oregon was due to two facts: first, aliens were given the ballot who had declared their intention to become citizens as

an inducement to their emigration to that far off region; and second, as a reflex of the more liberal policy pursued with the foreign-born in the states of the Northwest and trans-Mississippi states, between 1840 and 1850. The liberal provisions in Douglas' first Nebraska bill likewise reflected this then widespread liberal attitude towards the foreign-born in the local legislation of the states of the middle west and an index of their enormous political influence at that time. It could not, however, be truthfully said that Oregon had established a liberal congressional policy towards aliens. Senator Clayton's amendment consequently did no violence to our national practice. The hue and cry raised against it by Mr. Grimes and the Antislavery champions of the North was not, therefore, provoked by any just cause of complaint, but primarily upon the fact that it seemed to signalize the success of nativistic propagandists who were then making exorbitant demands adverse to the interests of the foreign-born; and the latter held the ballot and could punish their adversaries and unhorse the party in power if they could be aroused to the proper pitch of resentment.

Mr. Grimes found himself almost if not wholly in the lurch by reason of his citation of a private remark current on the streets of Burlington when he said that a "distinguished representative from Georgia has announced that in fifteen years Iowa will be a slave state." The canons of public debate do not permit indiscriminate, and especially adverse, use of remarks made in the course of private conversation. Practiced lawyer that he was, he might have anticipated that his Address would produce sharp debate, hot retorts and blunt demands for the authority for his assertions. Further, his mode of statement involved every one of the congressional delegation from Georgia in both the Senate and the House of Representatives; if they resented the implication they would have a grievance, and if assailed therefor they would deny and berate the one so misrepresenting them. Moreover, if truly reported, its public use involved one of his fellow citizens and neighbors in Burlington to his detriment, as he (Mr. Grimes) would be compelled to display his source of information in self-defense. His fellow-townsmen was soon left in a sorry predicament.

One very interesting fact in Mr. Grimes's rejoinder to the

broadside of *The Union* is his utter omission of any comment or note upon the assertion that Senator Seward, while governor of the state of New York, had told Governor Smith of Virginia that he, Seward, would gladly swap the German and Irish emigrants that hovered in New York for the free Negroes of Virginia—a remark that reverberated long and loud in the career of Senator Seward. If the “playful remark” of Senator Butler, qualified and deodorized as it was by Senator Butler himself, was properly to influence the Germans of Iowa in determining how they should vote on governor, how much more influence should the alleged remark of Senator Seward exert in such determination!

Consideration of the substantial merits of Mr. Grimes's argument save as they might involve the interests and inclinations of the Germans as aliens, ambitious to secure the status and the benefits of citizenship through naturalization, would take us farther afield than the limits of this paper permit. His contemporaries, partisans, and the public, so far as they speak via a majority of the voters, pronounced his argument solid and convincing. Historians, since his day, have recorded like opinions. A critical examination of the case for and against Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska bill makes one hesitate to accept such conclusion as always fair or as final.

The pleas of the Pro-slavery men and the protests of the Anti-slavery leaders all comprehended matters that directly affected the welfare of Germans.

## X

In the way of a counter blast to Mr. Grimes's second “Address to the People of Iowa,” Congressman Bernhardt Henn forwarded to the papers of Dubuque and Burlington copies of the responses of the eight representatives of Georgia to his inquiry of April 26 in which, after quoting Mr. Grimes's first address and the alleged quotation of “a distinguished representative of Georgia,” he asked, “I desire to know whether either of you ever so expressed yourself, or in any other way whereby such an inference might be drawn from your language as would convey the idea attributed to one of your number by Mr. Grimes.” Mr. Alexander H. Stephens writing for himself and two colleagues replied on the same date in part as follows:

\* \* \* we have only to say that we are utterly at a loss upon what

grounds Mr. Grimes could have founded the assertion made in the extract of his Address to which you have called our attention. No such idea certainly was ever advanced, or any one from which such inference could be drawn, in any speech made by either of us. We can but regard the statement therefore as part of that general system of wholesale misrepresentation which so many of the enemies of the equal, just and republican principles of the Nebraska and Kansas bills have resorted to for the purpose of misleading the minds of the northern peoples upon them—that indeed must be a weak as well as a bad cause which has to be sustained and bolstered up by such unfair and iniquitous means.<sup>17</sup>

The critical observer will have noted that Mr. Stephens refers in his denial only to "speeches" and thus technically may have shielded himself against an admission. In view of Mr. Stephens' high reputation and the specific and comprehensive interrogatory of Mr. Henn that included private as well as public remarks, it is difficult to believe that Mr. Stephens would thus hedge or dodge. Nevertheless, Mr. Howell abruptly and instantly charged him with "falsehood" and "cowardly chicanery and shuffling deceit."

In his speech in Keokuk on the night of July 5 Mr. Grimes apparently clinched his case by reading a letter from Judge Mason reaffirming the truth of his original assertion that he heard Mr. Stephens make such a prediction concerning Iowa. In view of the bitterness engendered one wonders why Judge Mason's letter was not published in the press, if it was read from the stump by Mr. Grimes.

Despite the reported letter of Judge Mason, the question of the reliability of the report and the veracity of Mr. Stephens was merely pushed away from Mr. Grimes. Mr. Howell's charge did not necessarily follow. Southerners as a rule seldom lacked the courage to back up their convictions. His alleged remark, if made at all, might have been made months or even years previously and have been forgotten. Or it might easily have been a hypothetical observation, made upon a contingent event.

Mr. Wm. B. W. Dent in his reply, although he must have realized that Mr. Henn wanted a response that would aid his party friends in Iowa and enable them to hold the favor of the German voters, could not resist shying a rock at the Opposition that struck Germans. He said, "The friends of the late bill for

<sup>17</sup>Dubuque *Miner's Daily Express* June 12, 1854.

the organization of the territories of Nebraska and Kansas *in the free states*, will be persecuted and misrepresented by that heterogeneous mass, who burn honorable senators in effigy and preach abolition sermons on the Sabbath day." The reference included and perhaps intended the sensational episode in the Public Square at Chicago on the night of March 16 when the Germans of that city burned Senator Douglas in effigy.<sup>18</sup>

### XI

After the foregoing section was written, the writer came upon the following letter from Congressman Stephens, dated at Washington, July 28, addressed to Congressman Henn. The letter apparently was delayed in transmission or misdirected or miscar-

<sup>18</sup>The writer has described at some length the incidents connected with the burning of Senator Douglas in effigy in Chicago in an article entitled "The Germans of Chicago and Stephen A. Douglas in 1854." See *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter, Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois, ... Jahrgang 1912 (Vol. XII)*, pp. 381-404.

Mr. Dent's letter is worth reproduction and is given at length:

House of Representatives,  
Washington, May 31, 1854

Sir: Yours of the 26th ultimo addressed to my colleagues and myself did not meet my eye until this day, owing to my absence at home where I have been confined on account of ill health. You give me a quotation from an address recently made by James W. Grimes, Esq., one of the candidates for governor in the state of Iowa, to the people of that state as follows: "A distinguished representative from Georgia has announced that in fifteen years Iowa will be a slave state." You ask me if I ever so expressed myself, *or in any way* whereby such an inference might be drawn from my language as the idea attributed to one of the Georgia representatives by Mr. Grimes. I take great pleasure in stating, that I have never made any such announcement as the one attributed to a *Georgia representative* by Mr. Grimes's address, nor have I ever used such language as could be distorted in the remotest possible degree by inference or implication to any such meaning. So far as I am concerned I pronounce the statement an unmitigated falsehood. I have not heard any of my colleagues use such language, or any language whereby such an inference might be drawn, nor do I believe they have done so. It has been a pleasure to me to speak of the democracy of Iowa in laudatory terms, as I have regarded them as *sound in the faith*. Those by whom the *Democratic party* have been represented in both branches of our national legislature, so far as the state of Iowa is concerned, have made up a record that is a monument of honor to themselves and the noble constituency who selected them. That record tried by the true standard (the Constitution) will never make them or their true friends blush.

The *people of Georgia* will not trouble themselves about regulating the domestic institutions of other states. The *Democratic party of Georgia* honor and respect their political brethren in your noble young state.

The friends of the late bill for the organization of the territories of Nebraska and Kansas *in the free states* will be persecuted and misrepresented by that heterogeneous mass who burn honorable senators in effigy and preach abolition sermons on the Sabbath day. They and their co-workers of all shades and colors, *enemies to the Democratic party*, will no doubt make a grand rally to defeat the true men in Iowa and other states in the approaching elections. I trust the result will show that those who have heretofore stood by the *pillars of the Constitution* remain as firm to their principles as the "surge repelling rock," and when the day of trial comes will rebuke this *piebald party* by giving them a real Waterloo defeat at the ballot box. Such a result will be hailed, by the great Republican family who *revere the Constitution* that binds us together as a family of *independent sovereign states*, with joy and gladness and by none more than the democracy in the Empire State of the South, including

Your humble servant,

W. B. W. DENT,

Hon. Bernhart Henn, House of Representatives,



ried, for it was not given out at Fairfield, Iowa, until September 13. It did not effect the immediate purpose for which Congressman Henn wrote Mr. Stephens, but he gave it out, nevertheless, it appearing in the columns of *The Fairfield Sentinel*. The letter is so frankly put, and the considerations so acutely and completely stated, that it is given entire. In view of the use made of the original charge by Mr. Grimes, it is but simple justice to reproduce the letter on this ground alone—but it will be agreed that the letter is worth perusal on its own merits for many other reasons.

Fairfield, Sept. 13, '54

Mr. Sheward:

Dear Sir: In justice to the Hon. A. H. Stephens and myself—both of us having been misrepresented by certain Abolition newspapers and by the Abolition candidate for governor—I desire you to publish the enclosed letter.

Yours truly,

B. Henn.

Washington, D. C., 28th July, '54

Dear Sir: I am obliged to you for calling my attention to an article in the *Iowa Observer* [of Dubuque] of the 15th of June, commenting upon my reply to your note of inquiry of the 26th of April, touching the correctness of a statement made by Mr. James W. Grimes in an address to the people of Iowa; and also to an article in the *Ledger* published at Fairfield on the same subject. It is a matter of regret to me that these articles, owing to my absence from Washington City on a visit to Georgia, were not brought to my attention earlier; but even late as it now is, I deem it proper that I should not let them pass without notice. The writers of both these articles affect to treat my answer to your inquiry of April as evasive on my part, and not fully meeting the statement of Mr. Grimes to which your note referred. Now I wish briefly to say to you, and to all whom it may concern, that no evasion was intended by me. My answer was intended to be full, positive and explicit, and was so considered by me at the time.

The allegation of Mr. Grimes was that "a distinguished representative from Georgia has announced that in fifteen years Iowa will be a slave state." To this I said on the part of myself and colleagues of the House, who joined me in the reply, "We are utterly at a loss to imagine upon what ground Mr. Grimes could have founded the assertion made in the extract from his address to which you have called our attention \* \* \* No such idea certainly was ever advanced, or any one from which such an inference could be drawn in any speech made by either of us. We can but regard the statement, therefore, as part of the general system of misrepresentation which so many of the enemies

of the equal, just and republican principles of the Nebraska and Kansas bill have resorted to for the purpose of misleading the minds of the people of the northern states upon them."

The allegation was that an announcement had been made by some Georgia representatives; no name was mentioned, nor any particulars given. Upon inquiry from us whether the statement was true, myself and colleagues answered in language which I deemed distinctly emphatic and quite pointed enough, that no such announcement had ever been made by either of us. How we, or either of us, could have been considered as having made an "announcement" of such a proposition in any way less formal than in a speech, did not occur to me at any time, and may now be left for Mr. Grimes to explain and the public to determine.

But the writer in the *Observer* says:

"Mr. Grimes does not accuse him (Mr. Stephens) of making the assertion in a speech—it was in a private conversation with Judge Mason; yet Mr. Stephens wished to quibble out of it in this way, etc., etc., etc."

Now, in reply to this I wish to say that the allegation of Mr. Grimes to which I was replying was not that which the writer states. It made no references to me, personally, at all. It made no allusion that [it] had been said "in a private conversation" by any of the Georgia representatives, with Judge Mason, or anybody else. It simply asserted that an announcement had been made, etc. This "private conversation" version of the matter seems to have been an afterthought. Whether this is a quibble or not I will not say, but it is certainly a modification of the first statement. It is in Mr. Grimes's second address which you have handed me that I see this turn is given to the matter. And to this qualification of the "charge" I have but a word or two to say. Mr. Grimes gives no statement from Judge Mason. The writer in the *Ledger* assumes that Mr. Grimes has shifted the onus of any issues that may arise from his own shoulders to those of Judge Mason. He also assures that as between Judge Mason and myself the people of Iowa will have little difficulty in determining. They know him, says he, to be an "honorable man"; they know me "to be one of the most rabid nullifiers of the South, who on all occasions has delighted in insulting the freemen of the North."

I shall say nothing in disparagement of the "honor" or integrity of Judge Mason: my acquaintance with that gentleman is limited. The people of Iowa doubtless know him much better than I do, and a great deal better, I am well aware, than they know me; but this I will say, from my acquaintance with him, limited as it is, I cannot allow myself to believe that he ever authorized Mr. Grimes to make the allegation which he did; and until I have some evidence to the contrary, therefore, I shall forbear all further remarks upon that point. This, however, I will say, in most emphatical and unequivocal terms, that if Judge Mason, or anybody else heard me say in conversation, either private or public, at the dinner table or elsewhere, anything from which he even



ALEXANDER HAMILTON STEPHENS

Representative of Georgia in U. S. House of Representatives 1843-61 and 1874-82; Vice President of the Confederate States 1861-65.

From a photograph presented to Charles Aldrich by Mr. Stephens in 1868.

drew the inference that I entertained the opinion, or intended to announce it as my opinion, that Iowa would be a slave state in fifteen years, or even at any time, he or any other such person was entirely mistaken in drawing any such inference. I never entertained such an opinion and never intended by anything that I ever said to anybody to convey the idea or to make the impression that I did. With the domestic affairs of Iowa I have no concern, and take no interest further than to indulge the desire to see that young state advance in power and prosperity with her older sisters of a common Republic. The statement in the *Ledger* that I am known "to be one of the most rabid nullifiers of the South, who on all occasions has delighted in insulting the freemen of the North" is altogether gratuitous, ungenerous, and unjust. And if it is in this character that I am to the people of Iowa, it is only because I have been sadly misrepresented to them, or rather it is because I am not known to them at all. And though this writer speaks of me as one who delights to insult the people of the North on all occasions, yet I think it would be a difficult matter for him to make good his accusation by showing a single instance in which I have ever indulged in this favorite propensity, whatever may have been my politics, or the errors of the nullifiers, it is well known by those who know me that I have never been subject to the charge of being attached to their sect, or of being a believer in their doctrines. Whoever accuses me of sectional hostility to any portion of this Union, does injustice to himself as well as a great wrong to me. These are feelings I have never indulged in. If an unkind word toward the people of the North generally ever escaped me, I am not aware of it. That I have felt it my duty to denounce a certain class of men in the North is true; but it is only that class who have arrayed themselves in sectional hostility against the South and her institutions, in violation of the Constitution of our common country. I have been and am willing for the people of the North to take care of their own rights and interests and manage their own internal affairs as they please, and I claim nothing more for the South. It was with these views and opinions I voted for the admission of Iowa as a state, notwithstanding by her constitution slavery was excluded from her limits. That was her business, not mine. I had no disposition to interfere with her institutions then, I have just as little now.

Yours most respectfully,

Alexander H. Stephens.

Hon. Bernhart Henn,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, D. C.

The present writer submits that it is very curious that Judge Mason's letter to Mr. Grimes, reported to have been read or referred to by Mr. Grimes in his speech at Keokuk, July 5, was not given out to the Opposition press and given the extensive

circulation accorded Mr. Grimes's original allegation and the correspondence of the Georgian congressional delegation.

The incident illustrates again the aggressions and injustice of so much partisan political discussion. The rules of fair dealing among men are constantly infringed and often grossly violated and the victims are helpless and unable to recover. Senator Dodge and his associates in Congress suffered unjustly, and Mr. Grimes obtained improperly an ill-gotten benefit.

## XII

The foregoing narrative, save the next preceding section, XI, was written in 1911-12. Section XI was added as a footnote in the galley proofs in the course of printing in 1917-18.

Last year (1925) the Historical Department of Iowa received the correspondence of Judge Charles Mason. The present writer, as soon as he learned of the fact, asked permission to examine the items for the year 1854 to see if perchance the foregoing queries could be answered. He discovered the original letters of Mr. Grimes to Judge Mason, and a copy of Judge Mason's reply. Judge Mason at the time was commissioner of patents and resident in Washington, D. C. The letters are reproduced entire. The criticisms penned nine and fourteen years ago by the present writer were clearly anticipated by Mr. Grimes.

### JAMES W. GRIMES TO JUDGE CHARLES MASON

Burlington, Iowa 15th May 1854

My dear Sir:

You have doubtless seen the *Washington Union* of the 29th April last containing a three column editorial attack upon me. I am very well aware of the source from which the attack emanated &<sup>19</sup> intend to repel the assault according to the best of my feeble power.

I am told that Hon. Alex. H. Stephens Rep. in Congress from Georgia, stated in your presence, an[d] predicted before you that in fifteen years Iowa would be a slave state. Is it so? I have it from two gentlemen who I understand heard you say that you heard the declaration made. I intend to reply to the article and shall upon the authority of what I have been told by Col. Warren<sup>20</sup> & Dr. Walker<sup>21</sup> give the name of Mr. Stephens. My own impression is that certain gentlemen are in a worse predicament than they think I am in. If Mr. Stephens did not say what I understand he did, telegraph me immediately the

<sup>19</sup>In these letters of both Grimes and Mason we follow their style of abbreviations, capitalizations, punctuations, etc.

<sup>20</sup>Col. Fitz Henry Warren of Burlington.

<sup>21</sup>Dr. J. C. Walker of Fort Madison.

words "He did not say so." If he did say so, telegraph me the words "He did say so." If you can give me the names of any persons in whose presence he said it, I will be greatly please[d], & if you can give them, telegraph them.

Will you oblige me by answering by telegraph immediately.

I knew nothing of the *Union* article until I reached here this morning.<sup>21a</sup>

Your friend, truly,

James W. Grimes.

JAMES W. GRIMES TO JUDGE CHARLES MASON

Burlington 24th May 1854

My dear Sir:

I wrote you some ten days ago and hoped to receive an answer before this time, but have been disappointed. The Senators from Iowa wrote a note to the Georgia Senators for the purpose of disproving that a "representative from Georgia had said that Iowa would be a slave state in fifteen [years]" & received an answer published in the *Union* of the 29th of April in which they say that they never uttered such a sentiment & that they do not believe any Geo. representative ever did. The *Union* also takes occasion to say that the members of the House from Geo. deny & denounce the statement of Mr. Grimes.

I would never have alluded to the members from Geo. had I supposed that the Iowa Senators would be fools enough to take any notice of my address, because I would not have given them the opportunity to drag in anything but a record fact. They however have taken the responsibility more to their injury than to my own *I think* to make up an issue of veracity with me and many others on the foregoing fact. I was left without any evidence to sustain me unless I used your name in that connection. I never had any conversation with you on the subject, but W. W. White,<sup>22</sup> Dr. Walker & Col. Warren all told me that A. H. Stephens of Georgia had made the declaration to you and I did not understand that it was in any degree private or confidential. I disliked very much to use your name at all & would not have done so until I had heard from you in reply to my letter had I not been compelled to leave Burlington tomorrow & only be at home one day from this until after the election.

If the use of your name is used by any one to your injury, or if an attempt of the kind is made, I want to know & I think I can do as much good as certain parties can of harm. I am very truly your friend,

James W. Grimes.

<sup>21a</sup>There is a serious discrepancy between Mr. Grimes's statement above and the assertion of the *Fairfield Ledger* of June 8, 1854. Commenting upon Mr. Grimes's speech in Fairfield the editor states that Mr. Grimes declared in his speech that he had not intended to make a personal canvass in Iowa until he saw, while in New Hampshire, the broadside of the *Washington Union* of April 29, 1854.

<sup>22</sup>W. W. White of Keokuk (?).

## JUDGE CHARLES MASON TO MR. JAMES W. GRIMES

Washington, May 22/54

Dear Sir:

I have just received yours of the 15th and have just telegraphed you as you desired but referring you to my letter for explanations.

According to my best recollections Mr. Stephens did not use the precise words mentioned in your letter though I think his language was in substance not widely different.

We were boarding at the same house about the time the Nebraska question was first started & it was the theme of frequent discussion. I expressed the opinion that the repeal of the Missouri compromise would be unnecessarily agitating a question that had once been put to rest & prove highly prejudicial to all sections of the country, & especially to the South—that the compromise of 1850 was as far as I believed the northern people could be expected to acquiesce in congressional action on this subject—that the repeal of the Missouri compromise would destroy confidence in compromises & I believed it unwise to disturb the quiet into which the country seemed now to be settling down.

He wholly disagreed with me & expressed the opinion that agitation & discussion would result to the advantage of the South & that the north would soon acquiesce in the repeal of the Missouri compromise.

In the course of these discussions I feel quite certain that he expressed the opinion that the discussions on the subject were gradually opening the eyes of the country to the benefits of the institution of slavery & that eventually we in Iowa should change our constitution so as to legalize it in our state. I do not think he fixed the time within which this change was to take place, but I do not remember the precise language used.

I recollect that the next day (or shortly after) such language had been used by him some one from Iowa (I think it was Dr. Walker from Fort Madison) was in my office to whom I mentioned the matter.

I have just called on Mr. Stephens. He recollects the conversation above stated except that he thinks he made no prediction that Iowa would ever be a slave state. Men in conversation at a dinner table frequently say things which are not seriously meant. Such might have been the case with Mr. Stephens, though I thought him serious.

If you can get along without bringing me before the public in connection with this matter I hope you will do so, for the reason principally that this is a statement of what took place at a dinner table & I would rather not appear as the public retailer of such statements. Especially as my recollections are different from those of Mr. Stephens.

At the time I stated to Dr. Walker in my office what had thus occurred it did not occur to me that I was violating any rule of propriety; I regarded the mere expression of such an opinion of Mr. Stephens as indicative that he was little acquainted with the disposition & feelings of our people & I repeated it as a curiosity—an extravagance entertained by a distinguished Southern legislator.

Considered as a piece of private information which was never expected to go farther, it will not I hope be considered reprehensible; but the case may be different when the matter shall get into the public prints in the heat of an excited political controversy.

I have thus stated to you the facts of this case as correctly as I remember them. I cannot expect to dictate to you the course you will pursue in relation to it but I hope to be brought into no unnecessary notoriety in connection with it.

Yours very truly

Chas. Mason

James W. Grimes Esq

PS. I never saw the article in the *Union* to which you refer.

MR. JAMES W. GRIMES TO JUDGE CHARLES MASON

Fairfield 31st May 1854

My dear Sir

Yours of the 22d inst. have been forwarded to me at this place. You do not regret my allusion to the imputed remark of Mr. Stephens any more than I do. I did not for a moment anticipate any of the results that seem to have followed from it. I see from yesterday's *Gazette* that has just come up here that Dodge & Jones will not obtain a certificate from Mr. Stephens to the effect that he never made any declaration of the kind. If they do I shall take no notice of it, but let the matter drop, although I shall be compelled to rest under the imputation of having stated a falsehood.

I am very truly, in haste, your friend,

James W. Grimes

Hon. Charles Mason,

Washington City, D. C.

MR. JAMES W. GRIMES TO JUDGE CHARLES MASON

Burlington 21st Oct. 1854

My dear Sir

Your favour enclosing a former one has been recvd. I need not tell you that I feel "confounded mean" for having drawn you into this controversy at all. I ought not to have alluded to Stephen's remark at all & should not have done so had I known under what circumstances it was uttered. Besides I had no idea that anybody would take the trouble to procure letters from the senators & representatives from Geo.[rgia] to disprove what I said in so general a statement.

They are now abusing me in the papers and charging that the whole letter is a forgery—that you never wrote any thing of the kind to me and that I have been guilty of concocting the whole thing. Their object is to force me to publish your letter in vindication of my reputation for veracity and then the onslaught will be directed upon you. They will not succeed. I can now afford to let them hack at me.

The whole Dodge force in the Legislature will be directed 1st to stave off an election 2d to endorse [A. C.] Dodge—& 3d to elect [M. D.]



Browning to the Senate in his place. But their efforts will be fruitless. We have no longer any political parties in this country. Every man fights on his own hook & makes his own political gods out of just such materials as he chooses.

I hope you will not resign. I have no right to advise you & you may deem me impertinent in doing so. But I will do it nevertheless. You enjoy a reputation all over the country that has never been enjoyed by any of your predecessors. The Colt & other cases have satisfied the country that you can't be bought and every body seems to be pleased with the correctness & dispatch with which the business of your bureau is transacted. The position is honourable,—you can do the country good service & such as I apprehend no other man can render, where you are; and you will return to Iowa at the end of the present administration with much greater power and influence, than if returned now. Such is my opinion, at least. Excuse me for talking so frankly about what does not concern me individually and about which any that I might say may be deemed rank impudence

I think the recent elections must satisfy Mr [Alex. H.] Stephens & the President that you was almost right in regard to the people of the north acquiescing in the apeal of the Missouri compromise

I am very truly

Your friend

James W. Grimes

Mr. Grimes is not the only public man who has too hastily given out or publicly reported the sayings of others delivered in private conversations to his discomfiture. Mr. Stephen's letter given in the preceding section explodes most of Mr. Grimes's assumptions.

There is no general or special reason for question as to the accuracy or sincerity of the assertions of either Judge Mason or Mr. Stephens. The alleged observation about Iowa might easily have been made in the flare and fling of partisan discussion around the common table of their boarding place in Washington. The furious debates in the Senate and House split the air everywhere—in the lobbies and lounging rooms and wherever men came together. Mr. Stephens and his confreres in the give and take of tabletalk naturally echoed or reiterated the contentions of the House and Senate. The alleged observation, if made, either substantially or approximately, was probably uttered in mere facetious byplay or counterplay in the rough and tumble of contention with no serious import on the part of the one so expressing himself. The predominance of southern, or of those of southern ancestors and affiliations in the population of Iowa was

known—in fact was notorious. It was soon after the utterance of the alleged observation here in question that John G. Whittier, the militant Quaker poet, said in *The National Era* of July 27, 1854:

Iowa—the near neighbor of Kansas—is another of the free slave states. From the hour of its admission to the present, its influence and its votes have been given in favor of slavery. Augustus Caesar Dodge's vote has always been as certain for any villainous scheme of slavery propagandism as those of Butler and Atchison \* \* \* but there is no disguising the fact that Iowa is now, and has been from the outset, so far as her action in the Confederacy is concerned, to all intents and purposes, a slave state.

In the way of sharp twist and sudden thrust, the alleged observation of Mr. Stephens might have been made to checkmate some contention of the ardent opponents of the "Repeal" without any notion that it would be taken as a settled conviction. All accounts of the character and conduct of Alexander H. Stephens show us a man whose earnestness and sincerity were conspicuous and controlling. A man who could attract and hold in admiration and affection such men as John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln was not one to dodge or hedge or get behind the shadow of a technical evasion in repelling the assertion of Mr. Grimes.<sup>23</sup>

### XIII

The general course of the campaign in Iowa in 1854 and the particular part taken by Mr. Grimes would be worth more detailed consideration because of its relations to the controversy

<sup>23</sup>See Sandberg's "Abraham Lincoln," Vol. I, pp. 376-378. The marked friendship of Adams and Lincoln with Stephens is strikingly suggested in the following which are taken from Mr. Sandberg's narrative. Four years before his death John Quincy Adams penned some verses addressed "To Alexander H. Stephens, Esq., of Georgia," two stanzas reading:

We meet as strangers in this hall,  
But when our task of duty's done,  
We blend the common good of all  
And melt the multitude in one.

As strangers in this hall we met;  
But now with one united heart,  
Whate'er of life awaits us yet,  
In cordial friendship let us part.

Immediately following Mr. Stephens' speech in the House of Representatives on February 2, 1848, Mr. Lincoln wrote his law partner, William H. Herndon: " \* \* \* Mr. Stephens, a little, slim, pale-faced consumptive man \* \* \* has just concluded the best speech, of an hour's length, I ever heard. My old withered eyes are full of tears yet."

Neither Mr. Adams nor Mr. Lincoln was given to lachrymose or mushy sentimentalism anent public men or measures, and neither was easily deluded or "fooled" in reading the characters or interpreting the conduct of their associates in public life.

just dealt with—Senator Butler's "playful remark" continued to serve as a football<sup>24</sup>—but the story is complicated and was concluded on August 7. The election gave Mr. Grimes a majority. But it was close margin which gave him his victory. His majority was only 2,110. Had 1,056 voters changed their minds he would have suffered defeat. His congressional running-mate in the southern half of the state was defeated. His victory was pre-eminently a personal one. But it was due in major part to the overconfidence of the Administration leaders who remained in Washington and let Mr. Grimes take the field in their default.

The general conclusions which a close study of the crucial campaign of 1854 seem clearly to justify are briefly summed up in what follows:

On January 1, 1854, the Democrats of Iowa, and the Democrats in the nation at large, had many reasons to anticipate the continuance of their party in control of the administration of the affairs of Iowa. Their confidence was generally conceded to be warranted by the public. There was considerable rancorous internal discontent in the Democratic party but not such as to create any dangerous dissension or desertions. All general signs on the horizon were favorable to their supremacy which they had enjoyed since 1838.

The Whigs had been almost completely routed and utterly demoralized by the presidential campaign of 1852. In the first days of 1854 it hardly possessed sufficient energy as a party organization to arouse its membership to serious purpose, concentration and concert of action.

The other elements of the Opposition consisted of a miscellaneous collection of more or less repellant particles—Abolition-

<sup>24</sup>It is not inappropriate here to note that Senator Butler's "playful remark" had another exciting chapter and effectually served the Republicans again in precisely the same fashion that it did in 1854. Five years later, at the crisis of the crucial gubernatorial campaign in Iowa in 1859, a few days before the election, *The Hawkeye* of Burlington delivered a broadside on September 28, 1859, against General A. C. Dodge, then the Democratic candidate for governor in his contest against Samuel J. Kirkwood, the Republican candidate. It was delivered under the innocent-looking caption "A Word With the Germans." It reprinted Senator Butler's declaration in 1854 that the slaveholder and his slaves would be preferred by Iowans to "an inundation" of foreigners; and also his letter to General Dodge of April 23, 1854, explaining his meaning. Mr. Clark Dunham, then editor of *The Hawkeye*, commented upon the episode in a ruthless fashion. The broadside was the last round of the appeals to the Germans of the Republicans in that campaign. It had the same effect in 1859 that it had in 1854. Kirkwood won by a narrow majority of only 2,963 votes, a narrower ratio of the total vote than Grimes secured in 1854. The writer has dealt with that campaign at length in a study entitled "The Germans in Gubernatorial Campaign of Iowa in 1859," printed in the Year-Book of the German-American Historical Society of Illinois for 1915. (See especially Sections XXIII-XXIX.)

ists, Communists, Free-soilers, Democrats, Labor leaders, Land Reformers, Socialists, Temperance propagandists and various sorts of philanthropists and philosophical radicals who generally find it difficult to amalgamate or to co-operate, save when constrained by some overwhelming, compelling consideration, such as an impending, indisputable menace to their personal and the public welfare. And there was no such central controlling fact, or menace, on January 1, 1854.

Although there was smouldering discontent anent the slavery question, especially with the barbarities incident to the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, the public seemed to be in the main content with the adjustment arranged and authorized by the Clay Compromises of 1850.

The introduction of Senator Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska bill in the national Senate in January, 1854, and the inclusion therein of Senator Dixon's amendment repealing the Missouri Compromise of 1820 confining slavery below the line of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , was a bolt out of a clear sky. It shocked the entire North and electrified the various elements of the Opposition and suddenly brought them together in a common consciousness of furious antagonism to the program of the Proslavery propagandists.

Among the elements of the Opposition not the least energetic and potent were the then recent revolutionary refugees from Continental Europe, who had attempted unsuccessfully to overthrow the established monarchical governments that grievously oppressed their peoples—especially Austrians, Bohemians, French, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, and Slavs—all of whom abominated all forms and procedure of human oppression incident to the administration of any form of autocratic government. In the decades of the first half of the past century the foreign immigrants had largely affiliated with and supported the Democratic party, as their leaders and party programs were for the most part uniformly favorable to considerate, not to say lenient, treatment of the foreign-born in the distribution of public benefits.

The ruthless revival and promotion of the Proslavery propaganda by Senator Douglas startled the liberty-loving foreign-born, especially Germans. They became fearful and soon convinced that the extension of the area of slavery would ultimately,

if not immediately, lead to a curtailment of their opportunities in this new land of freedom, and eventually would obliterate their newly acquired and dearly prized liberties. The bitter clash of the Antislavery leaders—Messrs. Chase, Fessenden, Hamlin, Seward, Sumner, and Wade—with the Proslavery champions—Messrs. Adams, Badger, Butler, Brown, Dixon, Hunter, Mason, and Thompson—disclosed a clear-cut antagonism towards legislation favorable to the foreign-born among the dominant leaders of the southern Democratic and Whig leaders.

This antagonism of the Proslavery leaders of the South towards favorable treatment of the foreign-born manifested itself in various directions. The southerners generally were adverse towards the efforts of the friends of European freedom, and especially those seeking to overthrow some of the arbitrary, autocratic monarchies and establish free republics in their stead, opposing some of their propaganda in this country, as in the case of Louis Kossuth, and Professor Gottfried Kinkel's efforts to raise a large loan to finance the attempt to establish a republic in Germany. The southern leaders almost uniformly opposed, effectually opposed, the passage of the bill authorizing free homesteads and land entries. They further refused to support provisions therein permitting aliens to make entries for homesteads, restricting the benefits entirely to natives and naturalized citizens. The foreign-born, and Germans in particular, were especially anxious to secure such beneficial legislation.

The diplomatic courtesies and privileges accorded by President Pierce to Cardinal Bedini, a legate or nuncio of the Pope to this country, an Austrian prelate, intimately associated with the Austrian general in charge of the siege and capture of Bologna when an attempt at revolution was thwarted in 1848, caused the bitter memories of the "Forty-eighters" and their successors to blaze out in riotous proceedings and alienated many from the Democratic standards.

The methods of the South in the apprehension of fugitive slaves, under the notorious act of the Clay Compromise, also re-animating the memories of European refugees of the methods of the henchmen of monarchical governments in the arrest and seizure of refugees, or those who had incurred the ill will of autocratic governments in the Old World—and this fact aroused

animosity and alienated foreign-born republicans from the Democratic party on this side of the Atlantic.

The popular amazement and indignation over Senator Douglas' proposed repeal of the Missouri Compromise restricting the northern boundaries of slavery so energized the various opponents of the national Democratic administration that the Whigs of Iowa assembled in convention at Iowa City on February 22, 1854, and nominated a state ticket, choosing James W. Grimes as their candidate for governor. The various groups of the Opposition, Free-soilers, and advocates of temperance workers readily and soon joined forces with the Whigs. Discontent, inertia, and revolt among the Whigs, however, did not create the most favorable anticipations of a victory for the Opposition.

The speech of Senator A. P. Butler of South Carolina in the national Senate on February 24 in rejoinder to the attacks of Senators Chase, Sumner, and Wade, in which the Senator from South Carolina asserted that the people of Iowa would prefer a population made up of southern slave owners and their slaves to a flood of European immigrants, became a major point of attack in Mr. Grimes's Address to the people of Iowa in the opening of his campaign for governor.

Contrary to academic opinion the "Americanistic" propaganda which was then taking form in secret societies called Know-nothings, began to affect public discussion in the fore part of 1854, and as the major number engaged therein were either Whigs or radicals in political and social reforms, the fact tended to alienate the foreign-born voters from Opposition forces.

Agitation for the enactment of drastic legislation restricting, and usually entirely prohibiting, the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, was then rapidly approaching culmination, and this propaganda was carried on chiefly by either Whigs or those radicals who had been more associated with the Opposition, and this fact likewise tended to make the foreign-born regard the Opposition with disfavor.

In their party platforms both Democrats and Opposition declared in favor of free homesteads. The Democrats were silent on the temperance question and the Opposition declared in favor of total prohibition of traffic in alcoholic stimulants. Both candidates for governor, Messrs. Bates and Grimes, took substantially

the same position with respect to their future official relations to a prohibitory enactment by the legislature.

In his canvass Mr. Grimes dwelt upon three questions: (1) the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, (2) the temperance or prohibition question, and (3) the hostility, or alleged antagonism, of the Democratic party towards the foreign-born, particularizing Senator Butler's speech and the course of the southern Slavocrats in opposition to the Homestead bill. The Opposition press in the main pursued the same course. Emphasis upon the interests of the foreign-born—and particularly the Germans—in the controversy involved in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the propaganda of the Proslavery leader, were earnest, constant, and systematic, and in many respects seemed to be the major objective of party tactics. The Democrats, no less than the Opposition, put forth special efforts to attract, or to hold, the German voters.

Contrary to general expectation the Opposition in Iowa in 1854 won almost a complete victory: Mr. Grimes won the governorship by a majority of 2,110 votes; they captured the state legislature on joint session by a majority of ten votes, thus insuring control of the senatorial succession at Washington; they almost prevailed in the First or southern Congressional District, and prevailed in the Second or northern District.

Although the Opposition won clearly and almost achieved a sweeping victory, a close scrutiny of the election returns discloses that Mr. Grimes's victory rested upon a very narrow margin—so narrow indeed that one is led to suspect that it was due chiefly to the fact that the national leaders of the Democratic party suffered from overconfidence, and did not come out from Washington and engage personally in the pre-election campaign in Iowa.

Analysis of the returns further seems to warrant the conclusion that the appeals of the Opposition to the foreign-born voters and the pronounced discontent of the Germans with the course of the Democratic party on matters affecting their status and welfare, constituted the major factor in securing Mr. Grimes's notable success which gave the Antislavery party a seventy-two-year lease on the seats of authority in the state of Iowa.

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