

last session, I have received from other States, with a request . . . I would lay them before you.

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

But five years ago the agitation of this subject brought us to the very verge of disunion; from the terrible consequences of which we were only saved by that profound love of country which animated the hearts and directed the noble efforts of the choice spirits of both the national parties of the country, then in the Congress of the United States. These efforts resulted in the adjustment of this unhappy controversy, upon a basis to which we looked forward with a trusting faith to give quiet and repose to the country. In this, however, we have been doomed to experience a bitter disappointment, and I fear there is but little now in the past from which we can gather much of hope or encouragement for the future. The rapid settlement of the Territory which lies North of the line of the Missouri restriction rendered necessary the organization of Territorial Governments for that known as Nebraska and Kansas. The Act of Congress organizing these Territorial Governments, in perfect consistency with the principles of non-intervention established by the Legislation of 1850, known as the compromise measures, repealed the restriction imposed by the act admitting the State of Missouri into the Federal Union, by which slavery was prohibited in the Territory lying North of the parallel of 36 degrees, 30 minutes; thus denying to Congress the power of either establishing or prohibiting slavery beyond that line, and very properly leaving with the people by whom the country might be settled, the power of determining for themselves whether or not the institution of slavery should be recognized within the limits of the States to be formed out of those respective Territories. And yet this measure of simple justice to the South, removing an invidious distinction between the States of the Union, set up in flagrant disregard of the Constitution, and to which the South never should have assented, has been made the signal of renewed hostility and revolt; and the angry clouds that passed harmlessly from our political hemisphere before the awakened patriotism and wisdom of 1850, have returned upon us with a deeper and a darker tinge, threatening a crisis from the consequences of which