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Speech of the Hon. R. B. Rhett.

After the unanimous passage of the Bill calling a Convention of South Carolina, to secede from the Union. Delivered in Columbia, November 19, 1860.

Mr. Rhett, after repeated calls, arose amidst tremendous applause, and said:

It is now late, but I will answer to your call, my friends. [The audience here interrupted with three cheers for Rhett.]

After quiet was restored, Mr. Rhett resumed: There exists a great mistake, fellow-citizens, in supposing that the people of the United States are, or ever have been, one people. On the contrary, never did the sun shine on two people so thoroughly distinct as the people of the North and of the South. They differ not only in their institutions and social organization, but their characteristics are altogether peculiar and distinct. To illustrate this fact, now that the Union is dissolved, (or the Union is dissolved—[Applause] we may put that down as certain—the Union is certainly dissolved) [Great applause] To illustrate this fact, I repeat, now that the Union is dissolved, let us recur to the past history of the sections. The first greatness upon which the difference of the North and South was apparent, was upon the question of the alien and sedition laws. John Adams was then President, and the North passed a law, that any one who should speak and write disrespectfully of the President of the United States should be punished, and pay the penalty of \$500 for his offence. This law the South resisted. Southern men said that it was an invasion of the rights of freemen and of the constitution, which guaranteed, as one of our liberties, the preservation of a free press. They said that free institutions could not live, except where there was a free press. This was the first great difference between the Northern and Southern sections of the Union.

Then came the war of 1812—a war for Northern interests and Northern shipping—a war for the honor of the North—a war springing up out of the beligerent state of Europe. You all know that it was called the Second War of Independence, and that it was led on by your great Calhoun and Henry Clay—both Southern men. What was the conduct of the North? Why, because it stopped their making money for a little while, they denounced the Government, and had the war continued six months longer, they would have dissolved the Union. Here, then, was a war for Northern interests and Northern honor, and yet, because they didn't make as much money as before, they denounced it and would have destroyed the Union. They are a people, fellow-citizens, wholly devoted to self-interest, and the pursuit of gain. I trust I am not tiring you. [Cries of "go on! go on!"] Well, then, what next? The war of 1812 passed off, and then came the tariff question. During the beligerent state of Europe, the ships of the North did much of the carrying trade of Europe; but, after the peace, they were thrown out of employment. What was to be done? They solved the question by determining to live on us—to become the carriers for the South. So they passed laws that none of the carrying trade of this country should be done by foreign ships, and passed the tariff of 1816. Now, my friends, though Mr. Calhoun has been much blamed for supporting the tariff of 1816, (for he voted for it,) he has been blamed unjustly. The tariff of 1816 was not a protective tariff; it was a tariff to pay the expenses of the war. It never was designed as a protective tariff. Besides, it was a progressively decreasing tariff, to be lessened in 1818, and again in 1820, and so on. But, when 1818 came, what did the North do? They refused to lessen the tariff. In 1820, what did they do? They again refused to lessen it. They did more—they increased it. They increased it in 1824, and again in 1828; until little South Carolina, groaning under the intolerable weight of oppression, nullified the law of Congress. You all know the history of those times, and how the tariff difficulty was settled in 1833. What next? Then arose in the North the idea of sectional domination. To accomplish this, two things were necessary: To increase the number of free States, to get the majority in both branches of Congress, and then to unite the North against the South. They had tried to unite the free States against the slave States upon the tariff. But the great Northwest, being an agricultural people like ourselves, had interests identical with our own, and they failed. Failing, then, to accomplish their tyrannical purpose through unjust tariffs, what were they to do? They decided to separate the slavery question. John Quincy Adams commenced it. They first approached the question through the insidious pretext of the right of petition. They commenced to pour abolition petitions into Congress. Some of the Southern men saw their design. I thought I saw it, and advised resistance. But other Southern men did not see it, and thought that it was a mere question of the right of petition, and so they succeeded. Then came the Mexican war. And so settled was their purpose to increase the number of non-slaveholding States, that they annexed to the very first war, appropriation the condition that all territory acquired by the common blood and treasure should be non-slaveholding terri-

tory. The Mexican war passed by; and then came the great contest about California. The cry of no more slave States was raised, and California, with a constitution prohibiting slavery, was most unjustly admitted into the Union. I then advised resistance. The Senate then stood fifteen from the South and fifteen from the North. It was the turning point of your destinies in the Union, fellow-citizens; and I counseled resistance at every hazard and to the last extremity. Since then other free States have been added, and the power of the South in the Union is paralyzed. You were then kicked out, and bullied out, and shot out, of Kansas. They have thus, fellow-citizens, succeeded in both parts of their policy. They have got the majority in both branches of Congress. The South is in a hopeless and powerless minority. They have united the North against the South, and intend to rule you through the Federal Government. During the whole of this time, the South has remonstrated—she has argued, she has appealed to the constitution in vain. She has submitted, with the most astonishing patience, to wrong upon wrong, and insult upon insult. And now they have consummated their scheme of tyranny, by electing a Black Republican President to rule you. So long have you submitted, that they have lost all respect for you. They despise and contemn you. They think you a low, degraded, mean-spirited set of semi-barbarians, with very little more courage than your own negroes; and they have had the audacity, the insolence, the unparalleled, the ridiculous insolence, to suppose that we of the South—we South Carolinians—would submit to a Black Republican President and a mulatto! [Cries of "Never! never!"] Well, my friends, what are we going to do? Or rather, what have we done? Why, we have dissolved this Union with our oppressors. [Great applause.] We have said to the North, we are done with you. [Continued applause.] I read somewhere, the other day, that South Carolina was like a spoilt and fretful child, and needed a spanking. [Laughter.] Do you hear that, fellow-citizens? some Yankee says that South Carolina needs a spanking, and is a spoilt child?

Fellow-citizens, I can tell them that we are the Samson, that will take hold of the pillars of the temple of their idolatry, and pull it down upon them, and crush them beneath its fragments. [Applause.] Could I raise my voice, until its tones reached the majesty of thunder, I would cry in notes of thunder, until it rolled over every village and city and hamlet of the North: "This Union is dissolved!" Had I the power, I would go and write upon the walls of their banqueting halls—"this Union is dissolved." I would go to the fanatic, the manufacturer, to the plunderer who has despoiled them, and not in the tones of thunder, but would whisper in his ear in the still small voice of conscience—"this Union is dissolved!" [This passage of impassioned eloquence was received with silent and solemn admiration by the audience.] Mr. Rhett presented the appearance of a tribune of the people vindicating their liberties, and predicting the ruin of their foes.

IMPORTANT FROM GEORGIA.—MILLEDGEVILLE, November 13.—The Legislature, today, by unanimous vote, passed a bill appropriating one million of dollars to arm and equip the State for any struggle that may occur. The announcement of the passage of the bill was received with the greatest enthusiasm by the people.

Harting's resolution has been referred to the Committee on Federal Relations. The feeling here is now calm, and all minds are settled here in the determination to resist. We are to have a feast of patriotic addresses here this week. Senator Bowles spoke last night. Hon. A. H. Stephens spoke to-night. Hon. V. Johnson spoke to-morrow night, and Hon. H. R. Jackson is expected to follow on Thursdays night.

The Hon. Thomas R. Cobb made a strong secession speech here last evening, which was well received. The Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, it is understood, is opposed to separate State action.

GEORGIA MILITARY CONVENTION.—The State Military Convention met here today, and the attendance of delegates is large.

A resolution favoring the secession of Georgia from the Union was passed by a large majority.

Gov. Brown was called out and he made a strong and decided resistance speech—declaring in emphatic terms the right of State succession, and the duty of all the States to sustain the right. He said he would see to it, if federal troops endeavored to coerce any or State, that for every Georgian who fell in the conflict, the heads of two Federal soldiers should stand above the grave of a brother. He called you to, all of us, to arm for bad names. But come, now, we'll take all that back. [Laughter.] Let us make friends. Come, return to our fraternal embrace. What do you want? There, now, stick it in the Constitution. [Prolonged laughter.]

My friends, why they care no more about the Constitution than they do about the dry leaves of the forest. We understand the Constitution. We understand free government. Like all the great nations of antiquity, we are slaveholders, and understand free government. The North does not. They are a people wrapped up in selfishness. They have no idea of free government. Their idea of free government, I think, is that when three men get together, the two are to rule the one; when five men get together, the three are to rule the other two; when seven men come together, the four are to rule the other three, and make slaves of them. But of a constitution of checks and balances, we have all that are to be free, they have no conception; and they have, therefore, flung the Constitution, by which our rights, and property were guaranteed to us, to the winds, and intend to rule you by means of a vulgar Yankee majority. My friends, I am glad I am rid of them. We have dissolved

this Union—for we might as well say it's done! [Applause.] And never with my consent will we go back into the hands of our oppressors again. [Great applause.] They will besiege us, by what they will call the ties of fraternal blood—by the blood of our ancestors, shed for a common country

—in a common cause. They will welcome us back to what they will call their fraternal embraces. But never, so long as I am a citizen of South Carolina, will I consent that any other flag than the Palmetto banner, with the lone star upon it, shall wave from the top of Fort Moultrie. Never will I consent that the fortifications built for our defense shall be in the hands of any government to be used for the purpose of menacing a people who dare to claim our rights. And, when the cotton States have formed a Southern Confederacy, never, with my consent, shall any Yankee be admitted into it. It shall be a confederacy of slaveholding States—none but slaveholding States shall come into it. [Great applause.]

Another thing, too, my friends, and I am done. At the coming session of Congress, if a Southern Confederacy be formed, or if South Carolina secedes alone, as she will, a force will be moved by the North; and I would not be at all surprised, that before this next spring flowers, you will see the whole South come out of Congress, just as they came out of the Charleston Convention. [Applause.] Already can we see the signs of fear creeping over the North. Those who have read the papers know what I say. But sooner or later, the other slaveholding States must come in. If they do not come immediately, it is well. They will act as the mediators in this great cause. They will say to their brethren of the South come, be quiet; and they will turn to the North and say, come, let there be peace. And we of the Southern Confederacy will deal with the North as any other foreign power. We shall hold them as enemies in war; in peace, friends. And the historian of these times shall hereafter record with what pride a free people cling to the Constitution of their fathers, with what earnestness they pleaded for the Constitution—how again and again, they remonstrated, and were answered by insult and renewed contempt; until, wearied out by concession upon concession, they at last were driven to resistance, and rising in their indignation, their majesty and their might, they put at defiance the Yankees pretension of coercion. They threw off the chains of their oppressors, and established for themselves a government they could call their own. And extending their empire across this continent to the Pacific, and down through Mexico to the other side of the great gulf; and over the isles of the sea, established an empire and wrought out a civilization which has never been equalled or surpassed—a civilization teeming with orators, poets, philosophers, statesmen and historians, equal to those of Greece and Rome, and presented to the world the glorious spectacle of a free, prosperous and illustrious people.

How to RAISE THE MONEY.—There is no doubt that South Carolina will secede from the Union. Although we think the probabilities are that no attempt will be made to evict her, still it is in our opinion, or the utmost importance, that she should prepare to resist any effort of violence. The best way to secure peace is to be ready for war. In order to arm the State it is necessary to put a considerable amount at the disposal of the Legislature. This amount must be raised by taxation, or shall be the free voluntary offering of the people? We think every consideration is in favor of the latter method. Proposals for a loan should be made by the State to its citizens, to be backed by individual subscription. These subscriptions should be collected that while they should allow rich men to contribute abundantly according to their means, they should not exclude poor men from casting in their mite in aid of the common cause. We have no doubt that in the present state of public feeling, much more than the necessary amount can be raised without difficulty. The ardent citizens would have to be restrained. If ten millions could be raised for the purposes of carrying on a foreign war, or obtaining a military loan of this sort, amounting to enormous sums, cannot the State of South Carolina raise among her citizens enough to enable her to protect and defend themselves and, forsooth, this plan has already been indicated in the Legislature, and we hope that the Committee of Ways and Means who have been instructed to sit during the recess, will give it their favorable consideration.—*Union Press.*

And now, fellow-citizens, let me tell you what will follow the dissolution of the Union, and mark my words: When the Cotton States go out of this Union, as they all finally will, two consequences will ensue at the North First, the people of the North, making the protection of their manufacturers which the tariff affords them gone—finding that as end of Northern shipping is over, the carrying trade of the South, European shipping will underbid it, and throw it out of employment—will turn upon the abolition politicians, and demand bread. Why do these politicians teach them now? Is it not that the country owes to every Yankee both a farm and a support? Is it not that they have a right to expect from the government a farm in the West? And when they begin to starve, will they not eat away for bread? Yes, fellow-citizens, and the first great consequence of this will be to make them more dependent upon us.

Among the distinguished men already nominated for the State Convention, we see the name of B. R. Carroll. We extract from his card, published in the Charleston News of November 14th, as follows:

The action of this coming Convention, it is believed, will be one of the most glorious upon the pages of the history of South Carolina. For such a consummation I have devoutly prayed for over a quarter of a century of my life. And to be enabled, obtaining the indulgence of a Convention that will bring about such an event, would be the greatest honor I could possibly confer on my countrymen—the greatest legacy I could leave my children.

I am not ashamed, the colonel, to say that I am a candidate for such an honor. The study of my whole life has been to make myself worthy of it and if my fellow-citizens see my past life enough to merit their support, I am not unwilling to say that it is a service I am anxious to live for, and in which I should be willing to die.

B. R. CARROLL, of Charleston.—Among the distinguished men already nominated for the State Convention, we see the name of B. R. Carroll. We extract from his card, published in the Charleston News of November 14th, as follows:

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GREAT DEMONSTRATION.—One of the largest and most enthusiastic demonstrations of public feeling took place in Columbia last week, that has ever been witnessed in that place before. The occasion was the reception of a committee from Cleveland on its arrival there to collect signatures to a petition to the government to release the slaves of the South. It was a scene of intense excitement, and it is not the effect of a simple detail. That we could have borne with composure and equanimity, but that such a general feeling of regret, as forsooth as we witness, we feel disgraced and humiliated, is not the effect of a simple detail. That we could have borne with composure and equanimity, but that such a general feeling of regret, as forsooth as we witness, we feel disgraced and humiliated, is not the effect of a simple detail. That we could have borne with composure and equanimity, but that such a general feeling of regret, as forsooth as we witness, we feel disgraced and humiliated, is not the effect of a simple detail. That we could have borne with composure and equanimity, but that such a general feeling of regret, as forsooth as we witness, we feel disgraced and humiliated, is not the effect of a simple detail. That we could have borne with composure and equanimity, but that such a general feeling of regret, as forsooth as we witness, we feel disgraced and humiliated, is not the effect of a simple detail.

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He called you to, all of us, to arm for bad names. But come, now, we'll take all that back. [Laughter.] Let us make friends. Come, return to our fraternal embrace. What do you want? There, now, stick it in the Constitution. [Prolonged laughter.]

And for YOUR STATE—THE BROWNS AT PAR—We learn that the Board of Directors of the Bank of Charleston unanimously passed a resolution, yesterday, ordering to take one hundred thousand dollars of State Bonds, to be issued for military purposes, at par.—*Charleston Mercury.*

SINGING WITH THE COTTON.—We have nearly 3,000,000 bales of cotton in the South.

Let us sing while we have them,

and intend to rule you by means of a vulgar Yankee majority. My friends, I am

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Signs of the Times.

A CONVENTION CALLED.—Never before in the history of South Carolina, or any other State, has such an instance of unanimity been exhibited, as the action of the General Assembly of this State, in calling a convention to secede from the Union. Not a dissenting voice was heard in either House, when the solemn and final question was put. The convention is to meet on the 17th December, the election for delegates to be held on the 10th of December, eleven days before the meeting. There has never been witnessed in our Legislature a warmer and more lively enthusiasm than on this occasion. No one doubts that this convention will put to the test of battle every man in the South.

WHAT THE SOUTH MUST EXPECT FROM LINCOLN.—The New York Times thus plainly tells the South what is to be expected from Mr. Lincoln; it should certainly satisfy every Southern man what a baseness will bring:

There can be no doubt whatever in the mind of any man that Mr. Lincoln regards slavery as a moral, social and political evil, and that it should be dealt with as such by the Federal Government, in every instance where it is called upon to deal with it at all. On this point there is no room for question—and there need be no misgivings as to his official action. The whole influence of the Executive Department of the Government, while in his hands, will be thrown against the extension of slavery.

Another thing, too, my friends, and I am done. At the coming session of Congress, if a Southern Confederacy be formed, or if South Carolina secedes alone, as she will, a force will be moved by the North; and I would not be at all surprised, that before this next spring flowers, you will see the whole South come out of Congress, just as they came out of the Charleston Convention.

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