

The Independent Press.

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TERMS—ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM.

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MISCELLANY.

Speech of Hon. F. W. Pickens, Before the Democratic State Convention, Columbia, May 5, 1856.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:—I return you my thanks for the very kind manner in which you are pleased to receive me. I would have declined the position you have called me to assume as your presiding officer, for I desire no notoriety whatever in public affairs, but for one consideration, and that is, that I know there is considerable opposition to the purposes of this Convention in many sections of our State, and it is accompanied with much bitterness. Under these circumstances, I do not wish to appear soon to assist in a responsibility, or to dread any share of vituperation. It has been the habit of my life to meet every responsibility imposed on me by those whom I esteem as my friends, and I have always had to encounter my full share of denunciation. On this occasion, while I shall not avoid the one, I shall defy the other.

If I am correctly informed, the sole object of this Convention is to send Delegates to represent the people of this State in the Cincinnati Convention, which meets to nominate, for the Democratic party, candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States. The objections to this are—first, that it has not been the usual custom of South Carolina to do so; and second, that it leads us into a corrupt struggle and contest for the offices of the Federal Government. First, as to custom, I trust you will bear with me while I look back briefly into this matter. As the issue has been made in South Carolina, it is important that we should understand the history of it, or at least some points bearing upon it.

In the clause of the Constitution which creates an electoral college, it was originally intended by Mr. Madison, and others, that the election of President and Vice-President should be removed from the people, and beyond the reach of popular excitement; and it was intended that the electoral college should choose whoever they thought proper, without reference to any previous indications. But, in the progress of events the theory was entirely changed, and the election of electors was, in fact, the election of President, for the body was pledged in advance to one candidate or another. The clause in the Constitution, as it originally stood, only provided that they should vote for two names, without designating who was to be President, and who was Vice-President, but the highest should be President. In 1800, the contest between the Federal and Republican party was bitter and excited. Jefferson and Burr were run by the latter, and it fell into the House—they both having an equal number of votes. Burr was voted for as President, but only intended by the Republicans in the electoral college to be Vice-President; and yet the Federalists, taking advantage of the technical flaw in the Constitution, which prohibited them from designating who was for President, and who for Vice-President, actually rallied on Burr for President in order to defeat Mr. Jefferson, who was the most odious of all men to them. The balloting continued by States in the House for a length of time, until the Government approached well near to a bitter rupture; so much so, that Jefferson himself said, if continued, Virginia would arm. By a member or two from South Carolina, who were voting for Burr, at last declining to vote at all, the election was made in favor of Jefferson, amid intense excitement, and great danger to the permanence of the Government itself. The feeling of danger was so wide-spread, that the Constitution was immediately amended, so as to make it the duty of the electoral college to designate on their ballots whom they intended as President, and as Vice-President. The country also saw the great danger of corruption, and a rupture of the

Government, by the election falling into the House of Representatives and to prevent its recurrence, and looking with abhorrence upon the disgraceful attempt in the Federal party to force Burr upon the country, the Republican party resorted to some mode by which it was to be prevented in future. Hence the Congressional caucuses of the Republican party to concentrate, by nomination, the whole strength of the party, and to prevent division, by which the electoral college might fail to elect, and throw it again into the House of Representatives. So at the end of Mr. Jefferson's second term, Madison was nominated over Monroe; and so at the end of Madison's second term, Monroe was nominated over Crawford, and others. Then during Mr. Monroe's administration, after the war, the Federalists, with the odium of opposing the war, and the odium of their intrigues under Burr, became utterly powerless. Mr. J. Q. Adams, the son of the great leader of that party, had betrayed them and made a merit of disclosing their secrets to Mr. Jefferson, and he had accepted office under him and Mr. Madison. He now was made Secretary of State under Mr. Monroe, which consummated his reward. Under his intrigues we fully, for the first time, realized what Mr. Jefferson had declared—that we were all Federalists—all Republicans. Mr. Monroe's administration was consolidating in its tendency, and seemed to be imbued with the great maxim of Hamilton, which was to make up by construction what was wanting in specific grants of power. What was called the Republican party became divided between Mr. Crawford, Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay, Mr. Calhoun and Gen. Jackson. The Federalists, as a party, not putting forth any candidate, there was no plausible pretext or necessity for a congressional caucus, as either if elected would still be a Republic. But, notwithstanding this, toward the close of Mr. Monroe's term, Mr. Crawford received the nomination of a Congressional caucus, and of course all the others denounced it. The election took place, and of course it fell into the House of Representatives in 1824—Mr. Adams, Mr. Crawford and Gen. Jackson, being the three highest—Gen. Jackson receiving a large plurality. According to the genius and spirit of our institutions, following the popular will, he ought to have been elected, but by a combination he was defeated. There was an adjourned case of venality between Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams, and notwithstanding this and their previous decided difference on many points, yet he voted for and, by his influence in the House, elected Mr. Adams, and immediately accepted the chief office under him, declaring that it had been used to elect the Secretary of State Chief Magistrate, and that he thought it a safe precedent. It produced a burst of indignation and a universal cry of bargain, intrigue and corruption. The danger of the election falling into the House of Representatives, and its dreadful and profligate effects upon all the fountains of power were deeply felt by all classes. The scenes that then occurred and the danger to the Republic were painted in glowing colors by one of our most beloved and distinguished statesmen—a statesman, the purity of whose motives in public were rarely commended by the transcendent and generous bursts of his passionate eloquence. I can mean no other than George McMillen, for in fiery eloquence he stands without a rival in South Carolina. He was a member of Congress at the time, and in depicting the dangers, exclaimed, if this election is to fall into the House of Representatives, and to be repeated, "your corrupt liberty in this seat of her vitality." And in this Mr. Calhoun concurred, for although elected Vice-President by the college, having been voted for by both the friends of Adams and Jackson, yet he threw the whole weight of his influence in favor of Jackson afterwards, upon the open grounds of defeating a precedent fatal to liberty and the existence of the Government, if repeated.

It was his friends—McMillen, Hayne, Hamilton and others—who fought the battle in favor of Gen. Jackson, on these grounds, and in 1828 carried the election by acclamation, and Mr. Calhoun was elected again Vice-President on Jackson's ticket. No State in this Union took more interest in the election than South Carolina, or went into it with more zeal. The outrage had been so great by the House of Representatives, in electing Mr. Adams, that there was no need of a Congressional caucus or nominating Convention to concentrate public opinion, for there was no division, and Jackson was elected by acclamation to wipe out the outrage. In the previous contest the friends of General Jackson, as well as Mr. Calhoun had taken decided ground against Congressional caucuses, because Mr. Crawford had been nominated in one, and the others had run against the nomination. Therefore, they could never after fall back to that course; but when real division sprang up again, they resorted to National Conventions as a substitute. This was the case in 1832, in the Vice-President; and Jackson was the unanimous choice as to the President, although he had said he would not run a second time. The only division was as to the Vice-President, and Mr. Van Buren was nominated, while Jackson was re-nominated without division. In the meantime, during the administration of

Mr. Adams, his friends, formed what was called the National Republican party, and claimed to be a sub-division of the Old Republican party, but they in reality drew in, to a great extent, the remnant of the Old Federal party, and by their doctrines soon made a platform so national, that any Federalist could stand upon it. The first great issue that Mr. Adams and Clay made was on the Panama mission, and the principles assumed made the distinctive division of parties. The State Rights and Radical school, as they were then called, fell into opposition in that great debate in the Senate. The next great issue made by the National Republicans, under Adams and Clay, was a tariff for distinct protection, *per se*, connected with an enlarged system of internal improvements. The State Rights Republicans took ground in opposition, and hence arose that great debate on Fort's resolutions, when all the friends of Gen. Jackson, with Mr. Grundy, from Tennessee, at their head, opened up the principles of State interposition, and even nullification, as endorsed in the Virginia resolutions of 1798. It was on this occasion that Gen. Hayne, distinguished for his lofty and elevated character, adorned as it was by pure patriotism and glowing eloquence, made his great speech in reply to Mr. Webster, which Gen. Jackson wrote him he had printed on satin, and placed in his library, as containing the true theory of the Constitution. Soon after his election, however, a rupture took place between him and Mr. Calhoun, and involved personal feelings. It grew out of what Gen. Jackson had supposed to be Mr. Calhoun's course in Mr. Monroe's Cabinet, in relation to the Seminole Campaign, and the taking of Pensacola and the Barancas. It is sufficient to say that it produced a violent rupture. In this rupture Mr. Calhoun fell into a minority in the great party that had succeeded so triumphantly in overthrowing the Adams administration. Then soon after, two opening up issues which involved the general principles upon which the canvass had been discussed; and the administration took up what Gen. Jackson called a judicial tariff, and a tariff on raw wool, Mr. Calhoun and his friends on each upon the tariff, and his great and vital principles, involving ultimately in the last resort, the right of State interposition, taking the identical ground taken in common with Gen. Jackson's friends on the "Woolens Bill" and tariff of 1822, before the election. In this great rupture, and in these great issues, it was natural for South Carolina to take sides with her distinguished son. He had been the pride and ornament of his State, and had illustrated the spirit of her institutions with a noble intellect and fervent patriotism, on the most trying occasion; in fact, his brilliant genius had illuminated the remotest corners of our State, and each and every one of hers delighted to bask and to revel in its soft and glowing rays, even as man delights in the genial sun of early spring, as he flings his morning light over the valleys and green hills of the land, all leaping with joy under the plastic hand of a beneficent God.

Yes, it was perfectly natural to take sides with such a man and to stand by him, although he might fall into a minority. The issues became more violent and decided, until it ended in the Tariff of 1832; and this State pursuing the path of her professed principles interposed her sovereign authority under the most intense excitement. This produced universal public discussion of the principles involved, throughout the Confederacy, and just a few weeks before the act was to be put into operation, which the State in Convention assembled, had declared should be null and void, as Virginia had done in the alien and sedition laws, "the compromise" was introduced in the Senate by Mr. Clay, and hurried through the House, so that in fact the Government repealed its own act before the day arrived on which it was to commence its operation. This was State interposition. All these events produced the most intense excitement, and of course threw us for years out of the party movements of the general Republican party of the Union then led by Gen. Jackson, and of course in general nominations we took little or no interest. Those who were with us were called the strict State Rights school. Mr. Calhoun, in the meantime, had resigned his Vice-Presidency and gone into the Senate to vindicate the course of the State and his public career. In the great contest with the National Bank, Gen. Jackson, for the first time in our public affairs, had in his messages, appealed to the people of the nation as a whole, as contradistinguished from the people of the States of the Confederacy. And hence the great majority of the party assumed the name of the Democratic party, as contradistinguished from the Whig party, a generic name, that had sprung up and was assumed by the old National Republicans under Mr. Clay. Our party retained the name of State Rights Republicans, and stood on many measures between the two. So much so, that in February, 1835, the Democratic party, under the lead of Mr. Polk, in the House, introduced the famous bill organizing what was called the Bank system, or State Banks as depositories of public monies; and the Whigs, under the lead of Mr. Binney, went for the re-organization of the States Bank again the

and the State Rights party under the lead of Gen. Gordon, of Virginia, introduced what is now called the Independent Treasury, to save themselves from being absorbed by either as to a great principle. I was then a very young member of the House, for the first time, and voted for thirty-two others for it, in the shape of three resolutions, embracing the identical principles of the present Independent Treasury of the Federal Government. In 1826, the National Convention nominated Mr. Van Buren, and from our peculiar position at that period, it was natural for South Carolina to feel no interest in the general movements of the more national branch of the party. It was not so much because she opposed their policy of organization, but because she was indifferent, having been alienated from the general party by her course on many exciting points. Things thus stood until the spring of 1837, when universal suspension of the Banks took place, and with that, what was called the Pet Bank system blew up. Mr. Van Buren called an extra session of Congress, and was forced to recommend an Independent Treasury. The Jackson branch of the Democratic party had warred upon a National Bank, and properly warred upon it, for I never was at any period of my life, and I commenced public life at the early age of twenty-three, a United States Bank man. Mr. Van Buren could not recommend that, and the favorite antagonist measure of the State Banks had blown up. So there was no alternative but the Independent Treasury, the very identical measure that had been introduced, February, 1835, by Gen. Gordon, and for which thirty-three of us then voted. This position of the President, then the head of the great Democratic party, of course involved all those great principles connected with the fiscal action of the Government, which lie at the foundation of our peculiar system. At the extra session of 1837, I was appointed by the Democratic party to call up and take charge of the Sub-Treasury bill, in the Committee of the Whole; I did so, and after discussion, a motion was made to report it and then lay it on the table. It was the only member from South Carolina who voted for the measure that session. I was censured severely for it in different parts of the State, as it was supposed at that time, to favor too much of support to the general Democratic party and Van Buren for the politics of this State. But as soon as Mr. Calhoun took his stand for it, public sentiment here changed. His great speeches on that subject soon brought the State to act cordially once more with the national party, from whom we had been partially alienated for several years. We then went into the campaign with them, and Mr. Calhoun became reconciled to Mr. Van Buren, even so much so, that he dined with him, and it was publicly announced through the Richmond Enquirer. We afterwards went into caucus with them on all important questions; and in the great contest of 1840, Gov. Thomas of Maryland and myself, wrote the address and resolutions of the Democratic party, upon which the canvass was conducted, or rather in caucus the report was made by Mr. Grundy, and on the motion of Mr. Polk it was referred back to a sub-committee of Gov. Thomas and myself, and we remodeled it. South Carolina went heartily into the contest, and the nomination of Van Buren was a mere nominal matter, as there was no division. We were beaten, because the resolutions and report had too much strict principle for the times, and our opponents under Harrison carried it without principles, or rather fighting for a National Bank in some sections and against it in others; and so of all the other great issues. At the extra session of 1842 they endeavored to carry every thing in the shape of a National Bank in some form, but were defeated in all. They succeeded in the Tariff of 1842. The compromise of 1833 made a biennial production of ten per cent, to run for ten years, and at the end of that time to be reduced to the wants of an economical Government. They got the first years of the protection afforded, and before its latter years fulfilled its final operation, so as to give us the benefit, it, in shameless disregard of all faith, was repealed by the Tariff of 1842, introduced by the same man who had introduced the compromise of 1833. This was carried against the opposition of the Democratic party, except two distinguished Senators, Mr. Wright of New York, and Mr. Buchanan, of Pennsylvania.

It was these great questions that brought South Carolina into full communion with the Democratic party of the Union, so that in 1843 we called a Convention of Delegates exactly similar to the assembly here now. Mr. Calhoun had made a great impression, and was freely spoken of for President in all parts of the Union. South Carolina took an active part in national politics. The Convention of this State met and nominated him subject to the nomination at the Baltimore Convention. The Convention also made an argument as to the plan of electing and organizing the General Convention. The prominent nomination of Mr. Calhoun by this State immediately drew the fire of the friends of all the candidates of the old Jackson Democratic party. These were Mr. Van Buren, Mr.

Cass, R. M. Johnson, and Mr. Buchanan. In the meantime, towards fall, Mr. Calhoun published his argument against the mode and manner of organizing the Baltimore Convention and its evil tendencies. There had been two Delegates for the State at large elected by the State Convention, but under this letter of Mr. Calhoun the Congressional Districts were indifferent to electing any Delegates as proposed by the State Convention, and there were none appointed. Mr. Calhoun's name was even taken from the papers of this State. But just at this juncture there began to loom up another great absorbing question upon the public horizon. The lone star of Texas had risen like a fiery meteor from the bloody fields of San Jacinto. In 1838 Mr. Van Buren and his Secretary of State had refused to consider the question of annexation, and it had died away until 1843. The British Government had interfered to prevent annexation, avowing through Lord Aberdeen, that her object was to produce emancipation through the world. This excited the public mind, and the able letter of Mr. Calhoun to Mr. King, our Minister in France, made the whole South deeply alive to the delicate and vast interest involved. The canvass for the Presidency had narrowed down pretty much to a contest between Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren. A majority of the Delegates already elected were known to be in favor of Van Buren. And it was supposed that Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren as heads of the two parties could sink the Texas question, and make the election turn on the old issues upon which Mr. Van Buren was defeated in 1840. There had been a great reaction on them and it was thought he could now be elected. Mr. Clay was at Raleigh, and Mr. Van Buren near Albany, and yet their letters against annexation of Texas appeared in the National Intelligencer, at Washington, if not the very same day—one appeared one day and the other the next. This looked like collusion, and it was universally believed it was by consent and understanding, and thence rose that conflict which ended in the overthrow of Van Buren. The Democratic party were too sound on principle to let the Whigs, who it is notorious always fought for abstract principle—followed their leader, and he led them to defeat. After the appearance of these two letters from Mr. Clay and Mr. Van Buren against annexation the excitement became intense, and Mr. Calhoun wrote Mr. Elmore and myself to go on to the Baltimore Convention by all means, and to have a meeting in Charleston to get others to go with us, as it was important to the South, and to the triumph of Texas. I was very reluctant to go, under the circumstances, but we did get a few together at Stewart's Hotel, Charleston, and could get no one to go, except Mr. Aiken, the present member of Congress. We attended the Convention, not however as regular members, but when Mr. Polk was nominated we were called on to speak, and we cordially approved of it. Mr. Polk was for annexation of Texas—sound on the Tariff—internal improvements—Bank, and all great questions; and as to general politics, occupied the same ground with Mr. Calhoun; and but for Mr. Calhoun's letter against the organization of the Convention, in all probability he would have received the nomination instead of Mr. Polk. We came home from the Convention and public meetings were held in the State to ratify the nomination. It was received with enthusiasm, and South Carolina once more entered warmly into the canvass for President and Vice-President. He was elected and appointed Mr. Buchanan Secretary of State, and the Mexican war came on. Mr. Calhoun threw himself against it, and lost the sympathy and control of the Democratic party in the South. And again in 1848 South Carolina became indifferent to the nominating Convention for the Presidency. Gen. Cass was nominated, and many of our members of Congress were against him and in favor of Gen. Taylor. The people of the State, however, took very decided ground for his nomination as against Gen. Taylor, and although Charleston was carried for Taylor, the rest of the State went decidedly for the nominee. In 1850 and '51, sprang up all those angry and exciting questions connected with the admission of California. A Southern Convention was called on the recommendation of Mississippi to meet at Nashville; secession enlisted the deepest feelings in South Carolina. The State was divided into two very decided and bitter parties. After the termination of the controversy, the whole public feeling of the State became prostrated and indifferent to general politics. Just at this period came on the Convention for nomination, and of course, the State under the heated events she had but recently passed through at home, took no interest whatever in the Convention. But when Gen. Pierce was nominated, she took a decided and unanimous part. There was not division enough amongst us to produce discussion. I have thus given a rapid view of the course of the State, and of the principal cause that influenced the course as well as I understood them. The only great and decided point made in her indifference to, or opposition to acting with the Democratic party in their nominating Conventions as was connected with Mr. Calhoun's publica-

tion against the mode and manner of organization of the Baltimore Convention that met in 1844. Mr. Calhoun was right as far as he went. There are no doubt very grave and serious objections to the usual manner of constituting such assemblies. And Mr. Calhoun's fertile genius, could also, no doubt, point out serious objections to the mode and manner of electing almost and deliberative assembly, if he chose to analyze it. Take for instance our own Legislatures. He could easily prove that there had been corruption and even bribery at many of the election boxes—that there had been fraud and corrupt combinations in many of the Districts. And, even after the Legislature was assembled, it could be proved that there was corrupt management and log-rolling, and unjust and unfair Legislation. So too of Congress, that it was very often corruptly constituted and unfairly organized—that it was partial and unfair in its Legislation. But is this sufficient to abandon them altogether and abolish them? All government itself is an evil and the only reason why we submit to it, is that it is a substitute for a greater evil, which is anarchy. In this point of view it is a positive blessing. So in this case, there was a great argument beyond the positions Mr. Calhoun assumed in his letter or communication, and that lay in the evils arising from the election of President and Vice-President falling habitually into the House of Representatives. Let us look at it for a moment. According to the Constitution, if any candidates fail to receive a majority of the whole votes cast in the electoral college, the election goes to the House of Representatives with the three highest. According to the theory of that instrument also, the powers of government are divided between the Senate, the President and the House of Representatives, and must be kept separate. But if the election of President habitually falls into the House—then that branch will in time absorb the Executive, and the President will but be the humble tool and instrument of those who will make the powers of the Republic and destroy the equilibrium of the three branches, and make in fact but two—and where then will be your

Government in habitual control of the election of President and Vice-President, there can be no safety for liberty or the Republic. The Senate would soon be at their mercy, and we would become a consolidated Democracy to a certain extent, with a corrupt oligarchy in the House of Representatives, contesting the destiny of empire. Such has been the catastrophe of all Republics, where the legislative branch chooses the executive also. The Constitution expressly reserves the raising of all revenue bills to the House of Representatives. Here, then, we would have the same branch of Congress that holds the purse strings, naming, too, the executive, and making him the humble tool of their corrupt and profligate expenditures.

You say it is corrupting to have Conventions to nominate and prevent the election falling into the House of Representatives, and yet you propose to corrupt permanently the Legislative branch of the Republic, and thus poison the very fountains of the law-making power, and debauch them by throwing the purple of empire at their bar every four years for sale and barter. Admit for argument that the Convention is corrupt, yet it sinks back again into the mass of the people, without the power habitually to cover your statute-books, with the permanent marks of fraud and corruption. To give that branch that holds the revenue in its hands, also the power to hold the President, is in fact to destroy the fundamental equilibrium of the Government, and drive it to decay and ruin, or to revolution. Here lies the argument, and the true reason why the country has resorted to nominating caucuses in the first instance, after the Burr conspiracy of the Federalists in 1801, and then in modern times to Conventions. True, they may be full of evils, and even corruption, and yet they are a choice of evils, and prevent a greater evil in all the stupendous and corrupting consequences of the election habitually falling into the House of Representatives. This was deeply felt both in 1801 and 1824, and came near producing a convulsion; and if repeated often, does any man who has read his history believe that this Republic could last?

Now, a few words as to the time, and the peculiar state of the country in which we are called on to meet at this juncture in our affairs. Heretofore there might have been some cause of apprehension on the part of South Carolina, for fear she may have been betrayed, or unjustly dealt with in Conventions. The South has for years great grievances to complain of, and there might have been danger that the candidates chosen might lean too much towards what had been done by Government, rather than to alleviate our wrongs and grievances. We complain of the operation of an unconstitutional Bank of the United States, and of a tariff for protection connected with it; and, also, of an enlarged and systematic system of expenditures in internal improvements, appropriated on canals and great national roads. These were all branches of the same system; and during the operations of the United States

Government, by the election falling into the House of Representatives and to prevent its recurrence, and looking with abhorrence upon the disgraceful attempt in the Federal party to force Burr upon the country, the Republican party resorted to some mode by which it was to be prevented in future. Hence the Congressional caucuses of the Republican party to concentrate, by nomination, the whole strength of the party, and to prevent division, by which the electoral college might fail to elect, and throw it again into the House of Representatives. So at the end of Mr. Jefferson's second term, Madison was nominated over Monroe; and so at the end of Madison's second term, Monroe was nominated over Crawford, and others. Then during Mr. Monroe's administration, after the war, the Federalists, with the odium of opposing the war, and the odium of their intrigues under Burr, became utterly powerless. Mr. J. Q. Adams, the son of the great leader of that party, had betrayed them and made a merit of disclosing their secrets to Mr. Jefferson, and he had accepted office under him and Mr. Madison. He now was made Secretary of State under Mr. Monroe, which consummated his reward. Under his intrigues we fully, for the first time, realized what Mr. Jefferson had declared—that we were all Federalists—all Republicans. Mr. Monroe's administration was consolidating in its tendency, and seemed to be imbued with the great maxim of Hamilton, which was to make up by construction what was wanting in specific grants of power. What was called the Republican party became divided between Mr. Crawford, Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay, Mr. Calhoun and Gen. Jackson. The Federalists, as a party, not putting forth any candidate, there was no plausible pretext or necessity for a congressional caucus, as either if elected would still be a Republic. But, notwithstanding this, toward the close of Mr. Monroe's term, Mr. Crawford received the nomination of a Congressional caucus, and of course all the others denounced it. The election took place, and of course it fell into the House of Representatives in 1824—Mr. Adams, Mr. Crawford and Gen. Jackson, being the three highest—Gen. Jackson receiving a large plurality. According to the genius and spirit of our institutions, following the popular will, he ought to have been elected, but by a combination he was defeated. There was an adjourned case of venality between Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams, and notwithstanding this and their previous decided difference on many points, yet he voted for and, by his influence in the House, elected Mr. Adams, and immediately accepted the chief office under him, declaring that it had been used to elect the Secretary of State Chief Magistrate, and that he thought it a safe precedent. It produced a burst of indignation and a universal cry of bargain, intrigue and corruption. The danger of the election falling into the House of Representatives, and its dreadful and profligate effects upon all the fountains of power were deeply felt by all classes. The scenes that then occurred and the danger to the Republic were painted in glowing colors by one of our most beloved and distinguished statesmen—a statesman, the purity of whose motives in public were rarely commended by the transcendent and generous bursts of his passionate eloquence. I can mean no other than George McMillen, for in fiery eloquence he stands without a rival in South Carolina. He was a member of Congress at the time, and in depicting the dangers, exclaimed, if this election is to fall into the House of Representatives, and to be repeated, "your corrupt liberty in this seat of her vitality." And in this Mr. Calhoun concurred, for although elected Vice-President by the college, having been voted for by both the friends of Adams and Jackson, yet he threw the whole weight of his influence in favor of Jackson afterwards, upon the open grounds of defeating a precedent fatal to liberty and the existence of the Government, if repeated.

It was his friends—McMillen, Hayne, Hamilton and others—who fought the battle in favor of Gen. Jackson, on these grounds, and in 1828 carried the election by acclamation, and Mr. Calhoun was elected again Vice-President on Jackson's ticket. No State in this Union took more interest in the election than South Carolina, or went into it with more zeal. The outrage had been so great by the House of Representatives, in electing Mr. Adams, that there was no need of a Congressional caucus or nominating Convention to concentrate public opinion, for there was no division, and Jackson was elected by acclamation to wipe out the outrage. In the previous contest the friends of General Jackson, as well as Mr. Calhoun had taken decided ground against Congressional caucuses, because Mr. Crawford had been nominated in one, and the others had run against the nomination. Therefore, they could never after fall back to that course; but when real division sprang up again, they resorted to National Conventions as a substitute. This was the case in 1832, in the Vice-President; and Jackson was the unanimous choice as to the President, although he had said he would not run a second time. The only division was as to the Vice-President, and Mr. Van Buren was nominated, while Jackson was re-nominated without division. In the meantime, during the administration of

and the State Rights party under the lead of Gen. Gordon, of Virginia, introduced what is now called the Independent Treasury, to save themselves from being absorbed by either as to a great principle. I was then a very young member of the House, for the first time, and voted for thirty-two others for it, in the shape of three resolutions, embracing the identical principles of the present Independent Treasury of the Federal Government. In 1826, the National Convention nominated Mr. Van Buren, and from our peculiar position at that period, it was natural for South Carolina to feel no interest in the general movements of the more national branch of the party. It was not so much because she opposed their policy of organization, but because she was indifferent, having been alienated from the general party by her course on many exciting points. Things thus stood until the spring of 1837, when universal suspension of the Banks took place, and with that, what was called the Pet Bank system blew up. Mr. Van Buren called an extra session of Congress, and was forced to recommend an Independent Treasury. The Jackson branch of the Democratic party had warred upon a National Bank, and properly warred upon it, for I never was at any period of my life, and I commenced public life at the early age of twenty-three, a United States Bank man. Mr. Van Buren could not recommend that, and the favorite antagonist measure of the State Banks had blown up. So there was no alternative but the Independent Treasury, the very identical measure that had been introduced, February, 1835, by Gen. Gordon, and for which thirty-three of us then voted. This position of the President, then the head of the great Democratic party, of course involved all those great principles connected with the fiscal action of the Government, which lie at the foundation of our peculiar system. At the extra session of 1837, I was appointed by the Democratic party to call up and take charge of the Sub-Treasury bill, in the Committee of the Whole; I did so, and after discussion, a motion was made to report it and then lay it on the table. It was the only member from South Carolina who voted for the measure that session. I was censured severely for it in different parts of the State, as it was supposed at that time, to favor too much of support to the general Democratic party and Van Buren for the politics of this State. But as soon as Mr. Calhoun took his stand for it, public sentiment here changed. His great speeches on that subject soon brought the State to act cordially once more with the national party, from whom we had been partially alienated for several years. We then went into the campaign with them, and Mr. Calhoun became reconciled to Mr. Van Buren, even so much so, that he dined with him, and it was publicly announced through the Richmond Enquirer. We afterwards went into caucus with them on all important questions; and in the great contest of 1840, Gov. Thomas of Maryland and myself, wrote the address and resolutions of the Democratic party, upon which the canvass was conducted, or rather in caucus the report was made by Mr. Grundy, and on the motion of Mr. Polk it was referred back to a sub-committee of Gov. Thomas and myself, and we remodeled it. South Carolina went heartily into the contest, and the nomination of Van Buren was a mere nominal matter, as there was no division. We were beaten, because the resolutions and report had too much strict principle for the times, and our opponents under Harrison carried it without principles, or rather fighting for a National Bank in some sections and against it in others; and so of all the other great issues. At the extra session of 1842 they endeavored to carry every thing in the shape of a National Bank in some form, but were defeated in all. They succeeded in the Tariff of 1842. The compromise of 1833 made a biennial production of ten per cent, to run for ten years, and at the end of that time to be reduced to the wants of an economical Government. They got the first years of the protection afforded, and before its latter years fulfilled its final operation, so as to give us the benefit, it, in shameless disregard of all faith, was repealed by the Tariff of 1842, introduced by the same man who had introduced the compromise of 1833. This was carried against the opposition of the Democratic party, except two distinguished Senators, Mr. Wright of New York, and Mr. Buchanan, of Pennsylvania.

It was these great questions that brought South Carolina into full communion with the Democratic party of the Union, so that in 1843 we called a Convention of Delegates exactly similar to the assembly here now. Mr. Calhoun had made a great impression, and was freely spoken of for President in all parts of the Union. South Carolina took an active part in national politics. The Convention of this State met and nominated him subject to the nomination at the Baltimore Convention. The Convention also made an argument as to the plan of electing and organizing the General Convention. The prominent nomination of Mr. Calhoun by this State immediately drew the fire of the friends of all the candidates of the old Jackson Democratic party. These were Mr. Van Buren, Mr.