

# THE STRUGGLE OF '76.

Address Delivered at Red Shirt Reunion at Anderson, August 25th, by Senator B. R. Tillman.

Ladies and Fellow Citizens:

It is needless for me to say that it affords me great pleasure to meet the good people of Anderson County face to face once more. Twelve months ago if anyone had asked me if I ever expected again to make speeches in South Carolina I would have answered, "No." My condition was such at that time that I had little hope of ever being able to undergo the mental labor and strain of public speaking or even attempting it in the senate. But the good God seems to have some more work for me to do, and my health has so far improved that I have been able to sit in the senate nine hours a day for two months and watch Aldrich run things, and becoming tired of seeing him turn the crank to run the machine while I was only a cog in the wheel I secured a pair for my vote and have been out in Ohio for a month preaching to those people the gospel of white supremacy according to Tillman.

I received invitations to address meetings in six or eight other counties besides this and arranged a schedule which gave me four speeches last week and two this. My old enemies have been raising Cain because I am able to come to you and you want to hear me. Certain editors resent these invitations being sent and are also disgruntled because I have accepted them. One would suppose that after nineteen years of honorable and acceptable service to South Carolina these men would have the decency to let me alone and stop, but this gang of whippersnappers continues to bark at my heels.

## Looking Backward.

I want to say, my friends, that since I received the invitation to attend this meeting my memory has been very busy and my brain has been acting like fire that has burned down. When you stir the embers they suddenly flare up into a blaze. If I were to tell you all the things that have come to mind about the period which we are here assembled to celebrate I have no doubt I could interest you until sundown. But I am somewhat fatigued and you are hungry, so I will only discuss the aspect of things at this time in connection with some of the most important events with which I was associated in 1876. Then, too, I have to go over to the "dark corner" of Greenville this afternoon. I am to speak tomorrow at Lickville. Of course I know that the "dark corner" of Greenville County is up near the mountains where they have the reputation of raising the devil and distilling corn liquor, while I shall speak in the lower part of the county which is benighted according to my enemies because they do not raise anything there but Tillmanites. It is a very prosperous and progressive community, all the same.

I consider this one of the most important meetings which has ever assembled in South Carolina, for the reason that we are today confronted by a condition which may become very dangerous. We are approaching a period of history when another crisis will come in our affairs. It seems that Divine Providence always takes care of South Carolina when conditions require it. For instance in the dark day of 1780 just before the surrender of Charleston with the only patriot army then in the state, and before the British had completed their lines around the city, Francis Marion, then a major in Moultrie's regiment, was invited to an entertainment at the quarters of a brother officer. On reaching the scene he found that drinking and gambling were the main objects of those in attendance. When he seized his hat and sought to retire some gentlemen got between him and the stairway and insisted that he should not leave them. Being highly religious in his habits of life and thought, after insisting that he must go and the exit being blocked he walked to the window which was on the second floor and sprang out on the ground. The distance was so great that it caused a very serious sprain to one of his ankles; and when General Lee, knowing the scarcity of provisions, ordered that all non-combatants and men unfitted for active duty should leave the city Marion crossed the Cooper river along with others and made his way to his home in the direction of the Santee river. After the fall of the city, which was surrendered on account of the lack of provisions, there was no organized body of patriots left in the state and Camden and Ninety-Six were soon occupied by the enemy. Marion called a meeting of the principal men of the eastern section, among them Colonel Peter Horry and Major Lacy, and after long discussion of the apparent hopelessness of the cause, he with a small number of patriots joined each other in pledging their lives to a continuation of the struggle as long as there was a British soldier left in the state. If he had not sprained his ankle he would have surrendered with Moultrie and the others, and who can tell what would have been the result upon the fortunes of the war? Moultrie's parole kept him inactive the remainder of the war. Marion's band of liberty and together with other similar troops under Sumter and Pickens led to Kings Mountain and Cowpens and made Yorktown possible.

## Commercial Democracy.

Now we all know that President Taft is coming to South Carolina and other southern states to see what he can do toward breaking up the solid south. I know the president's purpose is not bad and I give him credit for wanting to do what he thinks is right, but he in a measure seems to have placed himself under the influence of some of the shrewdest and most unscrupulous politicians in this country, whose purpose it is to mobilize the negroes and bring them back into our politics. It is a most fortunate circumstance that the younger generation of Carolinians who know nothing except from hearsay about the horrors and dangers through which we passed during reconstruction should have their attention called to it at this particular time. Under the lead of those editors who were many of them in knee-breches when we were it the throes of the

Reconstruction era, the rising generation has been taught that we have no race problem and that there is no possible danger from the negroes now; and many young men and some old ones need to be told of the tyrannies, oppressions and robberies to which the white people of the state had to submit because of the bad government put in power by northern bayonets using ignorant negro votes. It is, therefore, a good thing to have some of the actors in those scenes appear here and remind you, as has been done by Judge Aldrich and Governor Sheppard, of the suffering and danger through which we passed in that dark and gloomy period of the state's history.

I make the assertion from my own personal knowledge that if it had not been for the death of William McKinley, eight years ago, the efforts of John L. McLaurin to organize a "commercial democratic party" would have succeeded to a dangerous degree. You would have seen a large number of the white people of South Carolina fall in behind him and go off after that Trojan Horse. I know many good men who had their grips packed to take up the line of march and the scheme only fell through because of the death of President McKinley followed by the invitation of Theodore Roosevelt to Booker Washington to dine with him. Many of those men who are in control of our capitalistic enterprises, cotton mills, banks, etc., were prepared to fall in behind McLaurin, not as republicans, but as "Commercial Democrats." But what difference does it make about a name if the movement divides the whites?

Our only salvation in South Carolina has been the democratic primary which permits absolute liberty of action and the rule of the majority in our politics, and any movement which will tempt one faction of white men to use the negroes against another faction will bring about the result so much desired by Mr. Taft. He wants "independence of action" by two political parties in the south and a commercial democratic party or a Taft democratic party will answer his purpose equally well.

I want to say to you that President Taft has not been as generous as even McKinley was in dealing with the south in the matter of census supervisorships. He made a speech in Atlanta last year in which he said he would not impose federal office holders on our people who were obnoxious to them. According to the newspapers these important places in the census are to be divided in the south between the democrats and republicans, and the statement has been made that the South Carolina democrats will have only three places while republicans will fill the other four. McKinley gave all of these positions in the southern states to democrats exclusively. Mr. Taft is on the lookout for weak-kneed democrats who want a job so bad that they are willing to announce themselves as republicans. Some people in South Carolina whose names you would be surprised to know, have written in the last five months asking me to indorse them to President Taft. About the first thing after his inauguration I wrote President Taft to get his intention as to how he intended to fill places in the south. He replied that he wanted to appoint republicans for all positions where it was possible to find them. When I wrote my constituents this they replied that they were Taft republicans. In what does a Taft republican differ from an Aldrich republican? The News and Courier has been advocating the organization of a Taft democratic party. It may be that Deacon Hemphill is "playing" possum, but when I remember that the News and Courier under Dawson was the leading exponent of the proposed compromise with Chamberlain in 1876 which was defeated in the State Convention by the narrow margin of seventeen majority, and that that same paper did not support the state democratic ticket in 1890 and has never given Mr. Bryan anything but Joab stabs, I cannot help but be on the lookout for teachery in that quarter. In 1876 nothing but the war cry of a straight out white man's fight raised by Butler, Gary and George Tillman in the State Convention saved the day.

## Beware of Taft.

I do not like to inject anything personal here and I would not attack the motive of any man or newspaper if there were not good grounds for it. When Mr. Taft comes to South Carolina to spread molasses and give hungry office-seekers an excuse for deserting the democratic party, he will doubtless tell us why it is good that the solid south should be broken up, and will depict the glories of our entry into the national field as a factor in influencing the action of the United States government. But if the solid south is a bad thing why is not the solid north where the power lies a worse thing? We have only three democratic senators from the north and the republican machine has sixty-one to our thirty-one senators, twenty-eight of them southerners. This condition has brought about the exceedingly dangerous and degrading one-man power exemplified in the senate in the person of Aldrich, and in the house in the person of Cannon. These influences were so potent, last spring that twenty-three democrats, so-called, were found willing to cooperate with the Cannon organization in the house to defeat the efforts of the independent republicans to join with Champ Clark and his democrats to overthrow the Reed rules.

Mr. Taft is doubtless sincere in believing that it is best for the south to have a respectable white republican party, but the possibility of the revival of the negro as a factor in our politics cannot but give uneasiness to any man in the lower counties who remembers the days of 1876. While we are listening to the president's sweet words and congratulating ourselves on his friendliness and apparent purpose to be just, let us not forget to watch him and remember our trials and dangers thirty-three years ago.

Suppose he should secure the support of twenty-five thousand or even ten thousand good respectable white men for a nucleus of his new organization. Do you not know that under the constitution of 1895 it is only necessary to be able to read and write or pay taxes on \$300 worth of property to be able to vote, and it is altogether probable that at this time there are thirty or forty thousand negroes in this state who are eligible to register? It is well known to anyone who has taken the trouble to

read that there are more negro children attending the public schools of South Carolina than whites now and this has been so any time in these thirty-three years, for the simple reason that there are more of them. The last census gives our white population as 540,781 while the negroes have 781,788, a clear majority of blacks over whites of 241,007. The negro boys have been going to school ever since 1895, or just fourteen years. The negroes who registered then numbered 1,400. If they are not ready now, it will not be long before they will be ready to register. If you imagine that the negro question is settled as some of the young editors of papers in this state tell us, then you had better ask your friends to go get out a writ of lunacy at once. Nothing but besotted ignorance on the part of these would-be leaders can excuse their belittling the dangers of the race problem. With the exception of the counties in the Piedmont extending eastward to Chesterfield and including Horry, Anderson and Union all the other counties have negro majorities. The general proportion is two to one, but Beaufort's ten to one, and in the counties of Charleston, Georgetown and Berkeley it is from three to seven to one. The idea of a compulsory education law to hurry up the crisis which will come when the negroes who can vote outnumber the whites can but be considered criminal.

These editors say "Tillman is wild" and that he has been doing a great deal of injury to the state and the south and that he does not represent the best thought and feeling of South Carolina. God have mercy! If I do not represent the best sentiment!

## What He Says Up North.

All that I have ever said to northern audiences in the senate or elsewhere is that the creator made the Caucasian of better clay than he made any colored people. I have told them "we shot them, (the negroes) we stuffed ballot boxes, and did all that was necessary to maintain our hold on the government and that with the negro majority in at least two southern states there was not power enough between Cape Cod and California to make us again submit to negro rule, I spoke thus on the floor of the senate. Did I misrepresent southern feeling or sentiment when I uttered those words? I misrepresented the feeling of the News and Courier and State, no doubt, for both of those papers have a negro-loving record.

I have told the northern people that they do not know anything about the negro, that they would not submit to negro rule if they lived among us and that they only proclaimed their belief that the negro is the equal of the white man for political purposes. I have said, "you no not believe he is your equal, you only think he is our equal. If you would not allow them to govern you, you will never have the pleasure of seeing them govern us any more."

It is one of the things in my life of which I am proudest that when I went to Washington as your representative and found that the democrats were not saying anything about the republicans and their pretended love for the negro, and those republicans were running over us rough shod in dishing out federal appointments to negroes in the south, that single handed and alone, I began to discuss the question without fear or favor. Then after I had stayed there several years I made a speech on the race problem which occupied two days. I discussed it in all of its phases from the standpoint of ethnology, history, geography, sociology and presented its industrial and political phases. I rubbed it in and not a republican senator ever dared or thought it worth while to attempt a word in reply. This was followed by two subsequent speeches. One of these was in reply to Spooner of Wisconsin who had taken me to task on account of my advocacy of lynch law. If my answer did not satisfy him, he at least did not attempt to reply. Any person who has not seen a copy of this speech can get it by sending me his name and address on a postal.

## The Crum Affair.

When Dr. Crum's name was sent to the senate for the position of collector of the port at Charleston seven years ago I held him up for three years and would not allow him to be confirmed until finally I agreed with Senator Spooner to get a report from the judiciary committee on the matter of a "constructive recess." When it came it was the unanimous opinion of the judiciary committee, republicans and democrats alike, that there was no such thing contemplated by our constitution and that Roosevelt had usurped authority in appointing Crum as he did between 12 o'clock and 12 o'clock of the same day. That was a victory.

Last December Crum's term expired. Roosevelt sent his name in again. That republican senate had come to hate Roosevelt as much or more than I did. I went around and notified many of the democrats that I proposed to fight Crum's nomination and it was hung up in the committee until in February when President Taft telegraphed Senators Frye and Aldrich that he wanted Crum out of the way. I received notice from Mr. Frye that the nomination would be pressed. The rule in the senate is that when there is business before the senate somebody must talk or we must vote. I could only get one democrat, Mr. McLaurin, of Mississippi, to agree to help me filibuster. They said I would almost surely fail and I was unwise to fight under such desperate conditions. The matter of his confirmation came up and under the rules it went over until the next day. Next morning we went into executive session upon convening. It was universally felt among my friends in the senate both republicans and democrats that it was dangerous for me to undertake to make a speech, dreading lest the strain in the then condition of my health might produce either a stroke of apoplexy or paralysis. But I thought I could not die in a better cause; and I would infinitely prefer to fall dead upon the floor of the senate discharging my duty than to linger and suffer as I have known people to do. So the debate was opened by my reading the protests of all the commercial bodies of Charleston, and then presenting the constitutional relation between senators and the president in making appointments. I was interrupted by my friends among the republican senators who sought

to enter the debate to give me relief. Senator McLaurin and one or two other democrats came into the discussion. So that the first day after a five hours session we had hardly opened up the question.

The next day Senator Frye promptly called it up again. I was feeling splendidly and I spoke about three hours. I related to a full senate the whole story of my relations with Roosevelt, the McLaurin incident, the withdrawal of the invitation to dinner, and the president's cowardly treachery to Senator Bailey and myself in the matter of the rate bill.

The debate was continued between the republicans and democrats, all senators realizing by this time that the great race problem was a problem indeed and one worthy of most serious consideration by all. Many democrats by this time realizing the vital nature of the question were anxious to participate. So there was no lack of speaking, and after a six hours session we were no nearer a vote than when we began. A notable speech was made by O. M. Money which greatly impressed the Republicans.

The third day I spoke only two and one half hours. Taking Taft's speech in Atlanta for a text, and reading it paragraph by paragraph, I commented on it at length. My allies on both sides of the chamber by this time, the republicans asking questions and one or another democrat answering, were all working harmoniously towards a very protracted debate. At the end of the third day's session it became evident to Senator Frye that "settling the Crum case" was not a very easy job.

There is no record of any of the speeches made in this debate because stenographers are not admitted in executive session, so much valuable information on this all-important question is lost.

On the fourth day Senator Frye gave up the fight, being pressed by the republican leaders to get out of the way of big appropriation bills. After some inquiry as to the intention of men to make speeches and learning that six or seven democrats were anxious to be heard he withdrew Crum's name and the struggle over the last negro appointee of Roosevelt was over.

Mr. Taft has promised us that we will have no such appointments during his administration. One of my strongest points and one which I emphasized with the greatest vigor was the inquiry as to why South Carolina should be subjected to the mortification of having the last dose of negro office-holding.

Crum's defeat was accomplished by a persistent determination to debate the whole race problem, the exclusion of the Chinese, the threatening attitude of the Californians against the Japanese and Hindoos, the canting hypocrisy of the government's attitude towards the Filipinos, who are Malays, and the cruelty and wrongs which have marked the white man's treatment of the Indians. When the republican attitude towards all these was brought out and the inconsistency and hypocrisy of the whole black republican program was discussed at length by more than one speaker, it was easy to see that the republican senators were weakened and more than willing to stop the debate.

## Northern Sentiment Changing.

My lectures in the north delivered during the last seven or eight years to hundreds of thousands of their most intelligent people have necessarily aided greatly in the change of feeling and sentiment which is apparent there. I have been asked frequently why more southerners do not come among them and tell them about this great question and its dangerous aspects. There are thousands of communities up there in which there is not a single negro and they are wholly ignorant and indifferent on the subject, but when the facts are presented they grow intensely interested. Scores of times I have had men who wear the G. A. R. button crowd around me after a speech and express their approval of my utterances.

The issue is one which will not go down and which the south cannot afford to let rest and as long as I live and my health holds out I expect to continue to agitate it and press for its solution along the only possible line by the repeal of the 15th amendment thus permitting each state to regulate its suffrage according to its conditions. We will never have any guarantee of continued good government in South Carolina until we can limit the suffrage to white men just as has been done in the South African confederation. Sir Arthur Balfour's recent declaration that the admission of inferior colored races to participation in government would destroy civilization itself is as true of the South as it is of South Africa.

The negro-loving papers of the South, the News and Courier, The State, The Charlotte Observer, The Savannah News, and others, may protest and abuse me as much as they like, but I expect to continue to discuss the race problem as long as my health and strength permits.

## The Meeting Today.

We have met here today to celebrate the victory of 1876, the triumph of the whites over the blacks, of civilization and progress over barbarism and the forces which were undermining the very foundations of our commonwealth.

As is natural the Piedmont section of the state having a white majority suffered least during that terrible period and has profited most by the restoration of good government. When I first came to Anderson in 1886 it was a straggling village with muddy streets which gave no sign of the progressive and beautiful city which now greets my eyes. This is the condition throughout the entire upper section of the state. Wherever you find whites in large numbers industry and thrift are in evidence on every hand. As we move towards the coast the lack of these grows more and more apparent, due entirely to the difference in the population. The more negroes the least progress.

Anderson never had negro domination in its true sense. You old men know little or nothing about the horrors to which the middle and lower counties were subjected. You always had a white majority and have it still and you ought to thank God that this is so and strain every nerve to increase the number of good white people who shall make South Carolina their home and develop her resources.

To be continued.