

EDGEFIELD ADVERTISER.

A Democratic Journal, devoted to Southern Rights, News, Politics, General Intelligence, Literature, Morality, Temperance, Agriculture, &c.

"We will cling to the Pillars of the Temple of our Liberties, and if it must fall, we will perish amidst the Ruins."

EDGEFIELD, S. C., JULY 10, 1851.

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W. F. DURISOE, Proprietor.

The Edgefield Advertiser

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W. F. DURISOE, Proprietor.
ARTHUR SIMKINS, Editor.

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Substance of the Remarks of

HON. WILLIAM F. COLCOCK,

Delivered before the Convention of Southern Rights Associations, assembled in the Military Hall, Charleston, S. C., May 7, 1851.
MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:

If a stranger should enter this Hall, and see this unusually large assemblage of citizens from all parts of the State, composed as it is, in a great degree, of her wealth, intelligence, and influence, he would at once come to the conclusion that some subject far beyond the circle of ordinary topics had brought them together.

A short time since a member of one of your local Associations rises in his place, and offers a resolution proposing that a general Convention of all the Associations in the State should be held in this city for the purpose of consultation and co-operation.

In answer to this call, thus unobtrusively made, and without concert of excitement of any kind, I find you leaving your homes at this busy season of the year, and at much expense and inconvenience, assembled here to-day to the number of near five hundred delegates.

This must afford to every one of the most convincing proof of the earnestness and sincerity of your purposes, and of the deep and absorbing interest of the subject which brings you together.

I am aware that some of our friends, whose judgment I highly respect, are of opinion that the action of this body should be confined strictly and solely to the objects and purposes prescribed in the Constitutions of our Associations, and that we should carefully abstain from the expression of any opinions which might have a tendency to forestall the action of the Constitutional Convention which has been recently elected, and into whose hands the safety of the State has been committed. Whilst I am free to confess that these views may have been urged in the first instance with much propriety against the call of this Convention, still I must be permitted to say that it is expecting too much of a popular assembly like this, under the circumstances which now surround us, to tread this narrow path without touching those great questions which lie on either side of it, and which now fill the hearts and minds of our whole people.

For one, therefore, I do not regret that the questions which are presented by the Report and Resolutions now before us, have been presented for our consideration.

I regard this as a family council, as a meeting of friends bound together by the indissoluble ties of a common destiny, and we should conduct our deliberations here, and our discussions hereafter, with that frankness, candor, and good temper, which are due alike to our own characters, and to the interest of our State, for whose welfare I know we all feel an equal and an ardent devotion.

In entering on the discussion of the questions before us, the first thing that strikes the mind is the almost entire unanimity of opinion which pervades this body, and indeed the whole State, upon the subject of a dissolution of our present form of Government. I feel myself justified in saying that it is the universal, deliberate, and well considered judgment of the people of South Carolina, that the Government under which we are living, as now administered, is destructive of their rights, property and safety; and that having no hope of reform, they are under the solemn obligations of duty to themselves and to their children, to seek for security and protection under some other form of Government. Am I wrong in this assertion, or do I state the proposition in terms that are too strong? If I am in error, then it would be idle for me to say another word, as this is the postulate of all the argument I expect to offer, and if it be not true I admit in advance that my conclusions will be false.

If the usurpations of this Government; if its entire departure from its original purpose and design; if its hostility to our institutions; if its unjust and unequal administration; in short, if its utter unworthiness of our confidence and support, are still open questions, or questions for reconsideration, then I have nothing to say which is worth a moment's attention.

If the people of South Carolina have not made up their minds on these questions, or if they desire to reverse their judgment, then let them exercise the privilege which unquestionably belongs to them as freemen: judge now, or reverse their judgment.

It may be unpleasant, nay, it may be even humiliating, to retract opinions long and publicly avowed; but it is better, far better, to do so, than knowingly to persist in error, and to carry out doubtful opinions into decisive action. But I will not presume for a moment that any such state of feeling exists here, or elsewhere; that there is any fluctuation of opinion among our people on the great questions connected with the continuance of this Government. I repeat, then, that having no hope of reform, we are all the avowed, deliberate, and well considered judgment of the people of South Carolina, that the Government under which we are living, as now administered, is destructive of their rights, property and safety; and that having no hope of reform, they are under the solemn obligations of duty to themselves and to their children, to seek for security and protection under some other form of Government. Am I wrong in this assertion, or do I state the proposition in terms that are too strong? If I am in error, then it would be idle for me to say another word, as this is the postulate of all the argument I expect to offer, and if it be not true I admit in advance that my conclusions will be false.

erate and sincere advocates of Disunion.—For this state of public sentiment I take my full share of responsibility, and so must all your public men; your Senators, your Representatives, your members of the Legislature, your public functionaries, you yourselves, the people all, are all responsible.

The sentiment is unanimous that South Carolina must never submit to the past aggressions of the General Government. Now, whatever significance may be attached to the terms "submission" and "resistance" elsewhere, I presume they are well defined in South Carolina. By "resistance" we do not mean mere protest and remonstrance, but something actual, practical, organized, forcible, if force be made necessary for defence. Such has always been the construction placed by this State on the celebrated resolutions of Kentucky and Virginia. When, therefore, it is said that S. Carolina must never submit, I understand all those who hold this language, to mean that the State shall, within whatever reasonable mode of resistance, as will justify the use of all her rights and resources, to relieve herself from the injuries which have hitherto been inflicted upon her.

Such is the seed we have sown. Are we prepared to eat the fruit which it offers to our lips?

Mr. President, this is not the commencement of a new controversy. We are in the midst of an old and long-pending contest, and our ground has already been taken. We must advance. We are advancing. We cannot close our eyes to the past. What has been done cannot be undone. The State, under the guidance and direction of her constituted authorities, has already taken the initiative, and entered on important measures. A Convention of the people has been ordered and elected, and large supplies have been demanded and are in the course of expenditure.

Although I have heard objections made to the course of our Legislature on these subjects, yet I have never been repudiated by the people. Yet that delicate power which every faithful representative exercises with a sparing hand—the taxing power—was freely exercised, and as freely responded to by an earnest and intelligent people, who well understood for what purposes their money was demanded. It is now therefore too late, I repeat, to retrace the past. What has been done has deliberately been done—and deliberately confirmed. The people have determined to put the State upon her sovereignty in Convention assembled, and to furnish her with the means of maintaining and defending her national judgment. Into the hands of that august tribunal the honor, the liberty, and the safety of the State have been committed, and by its decision all must be prepared to abide.

Such, then, are the undisputed sentiments and purposes of the people of South Carolina, and such the present attitude of the State before the world.

Thus far have we advanced with almost perfect unanimity. Thus far have events been allowed to progress without scarcely any organized opposition.

For the present position of the State then we are all responsible. No appeal has been taken, and all are reconciled by the past. From this high position therefore, and from no other, we must now survey the whole field before us, and decide what the future demands of us which shall be in harmony and consistency with the present and the past.

Shall the next act in the drama sustain the unity of the preceding ones?

In this deeply interesting conjuncture of our public affairs we find ourselves assembled this day, and for the first time our counsels are divided—divided too on the gravest issue which can be presented for our consideration. To me this division is a source of profound regret. At the very threshold, I find myself called upon to differ from those with whom I have been associated all my life, and whose judgment and opinions I highly respect.

For one, among these stands, your senior Senator (Judge Butler)—whose stern devotion to the interest and honor of South Carolina, I have had recent occasion to witness and admire. Yes, Mr. President, it has been my lot, day after day, to stand upon the floor of the Senate Chamber during that memorable contest, whose history is familiar to you all, and to observe the conduct of that Senator, when after the death of your great Statesman, he had single-handed and alone to contend, in your name, for the cause of "truth, justice, and the Constitution." Few, Sir, at a distance from the scene can fully understand the heavy responsibilities of a situation like this to one of his proud spirit and pure integrity. Well and nobly did he discharge his high trust, and richly has he merited your confidence and affection. But although it is painful to differ from one I so much honor and esteem, I must imitate his example, and follow my own convictions of duty. I am consoled too by the reflection, that though we diverge at this point, we will soon come together again, and that when the State decides between us, we will cordially unite in carrying out her decision.

Our discussions thus far have brought us to the consideration of two leading measures, both professing to have the same end in view. Before entering on the consideration of these measures, allow me to say that I understand it to be the general judgment of this assembly that the Legislature, at its next regular session, should appoint a time for the meeting of the constitutional Convention which was elected in February last under its direction. No one that I am aware of proposes that the Legislature should decline this office. As the term of service of the present Legislature will expire on the second Monday in October, 1852, I presume, as a matter of course, that the meeting of the Convention will be fixed at some period anterior to that day. Assuming then that the Convention will be in session sometime between the 1st January and the 1st October, 1852, the measures for its consideration may be stated thus:

First. Shall South Carolina abandon the preparation for resistance, which she has thus far made separately and on her own responsibility without promise of co-operation from any State, and declining to carry on any further measures of that sort, announce to the other Southern States her determination not to secede alone, but to wait until a given number of such States shall through their

governments pledge the public faith, either to secede in the first instance, or to co-operate with South Carolina if she will take the initiative.

Second. Having failed up to this time to obtain any pledge of co-operation from the government of any other State, shall South Carolina secede alone?

The first measure, being that of my opponents, I have carefully endeavored to state with accuracy and precision: justice and fair dealing demand this in every controversy. In one like the present, I should despise myself were I capable of doing otherwise.

It may be urged that I have put the first branch of the question in too strong terms—"Shall South Carolina abandon her preparations, &c." for it may be said, she might continue her preparations, even though she determines to wait for co-operation. To this I reply that it is vain—utterly vain—to expect the people to submit to the present extraordinary rate of taxation, if their money is not wanted for immediate purposes. If therefore, we decide to wait we must certainly "abandon our present preparations."

I will now proceed to examine this proposition with attention due to its importance, and the respect due to those who advocate it. I admit, without hesitation, that conjoint action on the part of two or more States, if it could be procured, is preferable to separate action on the part of any one State.

But I distinctly declare it as my deliberate judgment, that co-operation cannot be obtained in the manner proposed, in our day and generation. Is it intended to adjourn the issue to a distant future—to bequeath it to our children? Surely not. Then we are to do the work ourselves, and it is with this understanding that I shall proceed to give my reasons for the opinion I now so confidently express on the subject of co-operation.

It is admitted on all sides, that at present there is no hope of co-operation by any State, on account of the past aggressions of the Government with the exception of Mississippi; and as her Convention is to meet in November next, her position will be defined previously to the meeting of our Convention.

The governments of all the other States have thus far, under the issues yet made, declined to adopt any measures of resistance. To the future then we must look for events to bring about co-operation. The compromise has failed to do so. If we wait then for some open, flagrant, palpable violation of the rights of the slave States; something, I presume, of course, worse than has already been done, which will unite these States in a determination to withdraw from the Union, and establish a Southern Confederacy.

I cannot concur in this view. To my mind, all the probabilities are against us. The aggressions, you observe, are to come from Congress, from the Government. They must be palpable, flagrant, invasions of your rights committed under the forms of law. Is it meant that they must be clearly unconstitutional, and such as the Supreme Courts will not uphold? But I will not hold our noses to this admission. Let us say, in general terms, that the measures will be of such a character, as according to all reasonable presumptions, will unite the South in withdrawing from the Union.

Let us now enquire what are the probabilities that such measures will be adopted by Congress in our day.

On looking over the whole field of controversy in which we are at present engaged I can see no measures of the character excepted to which Congress could adopt except two: the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and the repeal of the fugitive slave law. These are the only two measures which stand out prominently in the foreground. I can think of no others. No slave State is applying for admission, no territory remains for the application of the Wilcox Provision. No one, I presume, would pretend to say that any legislation on the old issues of the Tariff, a Bank, or Internal Improvements, would unite the South in any measures of resistance to this Government. The aggressions referred to by our friends, I presume, are to be direct anti-slavery measures.

Let us see, then, if either of the measures I have named are likely to be adopted by Congress.

First, as to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. In my opinion this measure will not be adopted, or if it is, it will be in such a form as will fail to produce united resistance on the part of the South. These are my reasons for this opinion. Whilst I believe that the Anti-slavery or Abolition party is increasing both in Congress and out of it, yet I do not believe that they will have strength enough to accomplish this measure at this time.

Politicians manage these things in Congress. They have the power to do so at present, and understand their business thoroughly. They will permit nothing to be done at this time which will unite the South, either by direct or indirect means. They will talk, and rant, and write, but when it comes to voting, the inventions are numerous for "arresting that evil." The authors of the Compromise are still upon the stage. That measure is to be made a test question. All others are to yield to it for the present. The Presidential question is near at hand, and all that is wanted now, is to keep the South quiet. A peace must be patched up with her. She must be let alone for a while, until her back becomes fitted to the burthen which has just been placed upon it. She must be flattered and courted and caajoed. Liberal offers will be made to induce her to join in the canvass. High places will be promised her; in short, she is wanted and must be won. This is

the course things will take, and only let South Carolina give up her purpose of secession—let her say that she will not leave the Union until she obtains co-operation through future aggression, and resistance in any form is at an end. But I have intimated that this measure might be adopted in a form which will fail to produce the result which my friends predict. Let me explain what I mean.

If slavery is abolished in the District of Columbia at the present day, it will be done with the consent of the slaveholders there. That species of property is becoming daily more insecure, and of course less valuable. The facilities for abduction, the spread of Abolition doctrines, and the presence of some 8 or 9000 free negroes, against 3 or 4000 slaves, out of a total population of 50,000, all combine to render slave property there of very little value.

When the alternative is presented to the people of the district of selling their slaves altogether, or selling out even at a reduced price, it is plain which course they will adopt. The consent of the slaveholder to sell will thus be easily obtained, and then the right of Congress to purchase will be the only remaining difficulty to be overcome. Now, it must be remembered that the general power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia is still an open question. Mr. Clay, and his school of politicians, if I understand them, admit the power, but say that its exercise would be a breach of faith to Virginia and Maryland whilst they remained slaveholding States; and now, since the retrocession of Alexandria to Virginia this objection would be narrowed down. I presume, to a breach of faith to Maryland alone. If slavery, therefore, should be abolished in the District of Columbia with the consent of the slaveholders the question then comes up: Will the South unite in dissolving the Union because Congress has done what, in the judgment of the greatest party leader of the day, and his numerous followers, is only a breach of faith to Maryland? Will Maryland herself, with 73,000 free negroes to 89,000 slaves within her borders (for such is the astounding fact disclosed by the last census) be the first to raise the banner of Disunion. Will Georgia do so? Before her Convention met I would have answered this question without an instant's hesitation in the affirmative. But the action of that Convention has afforded ground for very grave and painful doubts on this question.

Previously to the meeting of that body it had become a matter of invariable mode of expression on this subject by all the Southern States to say if Congress should abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, then &c. This was the stereotyped formula of words—plain, distinct and unequivocal, which had entered into the vocabulary of the whole South in laying down their platform of resistance. But the Georgia Convention declared, and upon consideration, abandoned the use of these plain terms, which could give rise to no dispute as to their true intent and meaning, and adopted this mode of expression: "That the State of Georgia in the judgment of this Convention will and ought to resist even (as a last resort) to a disruption of every tie which binds her to the Union. Any action of Congress upon the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia, or in places subject to the jurisdiction of Congress, incompatible with the safety, the domestic tranquility, the rights, and the honor of the slaveholding States &c."

Now, I ask, what does this change of phraseology mean? It must mean something, or why adopt it in preference to the other, which had become as familiar as household words to the whole South. Was it intended to leave a door open for a new issue on this question? "To abolish slavery" is a simple idea easily understood. "Any action of Congress on that subject incompatible with the safety, the domestic tranquility, the rights, and the honor of the slaveholding States" is a very complex proposition, and gives rise at once to doubt and construction. This action on the part of Georgia justifies, I repeat, very grave doubts as to the course she would pursue if slavery should be abolished in the District of Columbia with the consent of the slaveholders, or in any other way which it might be argued was not "incompatible with the rights, honor, safety and tranquility of the States &c."

Let it never be forgotten that Virginia, in 1847 and '48, and the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia, a measure which she would resist at "every hazard and to the last extremity." But, in 1849, she abandoned this ground, and fell back upon the abolition of the slave trade between the States as her "casus belli." When asking how this change of position was justified, the only reply I have received was this: "We found we had taken too high ground and we abandoned it and took another position." So I fear it will be found that in ten years from this time the emancipation by Congress of some two or three hundred slaves in the District of Columbia, with the consent of their owners, involving, as many think, no breach of the constitution, but only a breach of faith to a single State, which State may be the first to secede, it is too high ground to justify the secession of any member of this Confederacy.

I repeat, therefore, my deliberate opinions that slavery will not be abolished in the District of Columbia in our day and generation, or, if it is abolished, it will be done in some way which will prevent united resistance on the part of the South.

The next measure to which I have referred, is the repeal of the fugitive slave act. It is a matter of dispute as to how many are close observers of our political affairs can for a moment suppose that this law will be repealed by the next Congress, or for many years to come. This is the only measure of the Compromise whose repeal is threatened. Some of those measures are, in fact, irrevocable by Congress; they need no further help from their friends, but can now take care of themselves. But the issue of repeal is distinctly made the fugitive slave law, and though the efforts of the Abolitionists may be bold, open, and vigorous, they cannot carry a majority in both Houses of Congress and the President. The Administration and all the advocates of the Compromise have determined to keep this law upon the Statute Book. That is the issue. Its execution is another thing. We all know it is practical-

ly repealed already. All laws may sometimes require extraordinary means to enforce them, but a law which always requires such means for its enforcement is not worth the parchment it is written on. This is a truth which, sooner or later will force itself upon the popular mind, and hence the deep anxiety and embarrassment of the Administration and the advocates of the Compromise in relation to this law. They know in their hearts and consciences, that this law is not what every law ought to be, the instruments of cheap and speedy justice; and hence they seek to cover up this glaring fact, and to create a diversion upon the issue of its more formal repeal by Congress; and upon this issue, I tell you, they will succeed, let Giddings rave, or Seward plot, or Sumner talk heroics as he may.

Although I have a most perfect conviction that this law will not be repealed, I have at the same time a very strong conviction that it may be modified to suit Northern prejudices. I do not mean to say that this is certain. I desire to state my positions, with exactness and without the least exaggeration.

The advocates of the Compromise declared from the day of its adoption that they would oppose the "repeal" or "any essential modification" of the Fugitive Slave Law. Mark you, any essential modification? Now there are several features of that law which its supporters are ready to modify, for the purpose of increasing their strength at the North; if they could venture to do so, and they would say they were not essential modifications. For instance, they would be willing to modify that provision which allows the record made up at home of the facts of escape and that the fugitive was the slave of the claimant, to be used in evidence without further proof, except as to identity, &c. This would be a stop to Cereberus. As to the trial by jury, I presume Mr. Webster himself would be willing to assent that provision on the law, for it was a provision in the bill which he himself introduced before leaving the Senate.

Repeal, therefore, I regard as out of the question. Modification, or amendment, may be attempted, but very cautiously.

The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, then, are the only overt acts of aggression which, in my judgment, can be committed by Congress against the South at this time. I feel the most abiding confidence that neither will be done in our day. Our adversaries will take care that the measure of aggression shall be just so much as will stop short of uniting the South. Your patience shall be their gauge. The advocates of co-operation then must adjourn the question of Disunion to another day. If the past, or any issue which may be made upon the past, cannot unite the South, then the future of our day will afford no measure for resistance. My solemn belief, therefore, that "co-operation" is submission to the Compromise. Submission to the past with no hope for the future. Now, in using the term "submission," I do not mean to apply it in any offensive sense whatever, to our friends who differ from us on this occasion. Far from it. I know they are men who would spend the idea of voluntary submission, with all the scorn and indignation of unsullied patriotism. I speak to them as I would have them speak to me, with sincerity and respect. I must be allowed, therefore, to say to them, your position drifts you with the inevitable certainty of the Gulf Stream, to submission. You will take your place by the side of those whose course you so much condemn. You will ratify the Compromise. The voice of South Carolina will be hushed. She cannot go back to feed upon the husks of high sounding resolutions, protests and remonstrances. In two years she will sink down into the attitude of utter non-resistance: no human power can avert this result. What in others might be tolerated, in her would be derided. She has gone so far that she must now "be a law unto herself." But it may be said, we will be in no worse condition than our friends who are a minority in the other Southern States. This is a capital error. Our positions are widely different. They are struggling for power—we possess it. They are in a minority and therefore are without responsibility. We are in a majority and have all responsibility resting upon us. The government of their States is in the hands of their adversaries. Our government is in our own hands. There is nothing to restrain us, but the danger of striking; they are powerless. It is vain then to attempt to derive comfort for our voluntary submission from their involuntary acquiescence. We have promised much and much is expected of us.

Such, Mr. President, are the outlines of my views in relation to co-operation. I regret that I have not time to go more into detail. I have endeavored to be candid and explicit, because I am free to confess that I feel bound to consider maturely a measure which has such distinguished supporters before I reject it. I have done so, and I must declare in all sincerity that if South Carolina abandons all purpose of acting alone, and determines patiently and passively to wait, as she must if she waits at all the developments of the future in the expectation of such hostile legislation on the part of the General Government as will unite the South in the overthrow of this Union, she will sacrifice the great cause which all her sons, with but few exceptions, profess to be nearest their hearts, and give a death blow to disunion. Yes, I repeat—let South Carolina lay down her arms. Let her say she will not secede, and a shout of triumph (shall I say of derision?) will go up over all the land, for we have enemies every where, and the advocates of the Compromise will underwrite the Union for the next generation. These may be unpardonable truths, but they must be told.

I come now to the consideration of the second proposition which I have supposed will be submitted to our Convention when it assembles.

Having failed up to this time to obtain any pledge of co-operation from the Government of any other State, shall South Carolina secede alone? I approach the discussion of this question with a profound sense of its magnitude and importance. I never expected to be called upon to give my counsel on any question under a sense of higher responsibility. I have never entertained or expressed but one opinion on the character of this mea-

sure, as my constituents, with whom I have frequently and publicly conferred, can testify. I have told them that secession was a measure which would demand the exercise of all their firmness. The overthrow of any Government, and the establishment of another, is no holiday affair. It is no card-house we desire to construct, which can be reared by the hand and destroyed by the breath of an infant. No! It is a stern work which lies before us, and if we seek for new guards for our future security, we must expect to obtain them at the hazard of many sacrifices.

The questions in regard to secession, which appears to me will demand the careful consideration of the Convention, are

First. Has the State a right to secede?

Second. Is she justified in the exercise of this right at this time?

The first question is one which I presume the Convention will have very little difficulty in deciding, as it may be considered a settled question in the judgment of the Southern States at this time, though I am aware it is seriously denied by some within their limits, and perhaps if not brought to judgment at the present day, will, in a few years become much controverted if not ultimately repudiated. Resolutions affirming this right were laid on the table in one or both branches of the North Carolina Legislature at their last session. I am not fully informed of the circumstances under which this was done, but point to it as a fact which deserves attention.

But, whilst the abstract right of secession is not denied by some, yet they contend that it is a right whose exercise "good faith" must always practically prevent. Now, I admit the obligations of "good faith" in every relation of life, public and private, on States as well as on individuals. But, let us see how "good faith" will always nullify this right and render it of no practical utility. We owe good faith to our co-States and to foreign nations, with whom we have, through our agent, the General Government, established certain relations. Now, as to our co-States, as the very predicate of secession is, that they have violated the league and covenant which bound us together, that they have first broken faith with us, surely our faith is no longer due to them. Good faith requires every party to a compact to submit to many things, to bear and forbear much, but when the very end and purpose of the compact are violated,—when it is used as a "sword to destroy," and not as a "shield to defend,"—then surely, "good faith" should not prevent any party from withdrawing from its associates, on fair and honorable terms. So much for our co-States. But what are our obligations of "good faith" to foreign nations, with whom we have made treaties, and from whose citizens we have made loans, &c. &c. They, it is urged, are no parties to our domestic differences and "good faith" requires that we should either preserve our co-partnership until these engagements are completed with, or provide means for their performance if a dissolution takes place. To this I reply, that if a dissolution occurs peaceably, and an equitable partition of the partnership property is made, the rights of foreign nations will not be permitted to suffer beyond those hazards, which, it is always understood, are undertaken in all international dealings.

If the abstract right to secede, then, be granted, and "good faith" does not justly restrain its exercise, the next question will be, "Is South Carolina justified in seceding at this time?" We all admit that "governments long established, should not be changed for light and transient causes," but the causes which impel us to seek a change of our government, are neither "light" nor "transient"; they are deep seated, wide-spread, permanent and radical. I will not attempt to describe our wrongs before this audience, after the recital of them by our distinguished leader, Judge Cheves. He has painted them to you in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn;" he has told you that we are "living under the government of our bitterest enemies, whose avowed objects are to annihilate us." He has told you of the "danger, the dishonor, the infamy" of the condition of the South. He has told you that history furnishes no example of such disastrous submission as that which the Southern States now exhibit.

He has told you too that "he is convinced of the justice, the constitutional right, and the political expediency, of the withdrawal of the Southern States from that Union by which they are enthralled, and which cannot fail, while it subsists, to bring on them further and future danger, oppression and infamy." Now, if this picture be true, and who can doubt it, what measure of resistance are we not justified in resorting to? What is too violent or too precipitate? As, for the reasons I have given, we cannot obtain co-operation by delay, are we not driven directly, and distinctly, to the alternative of secession or submission? Are we not bound by every obligation of duty to ourselves and to our children to overthrow, in the only way that is left us, the government of our "bitter enemies"—to escape "annihilation"—to flee from "dishonor, oppression and infamy"? But let me draw nearer to the entrenchments of our friends and examine their strongholds. It is urged with great earnestness and with much apparent force, that South Carolina ought not to secede alone, because the other Southern States will not sympathize with her or sustain her in her course. Now, let it be remembered, that this argument comes from those who advocate the policy of delay in the confident expectation that new aggressions, such as the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, will soon unite the whole South in secession. Secession, say they, is soon to become the rallying point of the whole South. Now if this be true, then I do not perceive how any one can suppose for a moment that our sister States, who are thus only waiting with their hands upon their swords, ready to draw them at the first hostile movement of our common enemy, will turn upon us, or from us, because we bring on the issue a little sooner than they expect to do.

But I think the position of things in the other Southern States, has been mistaken by our friends. The politicians of these States are not telling the people, as our friends suppose, "bear your past insults and injuries patiently; we admit they are grievous, but strike not yet; wait a little longer, and renewed assaults will soon be committed against you, and then you may rise up in the strength and majesty of an outraged people, and hurl your oppressors to the earth." On the contrary, they are telling them that the Compromise is a solemn league and covenant—a final, permanent, inviolable settlement of the slavery question, and of all other matters in dispute between the North and the South. That hereafter the South will have all her rights conceded, her feelings respected, and her institutions preserved. This is the delusion which they are practicing on a generous and confiding people. But let a sovereign State withdraw from this Union, let the right of secession, that "right inestimable to us, and formidable to tyrants only," be brought up for solemn and for final judgment, and how soon will all other issues "pale their ineffectual fires."

Mr. President, I sometimes fear that both the right of secession and the importance of the measure when adopted are underrated. To my mind this right is of peculiar and incalculable value to every member of a sectional minority of Confederate States. To us, who are, as our senior Senator says, "proscribed political communities," it is the last anchor of hope—the last shield of our defence. Sectional majorities need no such protection. They can always take care of themselves, and hence they seldom seek or permit amendments to Constitutions, for they can always take more by usurpation than they can obtain by amendment. In my judgment secession will never be resorted to except in defence of the institution of slavery. All other subjects of difference may be adjusted without appealing to this remedy. If this Government, the creature of the States, formed chiefly to take care of the external relations, can deny this right, and by the mere power of its arm hold a sovereign State to this Union, like a victim to the stake, then the sooner we know it the better. It is surely high time, at the end of seventy years, to know the form of Government under which we are living. Let no one suppose that the secession of South Carolina can be looked upon with indifference anywhere. The press will denounce it, the world will stand forth before the great popular heart of the South, will be moved to its inmost recess. Stripped of all the disguises with which false issues may surround it; the naked fact will be presented to the people that South Carolina is making her choice between slavery and the Union. That, nurtured in the doctrines of Virginia, stimulated by the doctrines of Georgia, encouraged by the example of Mississippi, and sustained by the love of Alabama, she has planted herself in the pathway of the Abolitionists, and resolved to defend her institutions "at every hazard and to the last extremity." A spectacle like this, by every law and instinct of our nature, must command the sympathy and respect of every free people. Our sister States may say, if we are rash, that we are precipitate; but if they themselves have fixed a limit to their forbearance, can they say that we are without justification, or that our cause is unworthy of success? A new issue will be presented. It must be met and decided. A right as dear to them as to us is at stake. It will be the first struggle in that conflict which, all admit, must sooner or later take place between abolition and slavery. The manner in which the contest is begun, whether by too hasty a movement on the right, the centre or the left, will soon be forgotten, and all hearts will be turned to the great issues involved. Yes, Sir, be assured that the secession of a single State of this Union will bring up for judgment the mightiest questions of a modern age. Statesmen, Sir, not vernal politicians, not hilding pressmen, not pensioned libellers, but statesmen will find materials for the exercise of their highest intelligence—their profoundest wisdom.

But, if I am still told by our friends that they cannot concur in these views—that they cannot believe in the sympathy of the Southern States, then I submit that my arguments against co-operation before secession are as potent as theirs against co-operation afterwards, and that if neither is to be obtained, and South Carolina cannot maintain her separate existence as they also contend, then submission, hopeless, helpless, abject submission is the doom of the South.

But, again, it is asked why should South Carolina be further in advance than the other States. This is attributable to several causes. It must be remembered that from our earliest history, South Carolina has been one of the strongest pro-slavery States in the Union. The history of the Congress of the Confederation, and of the Convention which formed our present Constitution, affords abundant proof of this fact—she is now therefore where she has always been. And this is one cause of the peculiar hatred all eyes exhibited towards her by the Abolitionists, and why they would rather see slavery crushed through her than any other State.

Again: She has a larger slave population in proportion to her white than any other State. But the chief cause for this state of forwardness on the part of South Carolina is the entire absence of party division within her borders. This gives her an advantage over her sister States, and is not set up as a title to superior merit. Not at all. Every one knows how party divisions and party contests cloud and control all questions. In our sister States the people have been drawn away from the calm and unbiased consideration of great Federal questions, and have been engaged in eager strife for party ascendancy. But with us there has always been a "unity of sentiment," which has enabled us to be constituted as one people. Hence we have been able to look at these great questions through a clearer and more correct medium, and in this way the popular mind has been sooner informed and sooner set in motion. But South Carolina has manifested no disposition to aspire to the leadership of the South. Let the records of her legislation for the past fifteen years be searched, and it will be found that she has invariably preferred to give the lead to others. Good taste, as well as sound policy, required this of her. Her nullification contest placed her sufficiently far in the van to forbid her voluntarily assuming that position again, and accordingly