The Sumter Banner.

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Political.

Remarks of Mr. Butler.

Before the Convention of Southern Rights Association.

Mr. President and Gentlemen: This is an occasion that has associated with it in its probable consequences grave responsibilities—such as have intensely engaged and heavily oppressed my mind.

The highest exertion of human wisdom is to make a good government. To [illegible] with a view of [illegible] their [illegible] sight and deliberate [illegible] impulse of enthusiasm may be well regarded [illegible] motive [illegible] and a wise [illegible] out in such [illegible] it ought [illegible] to assume [illegible] proscription [illegible]

Inde[illegible] of [illegible], should [illegible] and associate [illegible] judgment and experience. The feelings which I see here manifested, do honor to the hearts of those who entertain and express them. They spring from the hearts of intelligent freemen, who, knowing their rights, are willing to make any sacrifice to maintain them. In taking counsel from the highest impulses of their nature, they are impatient at any suggestion that might interfere with their free indulgence. The venerable Cheves—who has been regarded as an adviser of both wisdom and courage—has presented to you a communication well calculated to arrest your attention. It is one that will command, I am sure, throughout the Southern States, a profound respect. Yet I have seen that paper meet with the impatience of the great and almost uncompromising excitement which prevails here: and even with some who have, no doubt, taken their heat from the fires that were kindled by his bold and commanding eloquence. Under such intimations, I might well pause in giving you my counsels.

We are gentlemen, in a crisis that calls upon every one, especially every man who has accepted a seat in this Convention, to do his duty; and to give you the conviction of his deliberate judgment. No man should avoid responsibility, by taking refuge in watchful silence and prudent neutrality.

Many have thought that my official positon would have allowed me to remain away and take advantage of the current. I have been summoned by my fellow-citizens to mingle in the current, and help to guide it, or be overwhelmed by its violence. I embark with those who have a common destiny with me. The fate of the people of South Carolina shall be my fate—let what may come, I shall stand or fall with South Carolina, the fond mother of my birth and my affections. In the advice and counsels that I may give, I am willing, before the tribunal of an impartial history, to abide by the judgment of my countrymen.

It has been my fate, for the last five years, to take, as your representative, a responsible part in the National Councils of the Confederacy. I have been made to feel the exposure of a struggling and isolated minority to an arrogant majority, who, feeling the vulgar strength of self-sustaining numbers, have resorted to all the machinery of a taunting audience and a sordid press to put under the ban the State whose representative I was. I have always had much to sustain me in trying situations. My conviction was, that South Carolina occupied a position from which she could look down with the luxury of scorn upon truckling partizans and trading politicians, who found it convenient to assail her to subserve their selfish ends. She has been a stumbling block to many, who, if they had dared, would have placed their treacherous foot upon her. I say here, that I had rather encounter all the hazard of debate with fifty Senators, or any hazards that might present themselves outside of her limits, than differ with a single sincere friend in this assembly as to any measure calculated to affect the dignity, honor, and rights of our cherished Commonwealth.

I am persuaded that our difference of opinion will, in the end, be more apparent than real. I may well question the policy of a celerity that may be too much actuated by gallant zeal and uncalculating chivalry. If, with the more prudent resolution of Ulysses, perhaps without its wisdom, I may be disposed to restrain the impetuous courage of Diomede, I shall have none of the resentful temper of Achilles, nor the grumbling censoriousness of Thirsytes. No, my countrymen, my heart is too much in the cause you are engaged in to suffer me to do any thing but what is prompted by a solemn duty. It is true that the proceedings of this body will not have the sanction and au[illegible] patriotism and energy [illegible] They will have committed advocates [illegible] measures, as in my opinion, and result in failure and disgrace. If measures cannot be devised—as I believe they can—to restore a lost equality—an equality [illegible] to [illegible] and imposing outrages to [illegible] institutions. Other Southern States cannot condemn it without condemning their own resolutions and solemn pledges. The paper has impressed upon it unmistakable marks of sincerity and deliberate purpose. Its author, or authors, are ready to stand by it, and make it good in the true import of the terms, "at every hazard, and to the last extremity." By others, it may be differently regarded. Some who will give it their sanction, may even regard it as the nucleus of a State party, to be used thus far and no farther. I choose to regard it as a solemn beginning, that may result in an important end, that will deeply affect the destinies and interests of this country. And as my friend from St. John's has said on another occasion, "we should take no beginning without looking to its probable end."

The proceedings contemplated will require South Carolina to tread her way through a narrow pass as yet untrodden and unexplored. Some are prepared to tread it with confidence and boldness, and to find its termination by experiment—as Sir Marrow was said to have found his enemy by the point of the bayonet. Others, on the contrary, insist on the prudence of reconnoissance before the probable termination shall be indicated.

The object of the address is not only to put the State on the track of seperate secession, but by the measures contemplated to commit the State, now to that determination: in other words, it excludes the idea that the State will have in its power to adopt any other measure. The legislature is required, as far as those proceedings can impose an obligation, to call the Convention together, and that body then is to put the State, as soon as it can, on the trial of separate independence.

In relation to this measure, and others connected with it and which have been presented as alternatives, I have nothing to disguise—I have no opinion to retract, no sentiment to suppress. I shall at least be consistent with myself. In setting forth our wrongs and endeavoring to rouse sentiments of resentment to them, and in preparing the public mind for measures of effectual resistance to the encroachments of the Federal Government on Southern Institutions, through the breaches of a violated Constitution, I have endeavored to do my duty to the best of my ability, and I have no steps to take backwards. What steps forward is the question. Whilst measures were under consideration, in which the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States were at issue, I expressed myself freely, but with the circumspection of one who was willing to let his remarks be carried out to their consequences. The representatives of the planting States spoke out with signal unanimity the resolutions of three different Legislatures. I am proud to say, that the resolutions of South Carolina, compared with some others, were in terms moderate, in tone firm, and in purpose deliberate. All these resolutions were regarded as mutual pledges and covenants for the Southern States to make common cause, and to stand by each other. The Southern members conferred together, and at one time would have been prepared to sink or swim in a common struggle, and their destinies as involved in a common fate. For a time the minds of all true men of the South, were lifted above the miserable contentions of party and the jealousies of neighboring strife. Under the influence of this suspicious state of tainge, I finished one of my speeches with a high note from the Diapede of the old Thirteen—our neighbor Georgia—"Equality or Independence." And I say now, if the Southern States had become united, they would have made good this declaration. They have it in their power to make it good at any [illegible] as by their conjunction can assume the attitude, and invest themselves with the attributes of a national sovereignty.

As this is a grave conclusion, or one that will so be regarded beyond this meeting, I must submit the proposition upon which it is founded.

The constitution of these States was intended by its express and delegated powers to impose limitations on the department of the Federal Government. For some years these limitations were observed in good faith: and after it was said that some of them had been violated: it was thought that the States, by the interposition of their sovereignties, could enforce an observance of them. The securities of good faith have long since disappeared, and the power of the States to interpose to protect their reserved rights has not and will not be recognized by the Federal authority. All the provisions of the Constitution intended for the protection of a minority have been perverted by artful construction, or fraudulent compromise: under these compromises the Southern States have not only lost their influence, but will become worse than dependent provinces. They will become proscribed political communities—disfranchised from the high honors of the Federal Government, and with their property and institutions liable to confiscation and unprovoked invasion.

The Southern States can no longer be the nurse of great statesman. The ambition of the eagle's flight will be no longer seen—we may have crows and ducklings who will be ready to be satisfied with the crumbs and garbage of office. There are those who will be willing to make an easy transition to degradation, by being candidates for the secretary and subordinate offices. Suppose there were a provision in the Constitution, that no man from the South Atlantic States, should be eligible to the Presidency, it would not change the present state of things. Such a clause might as well be in the Constitution for all practical purposes.

To conclude the proposition, the Federal Government has become a despotism of an interested majority. You will ask why have not the other Southern States been ready to join South Carolina, or rather to come into a voluntary conjunction with themselves, to devise measures for their protection.

I cannot better reply, than by quoting the purport of a remark, made by Demosthenes, in answer to the reproaches of Eschines, upon the disasters of his administration.

He said he had to contend with the three great enemies of free States: "The jealousy of neighboring States, the gold of Phillip bestowed on corrupt orators, the combined love of pleasure and the charm of tranquilty."

The Southern States have had some elements of distraction, destined, I hope, to be temporary. The dissension of party, in reference to federal politics, has been powerful; but, unless I am mistaken, must become less.

The Federal Government has a Macedonian party in the South—strong for a time, through the influence of office and patronage. The greatest enemy to the South has been an indisposition to encounter the hazards of change.

As it would be out of place to dwell longer on topics that may not be immediately connected with the questions here to be discussed—topics with which this assembly is as well acquainted as I am—I will go directly to the measures which I have suggested, as the object and end of your deliberations. That is, shall this Convention, at this time, undertake to commit the State to the trial of separate secession, by imposing, as far as this Convention can, an obligation on the [illegible] Convention to take the [illegible] as pr[illegible]

[illegible] first place, that this Convention ought not to take cognizance of [illegible] matter at this [illegible] occasion [illegible] I do not differ with a [illegible] who hear me. This Convention [illegible] of this body to vote upon them. All who are members of the Constitutional Convention of the people, cannot give a vote to control their future judgment. They ought not to be required to do so. I have conversed with several of them, and they have come to a common conclusion to give no vote upon any matter upon which they will have to deliberate, when there shall be a real occasion for their officially responsible judgment. I find myself in that class. What may be the situation of things when the Convention shall be called on to decide I know not. There may be many instructive developements and revelations before that time. Madness and infatuation take their course with a blind confidence, and at the next session of Congress I shall look for some of their usual exhibitions.

Before I speak of the probable and conjectural action of the Federal Government in reference to South Carolina, should she determine to secede, I will notice some views, and submit some considerations connected with Secession as a remedy for our wrongs.

The right of Secession in the abstract, and the right of resorting to it to effect a wise and beneficial end, in a political and moral point of view, are different things. The one may be conceded as a legal proposition—whilst the other, as it may effect other communities as well as the State itself, involves high considerations and obligations [illegible] which no States [illegible] hard.

[illegible] to [illegible] to [illegible] herself and confederates to protect their rights from Foreign powers and to [illegible] domestic tranquility. If these ends should not be accomplished—but in fact, if it should turn out that the Government is used exclusively for one portion of the [illegible] to the oppression and detri[illegible] the [illegible] parties should have the right of resuming their original position. To say otherwise would be to make free States as they entered into the Confederacy, not merely parties to a despotic Government, but victims of it against their consent. But whether secession be conceded as a legal right, or as measure of revolution, is immaterial, if there be a real occasion to resort to it, and it can be used to effect some great political end worthy of its exercise. If it should end in merely separating the State from her former confederates, and placing her in a condition that would require her to invest herself with all the attributes and duties of a sovereign nation both abroad and at home, then it might bring South Carolina into a situation of isolation, at war with her true interests and policy. If she should resort to this measure, with a view of bringing her neighbors into a political connection, so as to enable them jointly to form a Confederacy for themselves, that would be adequate for all the purposes of maintaining their rights at home and relations with foreign powers, then it becomes a question of the greatest magnitude, full of consequences that should be looked to with all the care and intelligence that can possibly be employed. The State should take no course that will make rivals and adversaries of her Southern neighbors. On the contrary she should endeavor by all possible means to act with them, as allies. If the State should look to nothing beyond her own secession, she will enable the Federal Government to make rivals of those who in interest are, and in feeling, should be her friends.

I make the broad remarks, that there is not a public man in South Carolina sensible of a responsible trust, and foreseeing the inevitable consequences of separate secession, that would put the State on the trial of that experiment, if the act were to operate exclusively on the State itself such an act would not only cut off our commerce, but would place it in the hands of our rivals. In assuming such an attitude, it would be the duty of the State to make arrangements for the management of her rights abroad. Her pride would revolt at sending forth her flag, without some navy to protect it, and without ministers and consuls to represent her rights, and protect her interests abroad. No nation can rely on the forbearance of others, when there may be a collision of interests, or a temptation for violation. At any rate, I would not allow the Palmetto Flag to float by sufferance only. Whilst it would represent as proud, as spirited a people as ever lived, it would be regarded as the emblem of a Slaveholding Commonwealth. Many would be tempted to insult it from wantonness. How would the proud spirited people of the State feel, to hear that their flag had been pulled down and torn to pieces by a Boston whaling party, or by a vessel from Liberia, or in any other way? How could they avenge the insult? If the State assumes a national responsibility, it must provide also the attributes and means of national power. It must have a navy and all the other appliances of national dignity. It cannot rely with safety on the comity of nations, or on a code founded in a sublime Anthropopathy. It seems to be thought by some with great confidence, that by opening her ports with low duties on imports, South Carolina could, under the temptations of free trade, invite the commerce of the world to her shores. Well, perhaps, if all would be good, and do as South Carolina might think they should do, something of this might come to pass. But games are generally conducted by adversary hands: and sometimes a play is made by one that may not be thought by the other to be *secundem artem*. None of of us suppose that the Federal Government would recognize the Independence of South Carolina; or would be disposed to make commercial treaties with her,—[illegible] that government would make any [illegible] or commerce in every way it could. It would bestow bounties in and give preference to, our [illegible] ports. It, so far as it could, would make treaties with foreign nations to isolate our condition, and crippple our resources. It would divert and obstruct all the channels of our trade, and might confine us to our exports alone as the basis of our commercial resources. I understand that the articles of commerce that come into our ports, coastwise and by foreign importations, amount in value to something over $2,000,000. Of this sum more than three-fourth finds its way into other States; into Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee; leaving something under $500,000 to be consumed in this State.

It is contended that under the operations of Free Trade more would come in, and in some way or other it would find its way out. Now if South Carolina was a seperate sovereignty, with a free port, there is no doubt she might attract a greater commerce than now comes to her ports, provided it could find a market out of her borders. But could it find its way out without violating the revenue laws of other nations? It is said 'a rose by any other name smells as sweet.' We might introduce as much commerce as we please, and send it to Savannah river, under what some would call a brisk Free Trade, but what, in the estimation of others whose rights would be involved, would be regarded as smuggling if carried across their borders in violation of their laws. It would be an acknowledged right of the Federal Government, to regard South Carolina as a stranger, and to place her commerce going into the ports of the States in the Union under an embargo, and so far as concerns Georgia and North Carolina, to regard as ports of entry, those places only which communicate by water with the ocean, such as Savannah and Wilmington. That Government might not establish ports at Augusta and Charlotte, or the North Carolina line; under this view, commerce could come into Charleston, but how could it get out without the process of smuggling? At the interior points indicated, it could not without smuggling. I then put the proposition, would capitalists import goods into Charleston, in opposition to the Federal Government, under the supposition that they could make a profit on them through the operations of thrifty smuggling? But in a commercial war, the State might be disposed to take all advantages, and it might be to the interest of Georgia and North Carolina to have ports of entry at Augusta and near Charlotte. What then? Could goods pay ten per cent, in Charleston and forty at these places,—in competition with a trade through Savannah and Wilmington, paying a duty of thirty or forty per cent?—Certainly not. I will not dwell on this view of the subject any longer; as I do my friends the justice to say that they have a much higher aim—one whose dignity of purpose may give their movements a different character. To move with the first view alone, would be to make the State submit to something more than a vain sacrifice. She would not have the consolation of blind Metellus, who lost his eyes in going through the flames of the Temple to save the Palladium. Her fate would not only be self-destruction, but it would be a sacrifice to build up the interests of new rivals.

Those who really look to the end of this begining, take the step with this view—to induce other States, by the prosperous and successful example of South Carolina, to come into conjunction with her. Or to place them in such circumstances, that, having a common destiny, they would be compelled to be involved in making a common sacrifice. I will not notice the first part of the proposition. The latter presents the subject in its great magnitude, not unconnected with considerations of the deepest delicacy. To force a Sovereign State to take a position against its consent, is to make it a reluctant associate. It would be to offend its pride and force its judgement. Is there any evidence that Georgia would be forced to take position with us, under the present juncture of affairs? She will perhaps contend that having decided for herself, South Carolina must abide the fate of her own decision. Before such a move is made on Georgia, something more ought to be made known of the sentiments of her people; who would not only sympathise with her friends, but ultimately, for their own benefit, come to their support. Nothing of the kind has been attempted. I may be asked if I can give any assurance that Georgia will ever be prepared to act in concert with us, or that she will take any measures to throw off the oppressions and encroachments of the Federal Government. All that I can say is, that she once said she would, and that in the most solemn form. But in spite of herself, she will have to come to such a conclusion. The slave and non-slaveholding States cannot remain long together with the present issues, and under the operation of causes that must bring about their separation. That is as certain as if it were written on the wall. This confederacy, that in a short time might comprehend fifty States, must undergo new organizations. I would not have a change effected through the confusion of anarchy and violence, if it could be done with intelligence and the co-operation of the parties concerned. Insult, usurpation, and accumulated wrong, will not allow our Southern neighbors to remain indifferent to their and our situation much longer. They cannot stand and see one corner of the house in which they and we dwell, undermined, without seeing that the edifice is in danger, and that when it falls the common tenants much perish with it. Both interest and honor must require the Cotton States to take counsel together. They should look upon themselves not with the jealousy of rivals, but as a common crew, all equally endangered, whose duty it is to make a long pull, a strong pull and a pull altogether, to save themselves from an impending wreck. It is bad taste and worse judgment for States, identified in interest, to use language of disrespect and censure towards each other.—The same remarks may be made of public men who hold responsible positions, and who ought to practice courtesy and inculcate harmony.—Such has not been the course of some few public men in Georgia especially. I have been surprised at a remark attributed to Speaker Cobb, who, in speaking of South-Carolina, said that her indicated course would be infamous. That gentlemen should recollect that every blow aimed at South Carolina will strike Georgia. For South Carolina is now only endeavoring to do what Georgia said she ought to do. It is grossly unbecoming in those who should discharge the trust of Sentinels, not only to quit their posts, but to turn round and fire upon the camp of their comrades.

We all know the dominion of party; its ties for a time may be more