

The Sumter Banner.

DEVOTED TO SOUTHERN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, NEWS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND THE ARTS.

WM. J. FRANCIS, Proprietor.

"God—and our Native Land."

TERMS—Two Dollars Per Annum In Advance.

VOL. V.

SUMTERVILLE, S. C. JULY 23, 1851.

NO. 39.

Terms.

Two Dollars in advance, Two Dollars and Fifty-cents at the expiration of six months, or Three Dollars at the end of the year.

No paper discontinued until all arrears are paid, unless at the option of the Proprietor.

Advertisements inserted at 75 cts. per square, (12 lines or less,) for the first and half that sum for each subsequent insertion.

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Rev. FREDERICK RUSH, is a travelling Agent for this paper, and is authorized to receive subscriptions and receipt for the same.

Political.

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.

(CONCLUDED.)

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 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 that 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 his 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 treaties, and from whose citizens we have made loans, &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 complied 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, 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 disreputable submission as that which the Southern States now exhibit.

He has told you too that "he is convinced of the justice of 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 rash; 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 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 encroachments 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 on 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 expected to do.

But I think the position of things in the other Southern States has been mistaken by our friends. The politicians in those States are not telling the people, as your 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 practising 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 final judgment, and how soon will all other issues "fade 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 confederated 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 can be obtained 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 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. Politicians and venal presses may denounce and deride it, but it will stand forth before the world as a most impressive event. The great popular heart of

the South will be moved to its inmost recesses, stripped of all the disguises with which false issues may surround it; the naked fact will be presented to the people that South Carolina has made 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 that 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 venal hireling presses, 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, 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 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 always 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 color 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 emphatically "constituted us 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 she has ever exercised all proper deference and respect towards her sister States, and is even now doing so by inviting them to meet her in a Southern Congress.

The truth is, that South Carolina is less responsible for the present ag-

itation than almost any other Southern State. Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama were certainly in advance of her. If then she now appears to be in advance of others, it is the result of causes for which she is not responsible. But, I freely admit, that if she retires from her present position she should always in future preserve the dignity of silence. She must now act, or "forever after hold her peace."

Again, it is said that the cause of disunion is making progress, and we ought to be satisfied with its present advance and wait for further developments—that a few years ago there was no disunion party in South Carolina, whilst now there is scarcely any other. To this I reply, that if it is meant to be said that our friends in the other States have "kindled their fires at our altars," shall we now abandon our position and expect them to advance? Some of them are now telling us: "we want a measure to unite us, we are beating the empty air, we speak to the idle wind." Let us then give them oil for their lamps. We have no other issue to tender but secession; it is the last arrow in our quiver, it is the only alternative to submission.

Mr. President, a state of high excitement is not a natural condition either in men or nations. We must not expect to keep up this agitation always. The people become wearied with long continued and fruitless exertions; they become fatigued into compliance, and yield a struggle that holds out no hope of immediate victory. This, sir, is our danger. Let us beware how we lose our opportunity.

Another objection urged against us, is, that our friends in Congress from the other Southern States have not counselled secession, and I am appealed to by my friend and colleague (Mr. Orr) to say if this is not the case. I answer frankly it is, so far as my intercourse extends. But at the same time I must be permitted to say, that I am inclined to think these very gentlemen, who are worthy of all our admiration and esteem, would be very apt to make the most uncompromising secessionists if they were, as I wish with all my heart they were, citizens of South Carolina. In all questions of this kind, involving fundamental changes of government, we generally find that the people are ahead of their representatives, and it is wise and proper that they should be so. In the ordinary administration of public affairs, the Representative may rightfully assume all responsibility—but the responsibility of altering their form of government belongs to the people and cannot be delegated. Hence we frequently hear the remark, even in our own State, that the representatives are behind the people on the question of disunion.

Whilst our friends in Congress, therefore, very properly declined to counsel a measure in regard to which they had no authority to commit their constituents, I know that they will never be found in the ranks of those who will denounce South Carolina if she secedes, but that in them we will always find men whom we will delight to honor.

Lastly, it is urged that secession will be met by coercion and its consequent difficulties. Now, before proceeding to consider this objection, I must be permitted to say, that if I were contending for the mere triumph of a forensic discussion, I should hold our friends precluded from bringing into the argument any of the dangers or sacrifices of secession, because the highest authority amongst them, one for whom we all feel a common veneration, (Judge Cheves,) whilst opposing this measure on other grounds, expressly says that "no dangers and no sacrifices can be too great in such a cause." But I am seeking no such triumph. The subject forbids it—I am actuated, I trust by a higher purpose. I will proceed then to consider this objection. It opens, I admit, a most important inquiry.

The aspect in which this branch of the subject presents itself to my mind has always been this. Will the Administration, with the powers they now possess, undertake, on their own responsibility, to oppose the secession of South Carolina in any way; or, supposing Congress to be in session, will they ask for its authority to coerce us, and for an increase of power

for that purpose? Now the answers to these questions must of course be wholly conjectural. I doubt very much if the Cabinet itself is prepared to answer them without qualification. Events must control the judgments and the actions of all men. But still it is wise and proper, with the lights before us, to endeavor to ascertain what are the probabilities that be in our path. No issue would ever be brought to an arbitration, if each party waited to know, with certainty, the plan of his adversary's operation. Whether the administration may think it possesses the right and the power to coerce a seceding State or not, I cannot pretend to say. We all know it did not think that it had sufficient power to coerce a Boston mob, and asked for more, but did not obtain it. Now, I do not intend to speak in terms of disrespect of the Administration, or to excite unfounded prejudices. Our cause is not to be strengthened by throwing dirt at any one. It spurs the aid of such missiles. Let them be used by those who have a taste for them. But in speaking of those who now wield the power of this Government, and their friends, we must speak of them according to their known opinions, principles and conduct. The school of politicians to which the Administration belongs is the school of consolidationists. Its most prominent members are thoroughly anti-slavery in their feelings, their principles and their policy. The President believes that Congress has the power not only to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but also the slave trade between the States, and that this power ought to be exercised, at what he calls a proper time. His opinions are on record, and will be found to be extreme on this subject. Mr. Webster believes slavery to be an evil, and "regrets exceedingly that it exists in the Southern States;" and what he admits that Congress has no power to act upon it there, still he suggests, to use his own words, "that in the dispensation of Providence some remedy for this evil may occur or may be hoped for hereafter." The truth is, that both the President and Mr. Webster, like many other advocates of the compromise, are responsible for much of that very agitation they are seeking to quell. They have sown broadcast anti-slavery doctrines in the Northern mind, and now behold the fruit. "The engineers have been hoisted by their own petard." The Pope taught republicanism at Rome, and republicanism drove him from the Vatican. Mr. Webster taught anti-slavery in Boston, and anti-slavery drove him from Faneuil Hall. French bayonets opened the way for the return of his Holiness. Federal bayonets opened the way for the coming of the compromise. Trained, then, in the school of the consolidationists, having as little respect in principle for the secession of a State as the sedition of a mob, with all their feelings and opinions opposed to that institution on which rest our happiness and prosperity, and which no minister of State has any right to denounce as an "evil" of such magnitude as to call for a "remedy" at the hands of "Divine Providence," with such feelings and opinions as these, I say, it is altogether probable that the Administration, urged on too by "the power behind the throne, greater than the throne itself," will be disposed to coerce South Carolina. The extinction of the "pestilent heresy" of secession, the subjugation of a slave State, out of which, through the "dispensation of Providence," the extinction of slavery may be "hoped" for, are triumphs to tempt the ambition of better men than live in these degenerate days. In such a crusade it is not difficult to foresee that an army with many banners might soon be enlisted; but what fruits would victory bring to them. The Administration would be compelled to say to their allies, like Phyrus of old: "Such another victory, and we must go home alone!" But it may be asked: Is the power to coerce a sovereign State so clear that the cabinet will feel authorized to exert it on their own responsibility? Are there not such grave doubts on the subjects as to make them pause before proceeding to such an extreme? I have already said that the Cabinet belongs to the school of the consolidationists. They deny the sovereignty of the States; they contend

that the States never were sovereign; that at no period had they powers of sovereignty, or if they had they have transferred them all to the General Government. They say that "the doctrine of republicanism is, that the majority can do no wrong, in the same sense in which it is said in England, that the King can do no wrong, and for the same reason; because there is no legal remedy." With such doctrines as these, it is easy to perceive that the Administration would not call it "coercing" a sovereign State, but merely enforcing the laws on the disobedient citizens of an empire, who have no more right to justify their proceedings, under the authority of South Carolina, than under the authority of their particular protege, Hungary, whose recent attempt at a redress of grievances has found such wonderful "favor at court." It is true, that we have all been taught to believe that this "government, created by compact, was not made the exclusive, or final, judge of the extent of the powers delegated to itself. So said Thomas Jefferson, in the Kentucky resolutions; but this good old man has been poured into new bottles, and they have burst. The moderns, I fear, have forgotten the faith of their fathers.

But we are not left to speculation as to the opinion, at least, of the head of the cabinet on the character of secession. In a letter addressed during the last winter by Mr. Webster to a dinner party in New York, he declared that "secession is war." By this is meant, I presume, that secession on the part of a State is *ipso facto* a declaration of war by her. The onus and the odium are to be thrown upon her. But supposing that the Administration determine to use coercion, in what form will it be attempted? I have been one of those who have conjectured, for as I have already observed every thing on this subject is conjectural, that a blockade of our ports would be attempted. In this opinion I find our senior Senator, (Judge Butler,) if I understand him correctly, does not concur, whilst our junior Senator, (Mr. Rhett,) pronounces it in very emphatic terms an "unmitigated humbug." With such high authority against me, it is not improbable that I may be mistaken in my conjecture, but it is always wiser to be prepared than to be surprised. I do not mean to say that the Government will call their measure a "blockade." They will merely term it enforcing the revenue laws—collecting the customs; but by whatever name it may be called, the attempt must very soon result in nothing more or less than actual blockade. It will soon become an interception of all communication, commercial or otherwise, between us and all other States and nations, maintained by a besieging force sufficiently powerful to render any intercourse with us dangerous to third parties, and expose them to seizure. To render their coercion effectual, their measure must come to this: It may commence in overhauling vessels at a certain distance from shore, and inspecting their manifests, or in attempting to erect floating custom houses, but it must end, I repeat, in what, through respect to the rights of foreign nations, must be justified as blockade. But blockade is a belligerent measure, and must be made public, so that neutrals may have notice of it, and act accordingly. War then, public war, must be declared against South Carolina, and Congress must be called on, for Congress only has power to levy war.

I think, therefore, that the question of coercion must be referred to that body. The Administration will be compelled to go so. But when the question comes then no human sagacity can predict what course things will take. The Presidential question will then be in full discussion. Much will depend upon the bearing which the issue of coercion will have upon that question, for it is the mighty whirlpool which draws within its greedy vortex all other subjects.

Whilst the Administration will be

"This is the language of Chief Justice Craft, in a recent publication.

"At this point of my remarks Judge Butler rose and observed that I did not understand him correctly, and re-stated his position, which will be seen in his published speech to which I refer, as I write without notes, and my memory does not enable me to repeat accurately what was said on the occasion.

in the hands of the Whigs, the Democratic party will be largely in the ascendancy in the next Congress.— If it is found that the South Carolina question can be made political capital of, it will be used for that purpose. Although the compromise has patched up a hollow truce between the old party leaders, yet there is no love between them. There can be none whatever. They are as far apart as ever, and when the Presidential race begins the cry will be "occupat postremum scabies"—"the de'il take the hindmost." This was clearly shown to be the state of feeling at the last Congress, when an attempt was made to get up a great Union party under a written compromise pledge. This pledge received the signatures of many distinguished Whigs; but, if my memory serves me, of only two prominent Southern Democrats, (Messrs. Cobb and Foote.)

The cohesive power of the compromise is fast giving way between party leaders, and they will soon be found in hostile array.

But should the appeal to Congress by the Administration result in the passage of some force bill, or other measure of coercion, then we will be called upon to defend ourselves with all the resources we possess, and I feel the utmost confidence that in such a contest the South will never stand neutral. Let the sword be put into the hands of the Executive, after a long and angry debate in Congress, for the purpose of hewing down a sovereign State, whose only sin has been her impatience to defend our common institutions, but who can appeal to the judge of the world for the purity of her purposes, and the justice of her cause, and that sword must be dyed deep in Southern blood before it is returned to its scabbard. In such a struggle, whoever shall triumph, the Union will fall.

But it is said by some of our friends that we will have no direct issue of force, but that a war of custom houses and of commercial restrictions will be waged against us; in other words, that we will be destroyed by famine, and not by the sword. Now I think this objection is only the blockade idea in another form, and may as well be classed under that head. I cannot see how our commerce can be effectually restricted, except by such measures as must ultimately result in a practical blockade of our ports, and I refer to what I have already said on that head.— But if something less than this is meant; if a sort of peaceable coercion is intended—then I ask if its hazards or extremities are too great to be encountered in defence of a cause which is worthy of resistance 'at every hazard and to the last extremity?' But I think that with ten or fifteen millions of the richest products of the earth for sale, it would be difficult to destroy our commerce by any measure of practical coercion. If we will be content to realize moderate profits and to offer a cheap market to the world, I venture to assert that it cannot be closed by a war of custom houses. But these are but speculations at best, and if we wait to ascertain the exact cost of every hazard in dollars and cents, we will never resist either separately or conjointly.

Supposing, however, that coercion in no form whatever is attempted, and that South Carolina is permitted peaceably to secede, still our friends contend that she cannot maintain a separate existence. Now this objection seems to me to amount to nothing more or less than this:— That if South Carolina should resume those powers which she has delegated to the general government, and become, what we have always contended she was, when she came into this Union, a free, sovereign and independent State, then that moment she perishes. I must be permitted to say, with due respect to those who urge this argument, that it proves too much, and gives up everything in dispute. It is a fatal concession to the consolidationists, and will be regarded by them as a complete surrender. They have always contended that the sovereignty of the States is an abstraction, a mere thing of words; that it has no practical value, and cannot protect the citizen, who, therefore, owes it no allegiance. They say that this is not a confederacy of sovereign States, but a government of one people—a unit, of