

SPEECH
OF
GEORGE W. RICHARDSON,
OF HANOVER,
IN
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
ON THE
REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL RELATIONS,
IN THE
CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA,
APRIL 4, 1861.

RICHMOND:

PRINTED AT THE WHIG BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

1862.



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SPEECH.

MR. CHAIRMAN,—I am not without hope that some member of the Convention will express or think in my behalf the kindness uttered by the worthy gentleman from Petersburg, (Mr Branch,) of my distinguished friend from Albemarle, who sits on my right, (Mr. Holcombe,) for whose accommodation the former gentleman, announced his willingness to adjourn, so that the latter might be heard when the Convention was not fatigued, on the ground that he had troubled this body but little with speeches. I have presumed to speak here but twice—once less than ten minutes—advocating the election of a friend to an office to which he was preferred by the Convention; and once again—less than fifteen minutes—in explanation of a resolution looking to the military defence of the State, which I had the honor to propose. Though I have been firm in my sentiments on the momentous matters to be considered by Virginia in this the highest exercise of her sovereignty, I confess to some vacillation as to whether I should speak here or not. For, notwithstanding the interminable clamors and fault-findings of the respective partisans of the majority and minority, I see around me gentlemen who, from character, talents and position, are the most distinguished men of the State, and my embarrassment is increased by the fact that I am, for the first time, a representative of the people in a body like this; so that it is with awe that I attempt to address them. Nor should I make the effort at all had I not reason to believe that my constituents desire their voice, however humble when spoken by me, to be heard in this hall. Certain mental peculiarities of mine, sir, lead me, in considering a subject, to look to its historical surroundings. I, therefore, propose first to take a glance at the origin of the Federal Union—at the many ties which should have united forever in fraternity and affection the North and the South—to show while the former section and a foreign power are, for the most part, responsible for slavery here, they have sought, with unhallowed hands, to destroy both the institution and those on whom they forced it; that the people of the North have rudely and cruelly crushed the love which bound us together, and have cherished and do cherish towards us such feelings as renders a longer union with them almost hopeless. Proceeding a step farther in the argument, and considering our responsibilities in connection with a once glorious but now disrupted nationality, I shall hold the position not only that our destiny is with the Southern Confederacy, but that the best mode of re-constructing the Union is promptly to identify ourselves

with the seceded States. Maintaining this ground, I shall be drawn into a reply to arguments advanced by gentlemen on this floor, who take a different view of the subject, and having carried out this line of remark, I shall have completed the programme formed in my mind, and will cheerfully yield the floor to gentlemen able to speak with more ability and eloquence than I can command.

Eighty-four years ago, Mr. Chairman, heralded by the clash of arms, and amid the shock of battle, a giant, so to speak, started into life—that giant was the youthful, but already magnificent country which reached from the ice-bound hills of New Hampshire to the warm and illuminated fields of Georgia, the renowned and patriotic thirteen sovereignties which had been the brightest gem in the coronet of power and dominion of that green isle of the ocean, in the storied inscriptions of whose Westminster, we read with reverential awe, the merited eulogies of those heroes, sages and philanthropists, who illustrated the land where once our fathers dwelt. Long years of suffering and of sorrow succeeded the nation's advent, but there came at last that independence, which in the end rewards the devotion of the noble, the chivalrous and the free—and when the smoke of the conflict had cleared away, when the clouds of war rolled back, and left spanning the horizon the rainbow of peace, that young land displayed a moral and physical grandeur to which the world showed no parallel. Every thing seemed to demand of her sons for their country, and their whole country, the tribute of their devotion and their love. A people on whose every lineament were stamped the moral and mental attributes of the great race from which they sprang—a federative system of separate State sovereignties of kindred institutions and kindred freedom, which promised, in the matchless beauty of its construction and operation, to be typical of the order and regularity of the planetary system itself—varieties of soil, climate and productions which seemed to have been ordained by a kind Providence, that this bright temple of freedom might be decked with every luxurious elegance of soul, of sense, or of intellect—rivers which rolled their brilliant tides through State after State, as if to mingle in great arteries the gushing life blood of these States—majestic ranges of mountains stretching forth their giant arms and uniting in fraternal embrace whole Commonwealths—washed by an ocean whose shores were indented with countless harbors, in which might safely ride the navies of the world—over whose waves were wafted the teeming products of a virgin soil to every clime—whence were brought in return the commercial spoils of distant lands, the Confederate States of the Revolution had, besides these physical bonds of Union, the sacred recollections of a struggle in which they stood side by side and shoulder to shoulder. The blood and the bones of noble

warriors from North, South, East and West, were mingled at Long Island and Camden, Brandywine and Savannah, Reading and Guilford, where lingered the melancholy memories of defeat, and at Lexington and Eutaw, Bunker's Hill and Cowpens, Monmouth and King's Mountain, Trenton and Hanging Rock, Princeton and Yorktown, above which hovered the glories of victory. To the progress of a portion of this beautiful country there was an obstacle which at first seemed insurmountable. Settled by Caucasians, by Saxons, and chivalrous Normans, whose genius and courage blazoned on their shields the quarterings of glory and renown won in every cabinet and on every field in Europe, and which fitted them for similar honors here, they found themselves lords of a country whose resources were to be developed in a climate, and under a sun beneath which their energies, mental and physical, drooped and withered. But the power which had guided them over the trackless ocean did not desert them here. Far away over the blue waves of the sea, and beneath the burning sun of Africa, there dwelt in the abasement of barbarism, heathenism and cannibalism, a race on whom, for the crime of their progenitor, had come down through the shadows of ages the curse of the God, "whose nod can hush the thunder and serene the skies," whose throne is placid amid the music of circling orbs, and glows and glitters in the light of suns and worlds—the solemn and awful anathema, "cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." The dread Omnipotent who makes "the wrath of man to praise Him," and restrains "the remainder of wrath," to lift that curse, that the degraded African might have his share in the atonement—as a part of the great scheme which gives the Redeemer the heathen for his inheritance; in view of the slow progress of light through that benighted land, over which wave after wave of moral darkness rolled, brings him in contact with civilization here. But, that fair and glorious freedom might have no stain on her escutcheon, makes others than her sons the responsible agents of the evil, from which was to flow in full and gushing streams blessings and benefits. Yes, to the thousand sins for which despotism has to answer at the bar of history and of God, is to be added the expatriation of the heathen African for gold, with no view to humanity or benevolence, while the freemen of our Southern States, guiltless in the means, but partakers of the merit of the end, have, by the dispensation of God, been made the honored instruments of good to a fallen race in the very act of developing the resources of their own beautiful and blooming land. They have made the African a happy part of a patriarchal institution, infused into his savage and gloomy mind the kindlier sympathies and feelings leading to contentment and happiness, and unsealing the word of God, pointed him to the great sacrifice, which, when he has faithfully

performed his duties here, offers him an inheritance in common with his kind in a world of eternal happiness. Passing from theory to history—from assertion to the logic of facts—inexorable truth will demonstrate that to Great Britain, the country which now so bitterly denounces us for our domestic institutions, must be charged the existence of slavery amongst us. She established it here by positive enactment of law, spreading on her statute book that it was not only profitable, but right. Citizens highest in rank, individuals and corporations, princes of the blood and even sovereigns participated in the traffic. Ten judges of her highest courts, including Holt and Pollexfen, declared negroes to be merchandise, and she introduced and continued the trade amongst us against our earnest protest. The North, lynx-eyed as to everything which advances her interest, took up and carried on the trade with an avidity which showed her constitutional thirst for and keenness in the pursuit of gain. Immaculate Massachusetts, as early as 1641, declared the lawfulness of African slavery and of the slave trade. In the other Northern States, slavery was established, but the immutable laws of soil and climate, which, if let alone, will carry into every country the labor, whether slave or free, best adapted to it, rendering the institution unprofitable, these enterprising people took their part in the trade more in selling slaves to the South than in introducing them into their own country. Hence they rapidly disappeared from their territory into the Southern States, so as to make emancipation in the former no stretch of philanthropy. By the census of 1790, the number of slaves in the older and more flourishing colonies was only 40,370, while in the Southern and then more feeble colonies, there were, even exclusive of those in Virginia, 567,527; Vermont had only 17. Massachusetts, though slavery never was abolished there by statute, none. New Hampshire, whose statutes were equally silent on the subject, 158; Connecticut 2,759; Pennsylvania 3,737; New York 21,524; New Jersey 11,423, while Virginia alone had 293,427. These figures prove that in the Northern States the institution was not worth preserving, but the last four having the largest numbers, in order to avoid all loss, adopted a plan of prospective emancipation, before the arrival of the period for which there was a wonderful and nearly complete stampede of slaves to Southern States for Southern gold.

To the influx of Africans, through the slave trade laws of Great Britain, the history of the Southern Colonies presented an unbroken series of earnest protests. Noble, glorious old Virginia, who stands in reference to the slave trade like the Chevalier Bayard, "above fear and above reproach," passed no less than twenty-three acts to suppress it; the other Southern States also endeavored to put an end to it, but veto after veto of royal Governors trampled upon the ardent wishes of the people. Not

until the revolution had given freedom to these States were they enabled to end the traffic, and then, notwithstanding the magnificent vaunting of England of her love of freedom and hatred of slavery, they suppressed it twenty years in advance of her. I have glanced at these historical facts to show the injustice, the iniquity, the cruelty of the attacks on the South and her institutions, and I ask if the world can furnish a parallel to an outrage so atrocious. Not only are we assailed by that country which forced the institution upon us, and which still retains bitter recollections of our lost allegiance and their defeat by our gallant ancestors, but the honest, benevolent and immaculate saints of the perjured North, who sold us slaves for gold, proclaim that a sin in which they were *particeps criminis*, is unpardonable, and seek to destroy our institutions and cut our throats, because we will not surrender these slaves, which have become necessary to our civilization, and to liberate whom would be our moral and physical death. No philanthropy commends itself to these wicked meddlers, save that which is a deadly injury to their countrymen. In vast regions of the earth millions wear the chains of a servitude to which our slavery is freedom; but the lamb-like hearts of our pseudo brothers are cold—their sympathies dead as to them. To give their philanthropy spice and relish, it must have the seasoning of perjury—the stimulus of violated compacts, and comity with brethren, the fiendish thirst for the blood of noble men, and the dishonoring of lovely women. Mr. Chairman, there seems to be a disposition on the part of both real and imaginary wrong-doers, to make others responsible for, and the scape-goats for their acts. Many a miserable old man who has had, during a long life, hundreds of slaves and reared a family to whom these slaves have become a necessity, when time has shattered his health and weakened his nerves, is seized with a spurious remorse, and in an evil hour wills the liberation of his slaves and the immolation of his children's birth-right. This folly and wrong finds many a parallel in the history of nations. France introduced slavery into her Colonies, and then, by abolishing it, gave them to fire and sword. So did Britain. And now this same Britain, having forced the institution on us, seeks, hand in hand with the unnatural North to act the same tragedy in the South. Sir, the immaculate God could, in the sublime benevolence and boundless love, which are the attributes of divinity, offer up a sinless mortal life as an atonement for a lost world, but I utterly deny the right of any human power to make a vicarious atonement, and I demand that the North shall bear the guilt of her own sins. I referred in the beginning to the great physical links and the hallowed memories which should have bound together the North and the South in bonds of fraternity as firm as the granite of the everlasting hills. But for "bread" the North has given

us the "stones" of immoveable and incessant oppression. For "fish," the serpents of ceaseless agitation and attack. They, not we, have forgotten that the bones of our ancestors lie side by side with the bones of their ancestors at Princeton and Yorktown. They, not we, have forgotten that we are brethren, and that when once the hand "is stained with brother's blood," nothing less "than the waters of the sweet Heavens can wash it white as snow." Sir, to almost every conceivable insult and injury have we been subjected. I will not weary the Convention by reading the innumerable assaults upon us by the North. I could read page after page to show that our oft-repeated complaints are true. That from the press, the pulpit, the school-house, conventions, legislative bodies, the masses, whether in cities or rural districts, from the leader of Senates to the lowest cross-road politician, who, like a former Indiana Senator, plays steamboat for the amusement of rowdies and scoundrels at grog shops,* there is one wicked, common, deadly and deep-seated hatred to the South and her institutions. As early as 1790 the war upon us began in the shape of petitions to Congress to interfere with our domestic institutions. These have been in every form—to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia—in the forts, dock-yards and other places, under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government—to exclude it from the Territories, the common property of both sections—to prohibit the slave trade between the States—to abolish it in the States—and to dissolve the Union because of slavery—many of these petitions being couched in terms of the grossest insult to the South and her institutions. The platform on which the abolitionists went into the presidential contest in 1840, demanded the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia—in the Territories—of the slave trade between the States, and announced an opposition to slavery every where, "to the full extent of constitutional power." In 1848, that portion of the party which did not support the Buffalo nominees, went for abolishing slavery in the States by the General Government. The Buffalo and Utica platforms themselves (claiming to be Republican, not abolition,) took the strongest ground for what they call "freedom," in opposition to slavery. For the "relief," (as they called it,) of the Federal Government from all responsibility for slavery wherever that government had jurisdiction. For the absolute prohibition by act of Congress of slavery in the Territories, and of more slave States; and they flaunted in our faces the inscriptions on their banner of "free soil, free speech, free labor and free men," declaring slavery to be "a great moral, social and political evil,"

* This dignified feat of the Senator is described to have been the rapid crawling on the ground on all-fours, with a large tin vessel on his back filled with water, from which a negro by thrusting in the water a heated poker, raised a great steam.

and a relic of barbarism." In 1852 the independent Democrats, (as they called themselves,) who supported John P. Hale for the presidency, declared that their organization was a Union "of freedom against slavery"—"slave Territory"—"slave States"—and any legislation for the reclamation of fugitive slaves; "that slavery was a sin against God," "a crime against man," and that "no human power could make it right." In 1856, the Republican platform denied the right of Congress—of Territorial Legislatures—of any individual, or association of individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States, and claimed that it was the duty of Congress to prohibit it. Added to all this, we have not the mere billingsgate of the Five Points, and the fish market eloquence with which we have been bespattered by strong-minded women and obscure male traitors, but countless declarations of leading men, politicians and divines, that republicanism is not only the ally, "but the progeny of abolitionism." That they are for the logic of Sharpe's rifles to oppose slavery—"higher law judges, an anti-slavery Constitution, an anti-slavery Bible, an anti-slavery God." That the time shall come when the sun shall not rise on a master or set on a slave—"slavery shall go out in fire and blood," and in its extinguishment the streets of our cities "shall run blood to the horses' bridles"—shall be abolished at the price "of the Constitution, the Union and the country"—because of its existence the Union is "a sham, a lie, an imposture"—a "covenant with death, and an agreement with hell"—"insurrections are justifiable"—"a fugitive slave is right to kill his master if he attempts to reclaim him"—"servile war or anything is better than the extension of slavery to the territories"—"and that jurors are justified in violating their oaths in acquitting persons who effect the escape of fugitive slaves," as are States in violating the law for their rendition. Their repeated legislative resolutions have declared against any more slave States. Chase proclaims that the clause in the Constitution for the rendition of fugitive slaves is null and void, and forms no part of an oath when it is taken to support that instrument. Seward, besides his higher law and irrepressible conflict doctrines, proclaims "that slavery has no constitutional guarantee which may not be released"—"its ultimate extinction is certain." Sumner, besides holding similar doctrines, declares the fugitive slave law should not be executed. Webb is for preventing the extension of slavery, sword in hand. Wade is not only in favor of abolishing it in the District of Columbia and excluding it from the territories, and everywhere, where the General Government has jurisdiction, but declares that agitation shall continue so long as the foot of a slave presses American soil. To the same purport are the declarations of Wilson. And the great splitter, who now occupies the Presidential chair, who

seems as good at splitting the Union as he formerly was at splitting rails, who is as much out of place in his present position as a child or a monkey passing with a lighted match in the midst of open kegs of gunpowder, also proclaims the "irrepressible conflict." That the Federal Government has the power, and should exercise it, of prohibiting slavery in all the territories; is not even certain that the abolition of the slave trade between the States is unconstitutional, and declares that men who own slaves do not deserve to be free. Moreover, as far back as 1858, there were twenty abolition United States Senators and one hundred abolition Representatives, since that time, sixty-eight members of Congress endorsed the work of Helper, an infamous incendiary publication, recommending fire and sword for the South, and the alarming spread of whose vile doctrines is shown by the boasting flaunting on its title page of the sale of one hundred thousand copies. The statutes of no less than fifteen States nullify the fugitive slave law. Myriads in the North claim the crown of martyrdom for the thieves, bandits and assassins who, under the lead of John Brown, invaded our soil and murdered our citizens. Last, though not least, a sectional party has "seized the government" with the avowed purpose of warring with its thousand weapons of patronage and power on our institutions. Thus, through every channel of communication, speaks the stolid, relentless, moveless North. Thus are heard the denunciations and threatenings, not of a foreign power without weight or influence in our government, between which and its hoped for victim rolls the billows of an ocean barrier, but of a vast and powerful column and cordon of free States of eighteen millions of inhabitants, whose suffragans have an immense majority in the election of our governmental officers—whose territory is in immediate proximity to our own, spanning and outflanking our whole Northern, North-eastern and North-western frontier, which, before the secession of the Southern Confederacy, were to the slave States in number as 19 to 15; in white population as eighteen millions to eight millions; in representation as 188 to 114; which to the slave States which now remain in the Northern Union, are now in number as 19 to 8; in white population as eighteen millions to five millions, in representation as 188 to 53; which immense preponderance of Commonwealths and population is to be steadily increased by the addition of new States, which is in possession of the power and the patronage of the government, with the ability and the will forever to exclude from it Southern men, and the unlimited power of taxing and trampling upon the hopeless minority.

And in this gathering of huge clouds, black as night—this rolling of the distant thunder, ominous of the approach of the storm—these shocks of the earthquake, heralding an explosion which may shake to atoms the pillars of our social edifice—this

roaring and surging of the mountain waves of the great deep, by the breaking up of whose fountains we may at any moment be overwhelmed, my distinguished friend from Augusta. (Mr. Baldwin,) who I was happy to see receive from fair hands the orator's wreath, not because I agree with him in sentiment, but because I am always pleased to witness rewards to intellectual merit; sees little more than the raving of madmen, joined to the offerings of gallant persons to the toothless old maids of Yankeeedom—these poor old creatures who stalk with eyes dim as lamps living on a short allowance of oil—their cheeks blazing with the permanent blush of the brush—their heads decorated with a profane and alarming eruption of exotic curls, and who make the welkin ring in his own facetious, but expressive language, with the singing of “psalms and *himes*.” Sir, I hope my friend is what I say, with sorrow and humiliation, I am not, a member in good standing and fellowship of some orthodox Christian Church; for I fear that if he is not in now, the scepticism which sees no danger to the South from Northern aggression, will keep him out forever. Knowing the solemn responsibilities of our position here, I feel rather rebuked at venturing upon an anecdote, especially a trite one; but the gentleman really seems as hard of belief as the man who, having been refused a place in the Ark, though the waters of the flood were rising in every direction around him, contemptuously told that distinguished old navigator, Noah, to get along with his old boat, for he did not believe “there would be much of a shower after all.”

Mr. Chairman, a fearful crisis is upon us—our agricultural, mercantile and commercial interests are prostrate—our finances are deranged—our once glorious Union is disrupted—seven stars have left our federative constellation, and others threaten to shoot from their spheres. Waiting in vain for sympathetic responses from the “blue mountains and monumental sea-shore of Virginia,” the Confederate Commonwealths have evinced the prudence of the traveller who stands on his guard, as he hears by the wayside, “the warning rattle of the serpent”—of the Western hunter, who raises his death-dealing rifle when there is a “rush in the jungle,” and he beholds the large green eyes of the spotted tiger glaring upon him. The flower-decked fields of Louisiana; the beautiful savannahs of Georgia and fair Carolina, “from plain to mountain cave,” resound with the din of preparation, and echo the stern notes of defiance. The Gulf States bristle with bayonets—column after column of the Huguenot and Cavalier chivalry deploy into line, and the brilliant casque and more brilliant eye, the sable plume, the “dancing crest” of many a noble leader, gleam along the ranks where flash the banners of a glittering army.

Amid these raging elements, what should be the course of the border States and of Virginia? In my humble judgment they

should at once resume the powers formerly delegated by them to the General Government, and in solid phalanx assert their independence. The time when they could be accused of imprudence for such a course has passed; necessity, not rashness, is now the word. Attempt after attempt at compromise has resulted in failure, until longer asking looks like supplication. Statesman after statesman in the Senate has endeavored, in vain, to calm the storm. Proposition after proposition for peace, which, though patriotically made, was regarded by the Southern men as in part a surrender of their rights, has been persistently voted down by the North. The voice of Virginia for peace, so potential, so successful heretofore with the nation, has been scorned; and having in vain attempted to secure the rights of the South by her separate action, when she again speaks, it should be from the head of the Southern column. Without the Confederate States she would be as helpless as a child. What, if she remained with the Northern, or Northern and middle Confederacy, would become of her cherished doctrine of State-rights, the liturgy of her political prayer book? How would she resist unequal taxation—the plunder of the public treasury, insults and aggression, and the steady encroachments of a relentless sectional majority upon her institutions? Every reading man knows the wild theories of the North and North-West on the subject of government. Scornful derision is their only reply to the cherished States-rights doctrines, to the perfection of which the great men of Virginia have devoted their lives. Trampling this hallowed creed in the dust, they favor the wildest and most partial schemes of internal improvement by the General Government. Rejecting both, an equal distribution of the public lands among the States, and the trust by which they are held, for the common benefit of all, they allow them to be seized by the States where they are situated; they hold that no system of taxation, by duties on imports, however excessive, is unequal or unconstitutional; and advocate dangerous agrarian schemes in the shape of homestead bills and other obnoxious measures for robbing the treasury and ruining the country. If, when the South was a unit, we were unable to stem the tide of injustice and oppression, how hopeless will our condition be now, with this resistless majority of Northern and North-Western States against us, and when seven of our sovereign allies have left the Confederacy? With these great political facts staring me in the face, I am forced to say that guarantees, which, for the sake of peace, I would, at one time, have accepted, I would now consider myself unjust to my constituents to touch. Every moment's delay on the part of Virginia has confirmed the wavering and strengthened the anti-Southern rights party, in the border slave States, while the Gulf States have become more and more exasperated against the North; and the hope of re-construction

grows fainter and fainter. As the breach between the Gulf States and Northern States widens, and the former become more determined to act with perfect independence, so diminishes our chance of having by our side our natural allies, and so increase the perils of Virginia and the necessity for greater demands and guarantees, and for the assertion of her absolute equality in the Confederacy. How are these guarantees to be obtained? By the fiat of Virginia acting singly? The futility of such a hope has already been proved by the failure of the Peace Conference, inaugurated by herself. If acting alone, she is too weak to command respect for her demands, she must seek more strength. Where is that to be obtained? The answer is plain: with the Southern Confederacy. Though there may be matters in which our interests may clash with those of that Confederacy (which I do not admit), yet it is impossible that that clash can be so fatal as that between the slaveholding interests of the South and the anti-slavery aggressions of the North. To the Southern Confederacy alone can we look for a community of interest, for strength, and for real sympathy in the maintenance of that most sensitive and vital of all our domestic institutions, slavery.

We cannot be sure of the effective coöperation of the border States. Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina, notwithstanding the nation is in the throes of revolution, have refused to call conventions. How far North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky have been influenced by the delay of Virginia in taking her position with the Confederate States, or what other causes have weighed with them, I have no means of knowing. But I fear there is too much reason to deplore the free soil proclivities of Delaware and Maryland; and Missouri, on the 20th of last month, by a vote of 69 to 23, actually refused to declare her willingness to unite with the South, even though the Northern States refuse to agree on a just settlement of the slavery question, and the Union is dissolved in consequence thereof. Then we should not await the action of the border States. Delay and uncertainty are ruinous to our interests. The great objection to border State conferences, and all other measures for delay, is that business men are kept in a state of harrassing and ruinous uncertainty, as to where the State is to go and the country is to go—under what revenue system we are to live—as to what amount of protection—stability and safety is to be given to that domestic institution of ours, which is the foundation on which is reared the whole edifice of State prosperity and civilization. Not only do commercial and manufacturing men stand aghast at the doubts and difficulties of the State's future, but slaveholders prepare to weaken our strength by the withdrawal not only of their energy, virtue and ability, but of millions of property from our soil. The motives which impel the latter to leave the State are two fold; first, by our un-

settled policy they fear the reduction of the value of their slaves; and, secondly, they know that of all institutions on earth slavery is the most sensitive, and the most dangerous to be meddled with by any but its friends and owners. They well know that the history of every outside interference with the institution is written in blood—hence they desire to place themselves and the institution in the keeping of its friends. Even though the secession of Virginia should in consequence of her delay fail to give her the proud leadership, which all were once willing to accord her, it would at least put her in a position where the slave interest would be free from attack by legislation—in an alliance with Commonwealths by whom she will not be trampled upon, and will be freed from insult, excessive taxation and ceaseless agitation.

We might have supposed our enemies to have prudence if not principle—shrewdness, if not wisdom and honor; and that this miserable government at Washington, when straining every nerve to keep the border States in the Northern Confederacy, when Virginia was staying the tide which threatened to sweep them from place and power, would have had the tact, not to say the common decency to stay the hand of oppression and plunder. So far from it, at that very time, they seek to prostrate Southern prosperity. For, as the distinguished gentleman from Halifax, (Mr. Bruce,) who first addressed us has shown, at the very moment this Convention was discussing the means of restoring union and fraternity, a Black Republican Congress passed, and a Black Republican President signed the odious Morrell Tariff, more unequal and oppressive to the South than that bill of abominations of 1832, which came near disrupting the government and destroying the confederacy. Go with the Southern Confederacy, sir, and no such oppression awaits us. We will then rest under the wise and statesman-like Constitution of the Confederate States, formed by Southern slaveholders for the benefit of Southern slaveholders. This is the conclusive answer to gentlemen who ask what we are to get by going to the Southern Confederacy, and express doubts as to the security of our rights and interests in it. Is there a gentleman on this floor who is not perfectly satisfied with that Constitution, who sees any thing in it incompatible with the interests of Virginia, or which does not better secure them than the Constitution under which we live. Moreover, the construction of an instrument is secondary in importance only to the terms of the instrument itself. The Constitution of the Confederate States will be administered by a Southern Congress, a Southern President, with a Southern Cabinet, and construed by Southern Judges, all looking to the interest of Southern slaveholders; and not by a Northern free soil executive and abolition Congress, and a Supreme Court to

be abolitionized as rapidly as death shall remove the remainder of the venerable States-rights Judges who now grace its bench.

The distinguished gentleman from Fauquier, (Mr. Scott,) argued that in ranging herself with the Southern Confederacy, Virginia would go as a mendicant, ignorant of the manner in which she was to be received. As a mendicant, sir? Why, have not the States which led the secession movement; sent commissioners to Virginia, both before and since their withdrawal, not only inviting but imploring her to join the Southern Confederacy?

Again, sir, he has argued that the Government would not brook our withdrawal and it would be equivalent to war, and that the act would forever alienate the Northern States from us, so that there could be no reconstruction of the Union. I do not see that the withdrawal of Virginia from the Confederacy, without aggression upon the Federal Government, will produce war any more than the mere withdrawal of the Confederate States has produced war. I apprehend that if war springs up between the rival Confederacies, it will not be in consequence of the isolated act of secession, but in consequence of some controversy with regard to the forts, and the collection of the revenue. And if it be said that the Government has up to this time stayed its hostile hand to keep Virginia with the Northern Confederacy I answer that if she secedes, the same policy will probably be pursued to keep in that Confederacy the remaining border slave States. And, with regard to the alienation of the Northern States from us by our alliance with the Southern Confederacy, and the consequent lessening of the chances of reconstruction, all I have to say is, that if, after all the injuries, insults and indignities heaped upon us by the Northern people, they are so sensitive, so squeamish as to make our union with the Gulf States a mortal offence, all hope of reconstruction is gone forever. The distinguished gentleman, (Mr. Scott,) touched upon a subject which has already been alluded to more than once on this floor. It was started by the distinguished senior delegate from Bedford, (Mr. Goggin,) and refers to the difficulty, in case of the secession of Virginia, and her alliance with the Southern Confederacy, which the State and the Confederacy would have in discharging their reciprocal obligations. I understood the argument to refer in the beginning to the difficulty of the transit of our Congressional representatives to Montgomery, and I thought it a strange position, when only a few days before Commissioners from the seceded States of Georgia, South Carolina and Mississippi had passed, without molestation and with welcome through unseceded States lying between us and the Southern Confederacy. In the discharge of these reciprocal duties there would be little difficulty in time of peace; and if it be said that in time of war it would be so great as to make secession for that reason

unwise; I submit with great deference that the argument proves too much—for it would show that we could not safely secede the State, even if every effort of compromise with the North and every proposition proposed in this body—border State propositions and all—shall fail. In other words that we are helpless in the grasp of abolitionism. It is a difficulty then which, as we may have to meet it, we should look in the face and be prepared for it. I hope that it will be found more imaginary than real. If Virginia should join the Southern Confederacy, I should hope there would be no difficulty, in case of danger, in marching an army from one to the other through the Southern and friendly States still in the old Union, and that while those States would resist the march of a Federal army, the spirit of their people, of their institutions, the feeling of Southern fraternity, the principle of honor would prevent their opposing the march of Southern forces from Virginia to the Confederate States, or from the latter to the former. Besides, it is to be hoped that a Southern navy will start like magic into life, by which her troops can be transported where they may be needed. Then let Virginia go with her Southern sisters, and in concert with them demand her rights of the North. We have already sufficient evidence of the inability of Virginia, acting singly, to obtain proper guarantees of the North and its abolition government, and of the indisposition of the North to accede to the demands of a disunited South in the failure of the Peace Conference inaugurated by her, of the Crittenden propositions, and of various other propositions of peace offered by Southern men, all of which were voted down and branded with scorn.

Though we contend that the Peace Congress propositions were a virtual surrender of Southern rights, and point to their failure in Congress to show that the North is not willing even to give us a part of our rights, the distinguished gentleman from Augusta, (Mr. Baldwin,) says we are estopped in any reference to the subject because the Virginia Senators, Hunter and Mason, voted along with Seward against the propositions, but the answer is plain. Seward voted against the report, because it gave the South more than he was willing it should have. Hunter and Mason voted against it because it gave the South less than its due. Does any human being suppose that Seward voted against it because it gave the South too little, or that the Virginia Senators opposed it because it gave the South too much? The bare statement of the proposition is its own best refutation, and there is an end of it.

I confess, Mr. Chairman, that my hopes of a reconstruction of the old Union are slight indeed. I fear that a separation of the States is eternal, but I am convinced that if there is any hope of reconstruction, it must be from the prompt secession of Virginia, and her union with the Southern Confederacy. Of one thing I

am certain, after the terrible ordeal through which the country has been carried and is now passing, the Gulf States will never return without constitutional amendments, securing them thorough and absolute equality with the North. It is vain for any man to tell me the Union can be reconstructed without an utter abandonment of those principles founded in inequality, injustice and wrong, but which are the very existence of the free soil party. That there will be such an abandonment, is almost hoping against hope; and almost equally futile is the hope that the Gulf States will return on any terms. But, if miraculously, almost, the free soil party, from a returning sense of justice, should be willing to accord us this equality, nothing but a union of Virginia with the States of the Southern Confederacy will bring them back. My distinguished friend from Halifax, who last addressed us, (Mr. Flournoy,) referred to the proud position of Virginia. He told us in eloquent terms that at her command the government had stayed its hostile hand against the South. My heart responded to every sentence of his beautiful eulogy on the old Commonwealth, for I am one of those who so reverence and love the Old Dominion, that even when dissenting from her line of policy, my tongue will utter nothing in regard to her, unless couched in the most humble and respectful terms, such as a dutiful son might employ towards an aged, venerated, adored mother. If, in the sentiment of my friend, her position was proud, noble, glorious, when acting singly, what would be her attitude when, assuming her ancient and natural leadership which she has been implored to take, she marches at the head of the glorious Southern column? She would then be entitled to address the seceded States, and remonstrate with them in the spirit of an elder sister—she could say to them, sisters I have left the house of your enemies and are with you in the house of our friends—I ask you not to abandon a single right or a solitary principle of honor—I will resist the invasion of either, with you, to the death. I am prepared with you to lay down a platform, an ultimatum of amendments to the Constitution, giving you perfect equality with the North and securing in all respects your full rights. If these are denied, with you ignore the old Confederacy forever—but if they are accorded to us, why do not go back with me, reconstruct a once glorious Union, and, forgetting the bitter recollections of the past, rest again with me under the shadow of that flag, which has made our name so respectable, glorious and renowned among the nations of the earth? For my own part, much as I have loved the old Union and would love it now, freed from oppression and wrong, I think we have no safety in it unless these seceded States return. Having ranged ourselves with them we would go back when they return; and if that is never to be, then we should remain under the wise Constitution of the Confederate States, with pow-

erful allies, and not be reduced to the weakness, the impotence of being alone. If all the slave States will not join the Southern Confederacy, I would, at least, make it as strong as we can by the addition of Virginia. The Northern States will then see the result, if they cannot comprehend the guilt of their acts, that the subjugation of the South is hopeless; and, (harshly as it may grate on their haughty and guilty pride,) that unless the war on our institutions is ended, and our equality admitted every where, and every where around our property as around theirs is thrown the protecting ægis of the law, the Union is gone forever. The eternal principles enunciated in three short words may re-construct the Union; they are truth, justice, equality—none other ever will. Then, sir, I favor the prompt secession of Virginia. This brings me to an examination of the report of the Committee on Federal Relations, which I shall make with great respect and regard for the gentlemen who compose the Committee. Looking, as it does, to other modes of redress, than the prompt resumption by Virginia of her delegated powers, I cannot give it my support—nor could I approve it, even if I was willing to live in the Northern Confederacy, without the Confederate States of the South. There are objections to the 2d resolution of the first partial report of the Committee, but I pass them by to the 4th resolution, the latter part of which says:

“If the equal admission of slave labor and free labor into any Territory, excites unfriendly conflict between the systems, a fair partition of the Territories ought to be made between them, and each system ought to be protected within the limits assigned to it, by the laws necessary for its proper development.”

Sir, that resolution defers to what, in my opinion, is an unjustifiable, illegal and abominable prejudice of the North against the institutions of the South. It holds out the idea that there is a moral degradation attached to those institutions, and that Northern men are contaminated in being brought in contact with them, and therefore in the very teeth of the decision of the Supreme Court, Southern men shall have no protection for their property in one-half of the Territory, while the property of Northern men is protected in all. I never will, willingly, give my vote for any resolution which sanctions such a principle.

The time has come when, if we are to live with these Northern people, they must give up the idea that we are a degraded class. They must admit that this busy-body intermeddling of theirs, in which they undertake to brand us and our ancestors with being an inferior race, in a moral point of view, shall cease. They must cease to insult us by telling us that our property in slaves is a claim so infamous, so polluting, as to be put under the ban of Northern morality and excluded from its constitutional right to protection in the Territories, or there never can be peace between us, and the sooner we separate the better.

The distinguished gentleman from Augusta, (Mr. Baldwin,) illustrated his views in favor of a division of Territory, and the exclusion of slavery from one-half, by this example: Suppose, said he, a Northern man moved into a territory belonging to the United States, he would have what he, (Mr. Baldwin,) termed to be a very natural prejudice, but what I conceive to be a most outrageous one, against the institution of slavery; he might consider that there was something degrading in slavery, and therefore be unwilling that his family should live in a community where such an institution was tolerated. Well, sir, what is the meaning of that? The plain English of it is, you gentlemen of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana and Texas, and the other Southern States, hold an institution which is enervating and degrading, contrary to the spirit of the age, to freedom, chivalry, honor, justice and right.

Now, sir, is not that an impertinent and most unjustifiable stigma upon our institutions, our social system. "Look upon this picture and then upon that."

Suppose a Southern man chooses to go there and to say, "I don't like this system by which boys are kept all day long learning tricks of Yankeedom, in making wooden nutmegs and swindling clocks, which are "no go," without any opportunity of cultivation or refinement. I do not intend that this Territory, to which I have brought my children, shall be without that peculiar institution to which the South owes so much of her civilization—virtue, refinement and chivalry, I demand that the Northern men be excluded and that the Southern institution be planted here."

Now, sir, would it not be just as fair and right for him to exclude the Yankee; as for the Yankee to exclude him? Both being citizens of a free country, I say, in the language of the Supreme Court, "that the territory is acquired for their equal and common benefit, and, if open to any, it must be open to all upon equal and the same terms," and, that the Constitution, recognizing slaves as property, and pledging the Federal Government to protect it, is bound to redeem that pledge as to the Southern man's slaves, as well as to the Northern man's clocks or nutmegs. If Southern men go into the territory with their slaves in sufficient numbers to make it a slave State, then it ought to be a slave State. If Northern men have the ability to exclude the system, not by Emigrant Aid Societies and Sharp's rifles, but by superior industry in emigration, and consequently by superior numbers, let them exclude it, and let the matter be determined when a State Constitution is formed by a Convention of the people of the territory according to the true States-rights doctrine. So much as to that resolution, sir.

Again, sir, there is the 8th resolution, which acknowledges the right of States to withdraw from the Federal Government,

and is so far right, and which says that the people of Virginia "will never consent that the Federal power, which is in part their power, shall be exercised for the purpose of subjugating the people of such States to the Federal authority." The objection to that resolution is that it is not strong enough. It does not recognize the fact that Virginia not only ought not to consent that the Federal power shall be exerted for the purpose of subjugating the people of the seceded States, but that she ought to resist the subjugation of those States with all the material power at her command, for the simple reason that if the seceded States are subjugated, we will fall an easy prey to the common enemy, the North.

But, sir, the most extraordinary resolution of all is the eleventh, which, after some preliminary sentences, goes on to say—"Virginia, therefore, requests the people of the several States either by the popular vote, or in Conventions similar to her own, to respond, at their earliest convenience, to the positions assumed in the foregoing resolutions, and the proposed amendments to the Constitution of the United States hereunto appended."

Well, now sir, that gives the Northern people of this Confederacy a *carte blanche* to delay this matter if they please to all eternity. There is no compulsion upon them even to call Conventions. They have under this resolution an absolute unlimited right to respond to the action of Virginia by their popular vote. Now, sir, let us see how that will work. I take it every body knows that the mere popular vote amounts to nothing—that all the people can do by this popular vote is to influence those who, as their representatives, are bound to carry it out as an indication of the will of the constituent body.

Now, mark you, the redress sought for the South is to be effected by amendments to the Constitution. Well, how is the Constitution to be amended? The only two modes by which it can be done are set forth in its 5th article. One is that Congress by a two-thirds vote shall propose amendments, which, when ratified by three-fourths of the States, by their Legislatures, or Conventions, shall become parts of the Constitution. The other is, by two-thirds of the States, by their Legislatures, uniting in the call to Congress for a National Convention; and the action of that Convention is also to be ratified by three-fourths of the States, by their Legislatures, or in Conventions, before it becomes valid. Well, sir, under this resolution the people are to respond. The popular will is to be brought to bear on Congress, so that by a two-thirds vote of both houses it will propose the desired amendments to the Constitution, or upon the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, inducing them to apply to Congress to call a National Convention for proposing amendments, which in either case shall become parts of the Constitution, when ratified by three-fourths of the several States.

The popular voice then to be of any avail must be brought to bear upon Congress or the Legislatures—then again upon the Legislatures or Conventions, as the case may be.

Do not gentlemen see that this is a round about process that will be interminable? “By the popular vote”—when? where? How expressed? how arrived at? By whom demanded? Popular vote in the election of local officers, members of the Legislatures, Judges, Congressmen, or President and Vice President? At which of these elections is this popular vote to be expressed? Under whose direction? Whose fiat is to be had in reference to the constitutional amendments proposed by this Convention? Sir, it is made the business of nobody, and they may put off this response to all eternity; for, mark you, they have the alternative of ignoring everything else except a direct popular vote. Sir, we hear of some very remarkable names among these long, lank, lantern-jawed Puritans of the North, which, whether they have any real existence or not, are made sufficiently classic by the genius of Irving. If I recollect aright, he speaks in that delightful embodiment of wit and humor, Knickerbocker, of certain selectmen of Yankeedom, rejoicing in the musical titles of “Preserved Fish, Habakkuk Nutter, Return Strong, and Determined Cock.” Very similar to the names of these same Puritans in Cromwell’s army and Parliament, such as “Praise-God Barebones,” “General Cry-aloud-and-spare-not,” “Colonel Fight-the-good-fight,” and “Captain Smite-them-hip-and-thigh.” Well, sir, the actual working of this proposition would be to request the people, to request Congress, to request the Legislature, to request Conventions, to respond to the action of Virginia. Very much like requesting Preserved Fish, to request Habakkuk Nutter, to request Return Strong, to request Determined Cock, to request General Cry-aloud-and-spare-not, to request Colonel Fight-the-good fight, to request Captain Smite-them-hip-and-thigh, to request Praise-God Barebones to do the South justice. And if they do not do it some time between now and the day of judgment, we will play the very old Harry with them. [Laughter.]

It seems to me, sir, that the South will get what she wants under this process when the archangel Gabriel blows his trump and frightens this crop-eared abolition crew into honest dealing with us, and not before. As well might Prince Rupert and the Royal Charles have asked their rights of the barebones Parliament.

The twelfth resolution says that the people of Virginia will wait any reasonable time.

Now, sir, I am utterly opposed to any such indefinite language as that, and, giving these men, who have always trifled with our rights, the liberty to wait as long as they please. Let us inform them what we mean by a reasonable time—that if they do

not accede to our requests by a certain period, we will dissolve our connexion with them.

The 14th resolution proposes a Border State Conference, and is objectionable because of the delay which it involves.

Then comes the 2d report of the Committee.

The first section says, that involuntary servitude is prohibited North of 36 degrees 30 minutes, and that South of 36 degrees 30 minutes it is not prohibited. Well, now, Mr. Chairman, that is securing the Northern share to the labor of the North, and failing to secure the Southern share to the labor of the South. The Supreme Court has decided in the Dred Scott case that slavery is entitled to protection everywhere in the territories. Now, if we are to surrender a part of our rights under that decision, and to give to the North one-half of the territories, when the law adjudges us equal rights in all, and North of 36 degrees 30 minutes slavery is prohibited, in God's name, South of that line let it be PROTECTED. Let us not be satisfied with a mere declaration that it is not to be prohibited.

Then, there is the fifth section, which my friend from Richmond, who first addressed us, (Mr. Randolph,) proved conclusively, looks strongly in its terms, (whatever may be its intention,) to a prohibition of the introduction of slaves to this State from the Southern Confederacy.

Then comes the sixth section, in which it is said that if the reclamation of a fugitive slave is prevented, by intimidation of, or violence against a Marshal, he shall be paid for out of the Treasury of the United States; thus saddling the South with one-half the burthen of paying for her stolen property. The distinguished gentleman from Prince George, (Mr. Rives,) who addressed the Convention the other evening, made an argument upon the subject, which seems to have brought down the House, but which struck me as a most remarkable one. He reduced the subject to mills in his calculation, and, with great respect, I thought the argument as small as the illustration. He went into a very interesting recital of a Southern man going North and bringing back, not his fugitive slave, but \$1,000 from the public treasury, in his place, and then being laughed at by his wife when, on counting the cost, it was found to be only two mills. In the first place, it seems to me a very extraordinary thing, when a great principle is at stake, to measure it by the mere matter of dollars and cents. When our ancestors resisted the stamp act, was there any calculation as to the number of cents each man would have to pay? No, sir. It was the principle—the violation of their rights—that they resisted, without stopping to inquire whether it would cost them a copper or not. Thus it should always be with nations in establishing the institutions under which they are to live. But, Mr. Chairman, the argu-

ment is a mistaken one as a matter of fact. If one or two slaves only are lost, then the cost will be small. But, suppose, under this process by which the United States undertakes to pay for all the stampeded slaves, thousands of them are lost in a year, the cost would be a more serious matter than the gentleman supposes. Added to the outrage and wrong—in the violation of our rights, of comity and fraternity—a premium would be offered to these Abolitionists to run off our slaves to be paid for out of the Treasury of the United States.

Great complaints have been made of the so-called rashness of these Cotton States, and of their failure to act in concert with the other slave States. Mr. Chairman, statesmen have to deal with questions practically. There is no propriety in standing upon stilts. In matters of individual dealing, when A and B meet each other upon the field of honor, there may be as much display of chivalry as suits the parties—either may even go as far as a distinguished gentleman once did when he pointed out the white vest of his adversary, below a black coat, as presenting too fair a mark in the conflict; but, in a representative capacity, we have no right to be governed by such nice points of etiquette. Sir, we have the interests of our constituents and of our country in our keeping, and the question is not whether the Southern States have acted with perfect prudence and courtesy, but whether, under the facts as they exist, the interests of the State is with the Northern or with the Southern Confederacy. And, it seems to me, that the imputation of rashness or want of courtesy at all, to the Southern Confederacy, is rather illiberal, in view of their invitation to us, both before and since their secession, to cooperate with them.

Equally illiberal seems to me to be the complaint, that they have endeavored to coerce and drag us out of the Union. We must admit their sovereignty, or abandon our own, and sovereignty carries with it the right to secede.

Now, does a State, when she thinks her safety and honor require her to withdraw from the Confederacy, coerce States that do not withdraw? She uses no force upon them. She merely exercises her own constitutional rights—her own attribute of sovereignty. If you and I, sir, were settled on the Western frontier, in a perilous district, surrounded by savages or robbers, and if you, after having remonstrated with me time and again about the danger of remaining, and notified me that if I did not leave the place with you, you would quit it by yourself, went away, would I be justified in saying that you insulted and coerced me? And yet I might as well say that, as that the seceding States have coerced and insulted us, or disparaged us in any way, by withdrawing from the Confederacy, after having warned us they would do so, and having invited us to go along with them. The coercion which a man exercises on another by the

assertion of his unquestioned rights, is a very different sort of coercion from that of wrongful force; if not, every industrious man may be said, by force of example, wrongfully to coerce every lazy man in his neighborhood to be energetic; and, by a like argumentative fallacy, the charge of coercion may be made by every bad man against every good man, by every slow man against every prompt man, who, by example, keeps up so high a standard of action and morality in his community as to brand a stigma on a less elevated standard. One cannot be rightfully complained of for exercising his unalienable rights, merely because thereby another is left in an unsafe position.

I listened, sir, with great pleasure to your (Mr. Montague's) argument on the right of secession. I do not think it necessary for me to argue that subject—first, because you have discussed it ably; and, secondly, because I do not consider it a practical question. This matter of secession lies in a nutshell, and can be disposed of practically, in a few sentences just as well as in a whole volume. I have not heard any gentleman upon this floor deny the right of revolution. Every one who has spoken here admits that if the oppressions and wrongs of a people are intolerable, they have that right. The practical question, then, is, do our wrongs justify resistance? If not, we have not the *moral* right of secession, though the technical right were “nominated in the bond,” written in the Constitution. The aim of my argument has been to show that our oppressions do give us the right of resistance—in other words, of revolution. That we have not exercised it, is because we chose not to do so. We have *suffered*, not consented to our wrongs. What, then, is the right of revolution? It is the right of an oppressed people, even in unorganized bodies, to resist the Government. If unorganized bodies, in the existing state of things, have the right of resistance, *a fortiori*, and as a conclusion of both logic and common sense, organized and sovereign Commonwealths, free from anarchy, and with settled institutions, have the same right.

It has been said, sir, that the South has submitted to, and sanctioned all the aggressions of the North. I think that argument has been well nigh annihilated, first by my distinguished friend from Charles City, (Mr. Tyler,) and next by the gentleman who now presides over this committee, (Mr. Montague.) But even suppose it were so, does anybody deny that these aggressions have been grievous wrongs? If they have been submitted to for the sake of peace, does that prove that they ought to be endured for ever? So far from being an argument to be used against us, it is one of the strongest to justify our present resistance.

The eloquent gentleman from Kanawha, (Mr. Summers,) told us that he did not despair of the Republic, and argued to show that we would get our rights from the North; that all the phases

of the argument in favor of slavery, including the biblical argument, and its effects—moral, social, political and civilizing—upon the country, were better understood at the North than ever before.

And the gentleman from Augusta, (Mr. Baldwin,) told us that there were at this time more pro-slavery men in the North than there were ten years ago in the whole world. Now, sir, the answer to all this is, that it is idle to talk of the great number of pro-slavery men there, when they are out-voted in every election, and when, in their halls of legislation, they are defeated in every measure looking to Southern rights, and utterly powerless to stay the vandal tide of sectionalism. While the distinguished gentleman from Kanawha is arguing to show the advancing enlightenment of the Northern mind on the subject of our domestic institution, the logic of facts and figures, as State after State increases her abolition majority, is utterly demolishing his beautiful theory. What use do the Northern people make of their increased knowledge? Are they any better for understanding the arguments by which the able and eloquent statesmen and divines of all sections have demonstrated that slavery is right, morally, socially and politically? that in their assaults on the institution they are invading our rights and trampling the Constitution in the dust? No, sir; their aggressions advance with their increase of light, in a sort of geometrical progression, until they threaten to overwhelm the South and destroy her institutions. This is the way in which they respond to the argument. In 1840, the Abolitionists cast 7,000 votes. By 1844, they showed that they had received great light upon the subject and were disposed to do perfect justice to the South, by increasing the vote of 7,000 up to 62,140. In 1848, they show that they are still further enlightened, still more benevolent, by increasing the last vote to 100,000. In 1852, they exhibit a still farther perception of our rights by polling 157,196 votes; and in 1856, by polling 341,812 votes; in 1860, by an overwhelming number of votes, they possess themselves of the Government and bring all its patronage and power to bear against our institutions.

But it has been repeatedly argued here, that for all these things, the Federal Government is not responsible; that it has made no aggression on the South; has taken no part in the passage of personal liberty bills, and has reclaimed some fugitive slaves. Sir, I think it has been shown you, clearly and conclusively, that the Federal Government has trespassed upon the rights of the South by legislation. Thousands upon thousands of fugitive slaves have never been reclaimed. And, further, the argument resolves itself into this: The Federal Government has or has not power to secure the recapture of fugitive slaves. If it has the power, it has been faithless, because, in countless instances, it has not exercised it; if it has not the power, it is im-

potent, and powerless to protect us; in either case the result is the same, and the Government, in default of a change for the better, is a nuisance, and ought to be abated.

Sir, who can count the number of slaves which have not been reclaimed? Look at the report of the committee appointed by the General Assembly of Virginia, to investigate the Harper's Ferry invasion. It shows the escape of numerous fugitive slaves, and, in some cases, the murder of their masters endeavoring to reclaim them. The reclamation of the fugitive Anthony Burns, under one of the late administrations, required the entire military organization of a State, with a large force of the Federal troops; and though the slave was worth only some \$700 or \$800, he cost the treasury of the United States upwards of \$100,000. Do you tell me, then, that this is a Government of which the South has no right to complain, and which secures protection to the South? Sir, if this is protection, God save us from injustice and wrong!

I have been struck, sir, with the many attempts and ingenious arguments which have been made upon this floor to apologize for the North; to underrate the enormity of Northern aggressions upon us; to prove that these Northern people are—what they are not—just and true to their obligations to the South. The gentleman from Prince George (Mr. Rives,) read you the amounts of subscriptions in Northern cities to the towns of Norfolk and Portsmouth during the prevalence of yellow fever a few years ago. Well, sir, what does that show? Does it show anything but what everybody knows and what we all are willing to acknowledge, that there are some noble spirits and generous people in the North? Sir, when the British government was pushing our ancestors to the wall, depriving them of their rights and liberties, and driving them to revolution, how many generous spirits, private individuals and public orators were there in the mother country who protested against the whole system of oppression? But, though grateful for this sympathy, our noble forefathers considered it no reason for submitting to oppression and wrong.

Again, sir, it is argued that the claim of the South to equality of rights in the Territories is a mere abstraction, that slavery cannot and will not go into them. If this be so, it is a wanton exercise of power on the part of this Northern majority to exclude the Southern people from an equal right to carry their property into the Territories. But the truth is, it is not an abstraction. No wonder that slavery does not go into the Territories when the moment it enters it is met there by Emigrant Aid Societies and Sharp's rifles? Though Southern men could get the most fertile lands at the lowest price, they dare not carry slavery into the territory where it is so insecure.

The eloquent gentleman from Kanawha, (Mr. Summers,) asked us if we were willing to make the Western section of the

State the outside row of the Southern Confederacy—if we were willing to bring the Canada line down to the Border? Well, sir, I think the Canada line has been brought down practically to the border years ago. I scout the idea that (with a few exceptions,) the gallant men of the West are not as true to the interests of Virginia as the men of any other section of the State. I cannot believe that Virginians are wanting in fidelity to the State. I have a great respect for a Virginian wherever I meet him. I am always inclined “to give him my hand and call him brother.” And I have the most earnest desire to afford to these gallant gentlemen of Western Virginia what I consider they need—protection for their property, their homes, and their families. Make them the “outside row?” Why, sir, I ask if they are not already the “outside row?” Have they any protection there for their property? What prevents their slaves from being stampeded under the operation of the underground rail road? What has become of their slaves? I have taken the trouble to look a little into this matter, and a most remarkable state of facts presents itself to me upon this examination. I find, sir, that the border counties, with the number of slaves in each one, are as follows:

Monongalia.....	101
Wetzel.....	10
Marshall.....	29
Ohio.....	100
Brooke.....	18
Hancock.....	2
Tyler.....	18
Pleasants.....	15
Wood.....	176
Jackson.....	55
Mason.....	386
Cabell.....	305
Wayne.....	143

Now, compare these figures with those representing the slaves of other counties, with those showing the number in Hanover, where there are 10,000, or in Halifax, where there are 14,000.

Perhaps these gentlemen can inform me what has become of their slaves. I ask whether the abolitionists have not carried them away? Pressing thus upon the border and driving slavery from those counties, what, I ask, is to prevent them from pressing on still further and pushing it from the counties which come next in order, and so rolling on the wave of sectionalism till they sweep slavery away through Virginia, through the Confederate States, and into the far South?

Now, sir, I want to stop this fearful wave—to roll it back from our Western brethren, their homes and families. To effect this, let the Southern States in solid column leave the Northern Con-

federacy, and establish on our free State frontier a line of military posts which will prevent further encroachments by the abolitionists.

Sir, if the slaveholding States of this country were ocean bound, there would be no danger from encroachments on the part of the Abolitionists. But they are not ocean-bound. We have a Northern frontier, bounded by the free States—by Pennsylvania and Ohio—and as well might you attempt to keep back the waves of the ocean, after you have destroyed the shores of that ocean, as to attempt to keep back the aggressions of this freesoil party of the North, unless you interpose some such barrier as I have mentioned, to stop them.

It is said that if we separate from the North, we will have to keep an immense standing army, to the ruin of the country. The gentleman from Halifax, (Mr. Bruce,) and my friend from Albemarle, (Mr. Holcombe,) have shown you that there are no fears of that. War is contrary to the spirit of the age. The people of the North are people of commerce and of peace. They will not support a large standing army, and we will not be compelled to raise a single man more than they raise.

But, sir, this idea that the maintenance of an army of 15,000 or 20,000 men is going to ruin our hoped-for Southern Confederacy, is a most preposterous one. How is it possible that it can be correct? Ruin such a country, sir, by the appropriation of a few millions of dollars for its defence? Why, do not some of the most prosperous and flourishing countries in the world maintain immense standing armies of hundreds of thousands of men; and could not our giant Southern country maintain twenty or thirty thousand? Why, sir, when our cities were villages, our farms forests, when our large and beautiful stores were small shops, the want of a proper military force enabled Tarlton and Arnold, in the half of a short summer, to destroy twelve millions of property in Virginia; but that did not ruin her; though young and feeble and bleeding, she struggled and overcame it. When, then, the great Southern Confederacy is in successful operation; when the commercial navies of the world ride in her harbors; when, relieved from Northern taxation, she has grown to be independent and prosperous—she will no more feel the burthen of maintaining an army of fifteen, or twenty, or thirty thousand men, than would a giant feel the stroke of a pigmy's arm. Then fort after fort would spring up along our free State frontier, and be manned by this army; thus would we protect our brethren, their homes and property. The Federal army is now engaged in defending our extreme Western settlements, stretching from the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, south, to the British possessions, north. In case of separation our Federal army would not have to defend the immense territory north of the line of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes, where you have

Mormons and savages; our half would be south of that line. The Indian troubles south of that line will probably be settled in a short time. Indeed, I think there is little difficulty experienced with the Indians anywhere south of thirty-six degrees 30 minutes, except in Texas. Troubles there will soon be ended. So that the whole strength of our force could be concentrated in military posts on our free State frontier, and thus raise a sort of a Chinese wall, and stay, if anything will, this tide of Northern aggression.

Mr. Chairman, I have endeavored briefly, by historical facts, to show the aggressions of these Northern people upon the rights and interests of the people of the South; that they were ever advancing, never receding; that our only safety was with the Southern Confederacy. I have shown directly where and when assaults have been made upon us by States and individuals as well as by the General Government.

Sir, is there nothing else that should stir the blood of a free and gallant people, except interference with their rights? Is slander nothing? Is insult after insult nothing? Is defamation in foreign lands of the honor of our State and section nothing? They have libelled our great names, abused our fathers and our families, and desecrated the very graves of our ancestors by claiming that slaveholders are unworthy of association with them.

Sir, neither individuals or nations can submit, habitually, to insult and indignity, without degradation so fearful, that they become ultimately as base as the denunciations of the oppressors proclaim them. The spiritual dilapidation goes on; it may be slowly, but surely, and soon or late moral ruin is the result. On the other hand, men cannot be made slavish or mean, who strongly will to be free and noble. Before they can be trampled on, their "spirits high" must be bowed to the dust. Then may it truly be said of them:

"Enough—no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell.
Yes—self-abasement paved the way
To villain bonds and despot sway."

Sir, I for one, will never consent to live or hold intercourse with men who claim that I am socially their inferior. The insolent pretension of those who—whether nations or individuals—have invariably the least right to make it; the bloated arrogance and impudence which prefers such a claim, will be met by true men with the scorn and defiance of border chivalry.

"I tell thee thou'rt defied!
And if thou said'st I am not peer .
To any lord in Scotland here—
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus—thou hast lied!"

The fanatical, meddling, overbearing disposition of the Puritans—their arrogant, conceited and wicked determination to ignore the moral fact that individuals as well as nations have quite enough to do to keep evil from their own characters without interfering with others; their ultraism and persistent claim to regulate and control the social rights and customs of other people, has deluged more than one country in blood. These detestable qualities altogether outweigh everything that is good in them, and render them the greatest curse that can be inflicted on a country. It would have been better for humanity had their Plymouth rock been riven by an earthquake and their Mayflower sunk to the bottom of the ocean. In England they persecuted the families, razed the houses and cut down the ancestral oaks of the cavaliers. So bitter—so arrogant—so conceited and tenacious of their peculiar views—so intolerant were they, that they became separated from the great body of constitutional reformers, and the reactionary spirit of a gallant people hurled them from power like Satan from Paradise, and drove them beyond the *ocean*. Whether on American soil they are to relearn in bitterness and blood this historical lesson; whether after having desolated with fire and sword the homes of the South, they are again, by the outraged spirit of conservatism, to be voted a nuisance, and pushed over or into the sea, I am not prophet enough to tell. But this I do know, that “joined to their idols,” and failing to profit by the evil example of their ancestors, they are again stirring up strife on another continent—that with no earthly right to interfere with them in any way, they have chosen to make themselves the bitter enemies of the peace, happiness and safety of the gentlemen of the South; that while gentlemen hate strife and are constitutionally quiet, social and peaceable, yet, combining science with courage, when driven to resistance they pursue their enemies with the terrible energy of furies—the resistless sweep of avenging angels—and that while these our hereditary foes were driven from Britain with execrations and curses, the descendants of the bleeding Cavaliers sit again in peace and happiness in their once desolate but now beautiful homes, or under the shade of their renovated groves.

Mr. Chairman, no man has looked with more reverence on the flag, or regarded with more idolatrous fondness the Union of these States than I. I have remembered how that flag floated in triumph in conflicts when the only aspirations of the heroes and patriots who poured out their blood beneath its folds were for the honor and glory of their country; and I have remembered how the majestic Union of our fathers carried into every clime, not the trembling terror inspired by the Roman name, when its eagles o’ershadowed the world, but the awe, the respect, the love which the great heart of the whole race accords to freedom, to

virtue and to justice; and I have said, in my "heart of hearts," should the South, to preserve its own existence, have to strike down that flag, her every true son would exclaim, in mournful resolution, with the great bard of Avon: "This sorrow's heavenly; it strikes where it doth love." It has been present to my mind that this great country was formed by the compact of independent sovereignties, not with the right, first, of libel, and then of destruction by one part of the institutions of the other, but with an endorsement of the institutions of the whole country, and an engagement of honor, and of law, in the very act of Union, to defend these institutions to the death. Sir, I am forced to remember how these solemn covenants have been fraudulently and foully repudiated by the North. How that Pharisaical land of every ism which degrades man to a level with brutes, Infidelity, Spiritualism, Mormonism, Free Soil—which means to rob a partner of all the partnership effects—Free Speech, which, with them, is the right of rank and reeking blackguardism, and atrocious slander on the South; Free Love, which means to roll back the tide of refinement and virtue, for the saturnalia, the hell of vileness and iniquity, has, in the blended spirit of avarice and fanaticism, not only assailed our fair fame abroad, but our very household gods at home. They, our pseudo brothers, have sought to direct upon us, in foreign lands, "the slow moving finger of scorn." Great names adorn our Southern annals—Washington and Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, Carroll and Rutledge, and a host of others. Splendid mausoleums mark the resting places of these great men, and they have still nobler monuments in the hearts of their countrymen. But the sacrilegious effort is made to blacken their sacred fame because they were slaveholders. Added to this, it is sought to outrage the reputation and profane the sanctity of the social circle. Our very ancestors are to be libelled because they were slaveholders. Sir, facts, stored in the memory of every gentleman in this hall, give the lie to these atrocious slanders.

Who is there, reared in Virginia, whose memory, in reverting to the days of his childhood, does not give him a thousand pleasant memories of the patriarchal institution of the State—of the good will between the servants and the families of their masters—of the many errands of kindness on which he has been sent to old or sick domestics of the household, and of the scenes in which these domestics would bless with their latest breath the benevolence of their owners? Raise the curtain of the past, and, forgetting the stern and wasting duties of manhood, he is carried back to the time when he was a happy member of a happy family circle. Before him, in memory, rises the aged and honored head and patriarch of the house, whose feeble steps, whose personal goodness, whose position of common ancestor, commanded for him the pious love and care of

his descendants. He recalls the manly form of one whose kind words linger forever in his memory—who bore to him the sacred name of father. A soft yet bright eye sheds upon him its mild and beautiful light in pity and in love as his youthful mother watches him with tenderest devotion. As childhood fades in the past and boyhood puts on its free and joyous attributes, that mother's love still encircles him like the atmosphere of a holier and better clime. Her tears fall upon his head like the dews of Heaven. Her prayers ascend to God in fond and fervent aspirations for blessings upon him even beyond the lot of man; and in after years amid the stirring scenes of life, the memory of that mother's counsel and that mother's love will better defend him from dishonor than a thousand bristling bayonets. Time rolls on, and these sacred forms depart, and he exclaims in bitterness of heart, all, all gone to return no more forever. They have sought the sanctuary of the dead, where repose other honored ones in whose veins once coursed the same life blood. Green grows the long grass and sweetly bloom the flowers planted on their graves by the hand of affection, and in the star-light and sun-light glimmers in palid lustre the monumental marble, with the simple inscriptions of departed worth. With throbbing brow the descendant of that house says these were mine, and though dead their pure and virtuous memories live. But Abolitionism, that fiendish libeller, says *cursed be they for they were slaveholders*. Sir, this is enough to make the blood of a Southern freeman not only boil, but dance through his veins "like burning alcohol." Let us say to these oppressors of the South, compromises with you are as nought. "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." We demand stern, full and exact justice; cease your assaults on our institutions; stop your agitation and give us peace, that peace to which your honor bound you in the compact of Union; bow to the decision of the Supreme Court; sweep from the statutes of your States every enactment warring on our property; cease your attacks on the laws which have established slavery in places under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government; confess that we came into the Union on terms of perfect equality with you, and that wherever, in the common territories, our flag floats, our property has the same right to protection that yours has; regard us, and let your legislation regard us as equals, not tributaries, and the seceded South may return. The Union may again stretch its grand proportions from Maine to California, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Deny us these, our rights, and our separation from you is eternal.



