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SPEECH OF THE HON. JOHN WHITE, OF KENTUCKY,
IN DEFENCE OF MR. CLAY,
UPON THE CHARGE OF "BARGAIN AND SALE."

No. 22.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, U. S., APRIL 23, 1844.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the Tariff bill, Mr. HOPKINS, of Virginia, in the Chair,

MR. WHITE said, if, on the present occasion, he should deviate from his uniform practice of confining himself strictly to the subject matter under debate, and occupy the attention of the Committee upon other topics, instead of the merits of the bill under consideration, he hoped he would be excused—referring, as an apology therefor, to the course of debate upon several previous bills, on which political speeches had been made by gentlemen on the other side of the House—and he having once or twice obtained the floor in reply to them, but having as often yielded to accommodate others, and deferred his privilege from time to time, he now felt called upon, by an imperative sense of public duty, to engage in this debate. The extraordinary course of gentlemen on the other side, and the repeated assaults and slanders uttered in debate on this floor, and libels published over the signature of members of this body against a distinguished citizen of his own State, left him *no alternative*.

Mr. W. said, he was not one of those who denied the privilege or propriety of fair and just criticism upon the political principles and services of public men. In his judgment, no higher duty devolved on a member of Congress than, upon fit occasions, to discuss the public conduct and character of aspirants to the Presidency of the nation—of men looking to the highest stations in this great Republic. At the same time he was one of those, who, neither *here* or *elsewhere*, would at any time assail the private reputation of any public man, to secure any party or political advantage. He cherished and honored the sentiment of the noble Spaniard, who said, "write the *private faults* of men in sand—their *public virtues* on brass." He was not one of those who, after the example of the boasting Pharisee, "thanked his God he was better than other men." He contented himself to prefer the character of the humble Publican, whose constant and fervent prayer was, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner!" He said he had been nauseated with the exhibitions of mock morality and religion on this floor. Day after day, he had been compelled to listen to tirades of defamation upon the greatest and best men of the age—uttered by canting hypocrites—whited sepulchres—interlarding self-praise and glorification—sickening to the heart of every generous and patriotic man. It has been truly said by an able divine, "were the faults of the best man that lives written upon his *forehead*, he would not dare show himself in society." Were the sins of the purest man in this body, among those who have dealt most lavishly in their slanders upon good men's names, written upon his *forehead*, Mr. W. said, he doubted not it would be as *black as Lucifer*. He abhorred and despised the hypocrite who "stole the lively of the court of Heaven to serve the Devil in. Of all the reprobates, none seemed maturer for the flames of Hell." He regretted the necessity of these remarks. The conduct of others compelled them. It was no part of his nature to assail any one. His

purpose in addressing the committee was not to attack, but to defend. It was not his ambition to fill the character of a *Thersites* at any time. It was not his purpose on the present occasion to assail the public conduct, even, of any man in this House, or out of it, except so far as it may be indispensably necessary in the defence of the great Whig leader. If ever there should be a time when he might feel himself called upon to "carry the war into Africa," now was not the time, although provocation had been heaped upon provocation. Without any spirit of idle boasting, he told his political opponents that he considered them a *doomed party*. Feeling so, feeling that you, sir, (said Mr. W., addressing the Chairman,) that the party advocating the principles you advocate, are doomed, it is in no vindictive spirit that I make the remarks I am about to address to the committee. The adage, "He whom the Lord intends to destroy, he first makes mad," was never more forcibly illustrated than by *you and your party*. Go back, said Mr. W., to the opening of this Congress; look upon your Journal; see what you have done. Go trace the desecration of that instrument, which the Constitution of your country (that you have solemnly sworn you would support) requires to be kept sacred; go and contemplate the destructive spirit of *nullification* in that act; go and read the record of a law of the land, enacted in conformity with all the requirements of the Constitution, trodden under foot by an arbitrary and ruthless act of a majority of this body. Go read your doom in your conduct on the repeal, and in the manner of the repeal, of that most just and beneficent act passed for the *distribution of the proceeds of the public lands*. Go read it in your bill, reported by your Committee of Ways and Means, for the restoration of that odious, monarchical, condemned, four times condemned, *sub-Treasury* measure. Then come, said he, and read your fate in this *monster* now under consideration before this committee, which you offer as a substitute for the Tariff act of 1842, whose beneficial influences the whole people *see and feel* in the restored credit, public and private, the revived trade, and confirmed prosperity of the country. All these acts are your *political winding-sheets*. You have prepared them for yourselves, and the American people are ready, by an overwhelming voice, to pronounce your *doom*.

Mr. W. said, without detaining the committee any longer with preliminary remarks, he would proceed to notice the charges of bargain and sale revived against the distinguished leader of the Whig party. In the execution of this task, it became his painful duty to notice a letter of his colleague, (Mr. BOYD.) It was the first time in his service on this floor that it had fallen to his lot to be engaged in political argument or collision with any of his colleagues. Nothing could be more unpleasant to him. He now asked the attention of his colleague, the Chairman of the Committee, (Mr. HOPKINS,) and of his colleague, (Mr. COLES,) whilst he read a document to which their names were attached.

[Mr. W. then read a letter (written by his colleague, Mr. BOYD, to MESSRS. HOPKINS and COLES, of Virginia,) published in the Richmond Enquirer, reviving the "charge of bargain and sale," between Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams, growing out of the Presidential election of 1824.]

He wished the calm attention of these gentlemen and the committee, whilst he examined into and exposed the infamy of this foul libel. He would say a word as to the time and circumstances of writing that letter. It was written and published, and that too, *be it remembered,*

by a *Kentuckian*, when it was known that the distinguished man on whom it bore, was on the borders of an adjoining State, travelling as a private citizen, and was to pass into the "Old Dominion," within a few days—at a time when it would naturally be supposed that all malignity and ascerbity of party feeling would be laid aside, and that all the hospitalities of his *native State* would be extended to him without distinction of party—just at that particular moment his colleague and his partners had chosen to revive, revamp, and republish this old and exploded charge of "bargain and sale."

Mr. W. said, he would now proceed to the consideration of this charge of "bargain and sale." He would not stop to demand proof, as he might do, or take judgment by default, against the accusers, and of acquittal for the accused; but he would assume to prove a negative—the most difficult of all things to do; yet, he flattered himself in this instance he could do it most successfully; and he would do it, not simply from the declarations of Mr. Clay, and those connected with him in the imputed guilt, but out of the mouths of his *enemies* he would refute, this *base* slander. In order to a proper understanding of the case, and an intelligible application of the proof, it is necessary to begin with the origin of the charge, and trace its history down to the document, now, the subject of my remarks. The following is the first responsible publication of the charge:

"A CARD.—GEORGE KREMER, of the House of Representatives, tenders his respects to the Hon. "H. Clay," and informs him, that by reference to the Editor of the *Columbian Observer*, he may ascertain the name of the writer of a letter of the 26th ultimo, which it seems has afforded so much concern to "H. Clay." In the mean time, George Kremer holds himself ready to prove, to the satisfaction of unprejudiced minds, enough to satisfy them of the accuracy of the statements which are contained in that letter, to the extent that they concern the course and conduct of "H. Clay." Being a representative of the people, he will not fear to "cry aloud and spare not," when their rights and privileges are at stake."

Mr. W. then read an extract from the proceedings of the House of Representatives, 3d February, 1825, as follows:

"After the usual business of the morning was transacted, the Speaker (Mr. CLAY) rose from his place and requested the indulgence of the House for a few moments, whilst he asked its attention to a subject in which he felt himself deeply concerned. A note had appeared this morning in the *National Intelligencer*, under the name and with the authority, as he presumed, of a member of this House from Pennsylvania, (Mr. KREMER,) which adopted as his own a previous letter, published in another print, containing serious and injurious imputations against him, and which the author avowed his readiness to prove. These charges implicated his conduct in regard to the pending Presidential election; and the respectability of the station which the member holds, who thus openly prefers them, and that of the people whom he represents, entitles them to your consideration. It might, indeed, be worthy of consideration, whether the character and dignity of the House itself did not require a full investigation of them, and an impartial decision on their truth. For if they were true—if he were capable and base enough to betray the solemn trust which the Constitution has confided to him—if, yielding to personal views and considerations, he could compromise the highest interests of his country, the House would be scandalized by his continuing to occupy the chair with which he had been so long honored in presiding at its deliberations, and he merited instantaneous expulsion. Without, however, presuming to indicate what the House might conceive it ought to do, on account of its own purity and honor, he hoped he should be allowed respectfully to solicit, in behalf of himself, an inquiry into the truth of the charges to which he referred. Standing in the relation to the House which, both the member from Pennsylvania and himself did, it appeared to him here was the proper place to institute the inquiry, in order that, if guilty, here the proper punishment might be applied; and if innocent, here his character and conduct might be vindicated. He anxiously hoped, therefore, that the House would be pleased to direct an investigation to be made into the truth of the charges. Emanating from the source they did, this was the *only notice* which he could take of them. If the House should think proper to raise a committee, he trusted some other than the ordinary mode pursued by the rules and the practice of the House, would be adopted to appoint the committee."

"On the conclusion of his address, the Speaker left the Chair, which was taken by Mr. TAYLOR.

"Mr. FORSYTH, (of Georgia,) then moved that the communication, which had been just made to the House by the Speaker, be entered on the Journals; that a select committee be appointed to investigate the business, and that that committee be chosen by ballot.

“ Mr. KREMER, (of Pennsylvania,) rose to express his entire acquiescence in the course taken by the Speaker. He was not disposed to shrink from the consequences of his communications. He wished the inquiry to be made; and he was prepared to meet it, let the stroke fall where it may.”

Mr. W. then read from the proceedings of the House Representatives, February 7, 1825.

“ A committee of seven was chosen, by *ballot*, on the appeal of the Speaker, (Mr. CLAY,) to the House. It consists of—

“ P. P. Barbour, of Virginia, Mr. Webster, of Massachusetts, Mr. McClary, of Delaware, Mr. Taylor, of New York, Mr. Forsyth, of Georgia, Mr. Saunders, of North Carolina, Mr. Rankin of Mississippi.

“ On the 9th of February, 1825, Mr. P. P. BARBOUR, from the select committee, made the following report, which was laid on the table and ordered to be printed :

“ The select committee, to whom was referred the communication of the Speaker of the 3d instant, report: That, upon the first meeting, with a view to execute the duty imposed upon them by the House, they directed their chairman to address a letter to the Hon. GEORGE KREMER, informing him that they would be ready, at a particular time therein stated, to receive any evidence or explanation he might have to offer, touching the charges referred to in the communication of the Speaker of the 3d instant. Their chairman, in conformity with this instruction, did address such a letter to Mr. KREMER, who replied that he would make a communication to the committee. Accordingly he did send to them a communication, which accompanies this report, marked A, in which he declines to appear before them, for either of the purposes mentioned in their letter, alleging that he could not do so, without appearing either as an accuser, or as a witness, both of which he protests against. In this posture of the case, the committee can take no further steps. They are aware it is competent for the House to invest them with powers to send for persons and papers, and by that means to enable them to make an investigation, which might be thought necessary; and if they knew any reason for such investigation, they would have asked to be clothed with the proper power; but not having, themselves, any such knowledge, they have felt it to be their only duty to lay before the House the communication which they have received.”

Mr. W. said thus it appears that, at the moment the charge was made, Mr. CLAY demanded and challenged an investigation. Conscious of his innocence, he sought to show to the world he was guiltless. The record I have read speaks for itself, it needs no comment from me.

Now, Mr. W. said, he would proceed with other testimony bearing upon the subject. And the first witness he would introduce should be the veteran Editor of the Richmond Enquirer, (Thomas Ritchie, Esq.)

From the Richmond Enquirer of February 10, 1825.

“ As to the other questions upon which we publish this day such copious debates, we do not hesitate to say that Mr. CLAY has met the charge as a man ought to meet it. His fearless promptitude and open defiance are the surest indications of his innocence. This, combined with avowals from almost all quarters of the House, and the uniform information in the last letters from that city, can leave no doubt of the result of the investigation, nor does Mr. KREMER shrink, but we suspect he will seek to escape by a sort of special pleading, such as Mr. McDUFFRIE has thrown into his amendment. Be it as it may, the inquiry is begun and it ought to be prosecuted with energy; the whole matter should be probed to the bottom; no loop hole ought to be left to hang a single doubt on, for in times like these the people will expect their Representatives not only to be chaste, but free from all suspicion. *Mr. Clay is innocent of this charge.* We are fully prepared to see the committee acquit him of this imputation of bartering his vote for an office.”

Mr. Ritchie, continued Mr. W., with all these facts before him, pronounces “ *Mr. Clay innocent of this charge.*” And yet, at this late day, with accumulated evidence of his innocence, with a full knowledge of all the facts of the case, Mr. Ritchie repeats and reiterates this branded libel. How condemned must he stand before the civilized world. Nature’s Poet has well said—

“ Who steals my purse, steals trash; and ’tis something, nothing;
’Twas mine. ’tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But, he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor, indeed.”

Yes, Mr. Chairman, said Mr. W., the robber of character is the *vilest thief* that lives. He has not the apology of the burglar, *he* may have a starving wife and children appealing to him for bread.

Well and truly, Mr. Chairman, has the eloquent poet expressed it, when he says—

“ Slander, the foulest whelp of sin. The man in
Whom the spirit enters, is undone.
His tongue is set on fire of Hell, his heart is black as Death.”

Mr. W. said he would forbear any comment of his own upon the conduct of this veteran witness. He delivered him over to the gnawings of a guilty conscience, and the punishment of a just God; who has said “vengeance is mine, and I will surely repay.”

He would now call the attention of the committee to a letter written by the Hon. THOMAS H. BENTON.

“ WASHINGTON, December 7, 1827.

“ SIR : Your letter of the 19th ultimo, covering the Lexington Virginia Intelligencer of that date, has been duly received, and in answer to the inquiries you put to me, I have to state that the article to which you invite my attention is substantially, not verbally, correct, so far as it represents me as saying that I was informed by Mr. CLAY, in the fore part of December, 1824, that he intended to vote for Mr. Adams. There is no mistake in the date, as a visit which I made to your part of Virginia about that time enables me to fix it with certainty. I left Washington, on that visit, about the 15th of December, and had received the information of Mr. CLAY before I sat out, and told it, while absent, in the family of my father-in-law, Colonel McDowel, of your county. But the inference so much insisted upon, that I must have told the same thing to Mr. Eaton and other of his political friends, is wholly erroneous; for, having no authority from Mr. CLAY to promulgate his intentions, I only spoke of them in the bosom of a private family at two hundred miles distance from Washington. Since that period, and especially during the present summer, I have, on several occasions, and sometimes in the presence of political opponents, when the course of conversation led me to it, mentioned what I knew of Mr. CLAY'S early intention to vote for Mr. Adams; and in this way I came to speak of it again, some two or three weeks since, in the house of my father-in-law, where I had first spoke of it near three years ago, and whence, with some additions and variations, without the privity of any one present at the conversation, it has crept into the paper which you have sent me. No one ever asked my leave to publish what I said; if any one had, the authors of the publication in the Lexington paper might have been spared an office which must have been inexpressibly painful to their honorable feelings, as I should not have refused to the administration any testimony in my favor to give, notwithstanding the *character* of the war which the great body of their forces are carrying on against me.

“ Yours, respectfully,

THOMAS H. BENTON.”

This letter, said Mr. W., not only proved that, two years after this charge had been made, one of Mr. CLAY'S bitterest enemies, (who was an eye witness to the whole transaction,) considered him innocent of the charge. But it established another important fact. That, sometime before the Presidential election came off in the House, Mr. CLAY disclosed his purpose to vote for Mr. Adams. Mr. CLAY had disclosed this determination to Mr. Crittenden, and many others in Kentucky, in the fall before he left home, and long before Congress convened. He had no secrets, no disguise, in all his conversations upon this subject.

Mr. W., now, would offer the testimony of another political opponent. He read an extract from a letter written by the Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN, dated August 8, 1827.

“ I called upon General Jackson on the occasion which I have mentioned, *solely as his friend*, upon my own individual responsibility, and *not* as the agent of Mr. CLAY or any other person. *I never have been the political friend of Mr. Clay*, since he became a candidate for the office of President, as you very well know. Until I saw General Jackson's letter to Mr. Beverley of the 5th ultimo, and at the same time was informed by a letter from the Editor of the United States Telegraph, that I was the person to whom he alluded, *the conception never once entered my mind* that he believed me to have been the agent of Mr. CLAY and his friends, or that I intended to *propose terms of ANY kind* for them, or that he could have supposed me capable of expressing an opinion that it was right to fight such intriguers with their own weapons.”

“ *I had no authority from Mr. Clay or his friends to propose any terms to General Jackson in relation to their votes. NOR DID I EVER MAKE ANY SUCH PROPOSITION*; and I trust I would be as incapable of becoming a messenger upon such an occasion, as it was known General Jackson would be to receive such message.”

It will be recollected (said Mr. W.) that this was the witness with whom this foul charge of slander and defamation had its origin. Gen. Jackson had repeated the slander on the testimony of Mr. Buchanan, and from him this individual, Carter Beverly, had received the charge, which he had made public. Carter Beverly at that time had been an enemy of Mr. Clay; he had lived long enough to come to his senses. Before his death, although he had slept over this charge for years, perhaps in view of the grave, he had been prompted to award justice to an injured and innocent man; he had come out with his unqualified denial and refutation of the charge. And (said Mr. W., addressing the chairman,) I predict that, before you and some other gentlemen shall have descended to the tomb—when the violence of party feelings shall have had time to subside, and party blinds shall have fallen from your eyes and the eyes of others, and all those prejudices which are calculated to delude and bewilder the human mind and lead to false conclusions shall have been dissipated—that you and others will write, declaring the innocence of this man. Now hear what this dying man said. Mr. W. read from a letter of Carter Beverly to Mr. Clay as follows :

“It will be no doubt matter of some astonishment to you in receiving from me the present address. I will not preface it with any kind of apology, because, in doing it, I justify my mind in the discharge of an act of conscience, and a duty that I feel the utmost pleasure in performing.

“Although the time is quite far gone since I became, very innocently, instrumental in circulating throughout the country a very great attack on your character and virtue as a gentleman, and certainly a very heavy one as a public man, I feel exceedingly desirous to relieve you, as far as I can, from the slander, and my own feelings from the severe compunction that is within me, on having been, though neither directly nor indirectly, your personal accuser, yet that I was drawn directly into the representation of an attack upon you. * * * * *

“I again say, that I am most thoroughly convinced that you were most untruthfully, and, therefore, unjustly treated; for I have never seen any evidence to substantiate at all the charge. * * * * *

“CARTER BEVERLY.”

Now, (Mr. W. continued,) while this old charge of slander had been so fully refuted by the testimony of the very enemies of Mr. Clay, they found it revived, not only in the Richmond papers, but in every paper in this District claiming to be Democratic or official. Mr. Ritchie had repeated this charge, and the Presidential organ here; “The Madisonian,” had copied it without any comment, save at the close the words, “True, oh King !” taking from Holy Writ this expression to pervert it to the sanctioning of this most infamous and unfounded libel. Now, what had this man, the present Executive, under whose eye and under whose hand this charge was now being repeated, said, in other days, when he had some little regard to truth and justice? Mr. W. read from a letter of Mr. Tyler of the 14th February, 1827, as follows :

“In adverting to that letter, I shall content myself with stating its substance; but if Mr. Clay shall see cause to gratify the appetites of newspaper editors, he is at liberty to publish it. I shall have no cause to complain of it. It is, then, perfectly true that I wrote to Mr. Clay in the spring of 1825. It is also true that I approved of his course growing out of the Presidential election, and concurred with him most emphatically in the result of his vote. It is equally so, that I esteemed Mr. Adams as decidedly better qualified for the Presidency than Gen. Jackson, and that I would have voted for him after Mr. Crawford’s chance of success was over. To this effect I wrote to Mr. Clay in terms of perfect frankness. * * * * * Or is it because I do not believe Henry Clay, along with the western delegation who sided with him, to have been *bought and sold*, for which, if guilty, he and they deserve to be gibbeted, that I am therefore bound to support an administration which may oppose all my convictions of proper policy?”

Now, he asked his colleague, as a candid and fair man, whilst he was permitting garbled statements of the testimony taken in the Kentucky Legislature in the investigation of this foul charge of bargain and sale, why it was that he had suppressed the testimony of Jephthah Dudley, one of his own political friends? And why he had suppressed various

depositions that had been elicited in vindication of the character of this man? Here was testimony, and testimony of his colleague's own particular friends, which it would make him blush to read, and then to read his own remarks on the subject.

Now Mr. W. had done with the testimony of Mr. Clay's political enemies, and he thought that any set of men, that any tribunal, would be compelled, from this evidence, to pronounce him innocent of this foul charge.

He would now read the testimony of some distinguished gentlemen, who alone could speak, because they had been part and parcel—one or two of them—of the transaction itself; and he would submit their testimony, making all due allowance for men speaking of affairs in which they themselves had been participators. Before he presented this proof, he would read a short extract from a distinguished foreigner, whose testimony could not be questioned by any man on this floor; who had no interest under heaven, either in vindicating or in condemning this man. He would read from the statement of General Lafayette:

“My remembrance concurs with your own on this point: that in the latter end of December, either before or after my visit to Annapolis, you being out of the presidential candidature, and after having expressed my above mentioned motives of forbearance, I, by way of confidential exception, allowed myself to put a simple, unqualified question respecting your electioneering guess and your intended vote. Your answer was, that in your opinion, *the actual state of health of Mr. Crawford had limited the contest to a choice between Mr. Adams and General Jackson; that a claim founded on military achievements did not meet your preference, AND THAT YOU HAD CONCLUDED TO VOTE FOR MR. ADAMS.*”

He would now offer the testimony of the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. ADAMS,) who had been a part and parcel in the transaction, and to whose testimony the present generation and posterity would give that weight it was entitled to. He would first read from his letter to the New Jersey committee, after he had retired from the presidential chair:

“Upon him (Mr. Clay) the foulest slanders have been showered. Long known and appreciated, as successively a member of both Houses of your National Legislature, as the unrivalled speaker, and at the same time most efficient leader of debates in one of them; as an able and successful negotiator for your interests, in war and in peace, with foreign Powers, and as a powerful candidate for the highest of your trusts—the Department of State itself was a station which, by its bestowal, could confer neither profit nor honor upon him, but upon which he has shed unfading honor by the manner in which he discharged its duties. Prejudice and passion have charged him with obtaining that office by bargain and corruption. *Before you, fellow citizens, in the presence of our country and of Heaven, I PRONOUNCE THAT CHARGE TOTALLY UNFOUNDED.* This tribute of justice is due from me to him, and I seize with pleasure the opportunity afforded me by your letter of discharging the obligation.”

This distinguished patriot and statesman, (continued Mr. W.,) on a more recent occasion, not having sought the opportunity himself, but having been called on during his Western tour this fall by a committee, responded in this language to this same charge:

“I thank you, sir, for the opportunity you have given me of speaking of the great statesman who was associated with me in the administration of the General Government, at my earnest solicitation—who belongs not to Kentucky alone, but to the whole Union; and is not only an honor to this State and this Nation, but to mankind. The charges to which you refer, I have, after my term of service had expired, and it was proper for me to speak, denied before the whole country; and I here *reiterate and re-affirm that denial*; and as I expect shortly to appear before my God, to answer for the conduct of my whole life, *should those charges have found their way to the throne of Eternal Justice, I WILL, IN THE PRESENCE OF OMNIPOTENCE, PRONOUNCE THEM FALSE.*”

Was that the language (asked Mr. W.) of a man declaring falsehood and untruth? Did it appear, that a declaration of this character, if false, would be made by a man solemnly appealing to that God in whose presence he was conscious he was soon to appear, either for approbation or for condemnation? What man is there in this country so base as now to repeat this foul, this malicious, this branded libel?

NOTES.

Extract from Col. Drayton's speech.

"I will here, sir, said (Col. DRAYTON,) avail myself of the occasion to disclaim, on my part, in what I have said, or in what I may hereafter say, all allusion to individuals. Allusions of this nature may sometimes be unavoidable; it may sometimes be excusable, and sometimes even a duty to make them; *but*, unless under peculiar circumstances, they should be avoided. *Personality is not argument*; nor is it manly to attack the character of those who are not present to defend them. I will not say that I have not heard reports injurious to some who are, and to some who are not, now members of Congress, as connected with the late presidential election; but I know, sir, and I often painfully witnessed the effects of party feelings, even upon *the virtuous and enlightened*. The representations of those who are under such an influence, must be cautiously received. They cannot refrain from mingling their passions with their judgments; their disappointments with their statements: and it has always been *my habit to believe slowly and reluctantly*, that any one who has been long distinguished for high-mindedness and talent, and who has long enjoyed the confidence of his country, would descend so low as to barter away the jewel, reputation, for the paltry emoluments, or the transient honors of office." See 2 Vol. Congressional Register, pp. 15, 61.

OSWICHEE BEND, RUSSELL COUNTY, ALA., May 26, 1844.

DEAR SIR,—I have had the honor to receive your favor of the 17th inst. There is nothing in the nature of your communication which requires an apology for your addressing me.

If I had in my possession such a letter from General Jackson, as has been most erroneously supposed, I should, under his very emphatic card of the 3d inst., in the Nashville Union, have felt myself released from all reserve as to its publication. You will have perceived, ere this reaches you, from my reply to that gentleman, that he never, in the confidence which once subsisted between us, transmitted me such a paper.

Indeed, I have very frequently heard him express opinions altogether at variance with the alleged retraction. His belief, and that generally of the party to which I was then attached, I did not share, in reference to the charge of "bargain and corruption," which, in 1825, was so freely preferred against Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams, and which constituted the electioneering staple of our party, during the four years' war which ended in our triumph, in 1829.

It would, in my humble opinion, have been an act of supererogation on the part of Mr. Clay, to have made a bargain for what, by the force and gravity of political causes and geographical considerations, was inevitable, without either his crime or his participation—an offer of a seat in Mr. Adams's cabinet. In accepting it, I have always understood he acted in conformity with the advice of some of the most influential supporters of Mr. Crawford, whose friends then occupied a position of neutrality between the two great parties of Gen. Jackson and Mr. Adams, although they soon after, it is true, became belligerents on our side. I sincerely believe that Mr. Clay's acceptance of the office, that subjected him to such obloquy, was the result of a sense of the duty which he owed to the country, to aid by his counsels, him whom he had assisted to place in power. He certainly relinquished, for the department of State, a position in the House of Representatives, far more desirable, and of more influence and authority, which was much better adapted to the peculiar and transcendent vein of his signal ability for distinction in a popular assembly.

I know that this view of the case runs counter to the opinions of my old chief (who, if he puts himself at the head of the annexation movement, will be my chief again) and to those of many esteemed friends, with whom I was proudly and victoriously associated in the struggle of 1828 and '29. But they must pardon me for adhering to opinions (however valueless) long since entertained and frequently expressed. And now, when I have no sort of connexion with any party in the country, (except on one isolated question, associated, as I believe, with the best interests of the whole Union, and the vital security of the South,) I hope I may be allowed, without an impeachment of my own motives, and certainly with no adhesion, either expressed or implied, to the politics of Mr. Clay, to do justice, as far as my humble opinions can afford it, to his public reputation and his unsullied personal honor.

I remain, dear sir, with esteem, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. HAMILTON.

Hon. JOHN WHITE, House of Representatives.

A RESOLUTION relating to certain resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee at the session of 1827, condemnatory of John Q. Adams and Henry Clay, referred to in said resolutions:

Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, That so much of the proceedings adopted by the Legislature of Tennessee in 1827 as sustains the allegations, either expressed or implied, of an improper and corrupt combination, or, as it has been more generally denominated, "Corruption, Bargain, and Intrigue," between JOHN Q. ADAMS and HENRY CLAY, is, in the opinion of this General Assembly, unsupported by proof, and not believed.

Adopted, January 27, 1844.

D. L. BARRINGER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.
J. M. ANDERSON,
Speaker of the Senate.

A true copy: JNO. S. YOUNG, Secretary of State.