SECESSION DOCTRINES OF THE SOUTH.

ABOLITION DOCTRINES IN THE NORTH.

Speech of Hon. R. R. Rhett, of South Carolina, delivered at Hibernian Hall, April 7, 1851, at a Meeting of the Southern Rights Association.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—I am indebted, I presume, to the fact that I am but lately from the seat of government, for the invitation I have received to address you this night, and for the warm reception with which you have greeted me. You know my opinions, frankly expressed, on the past state of our affairs. But you wish to know whether I see anything in their present condition which has changed or modified these opinions.

Gentlemen, I can teach you nothing, and I presume you desire to hear nothing, of those wrongs which have aroused within you the determination to redress yourselves. South Carolina, in her Legislature, long since declared that, with respect to them, the argument was exhausted. She will no more reason with her sister States concerning them; and we, I think, need no more reason, concerning them, amongst ourselves. Our understandings are sufficiently informed. All we want is the will, in the face of acknowledged wrongs, to right ourselves. It is on this point, and this only, the mode of redress, that I propose, in a very simple way, to submit to you a few brief considerations.

Your last Legislature looked to two expedients for redress—secession from the Union in co-operation with other Southern States, and secession by South Carolina alone. With the exception of less than a half dozen members, all the members of the Legislature were disunionists. Those who were in favor of disunion in concert with other Southern States, limited their policy to the call of a Southern Congress. Those who, despairing of the co-operation of any other State, were in favor of secession by South Carolina alone, supported the call of a State Convention. The latter prevailed by a large majority in the Senate, and their bill was sent down to the House calling a State Convention. It there failed for want of a few votes necessary to give the two-thirds majority required by the constitution to call a convention. On the other hand, the Southern Congress bill failed also in the House, where it originated. As all aimed at the same end, it was soon agreed to pass both measures. All desired a Southern Congress for redress, if it could be obtained. Time would, in a very few months, settle its practicability, whilst the call of a State convention would put it in the power of South Carolina, in case her invitation for a Southern Congress should be declined by the other Southern States, to go out of the Union alone. A bill embodying these measures passed both branches of the Legislature by an overwhelming majority—far more than the two-thirds required by the constitution to summon the people in convention.

My friends, time, resistless time—the great discloser of our destinies—the iron instrument of Providence in working his decrees—has settled at least one branch of this policy. Southern co-operation is at an end. The Governor of your State, in obedience to your command, has sent to every Southern State your invitation to meet you at Montgomery, in Alabama, to confer on the wrongs we have endured, and the dangers which environ the South. All are silent, save one; but that one has spoken for all. Virginia, who first counselled us by one Legislature, to resist the Wilmot Proviso or any kindred measure, at all hazards, and to the last extremity—Virginia, who, at a succeeding Legislature, repeated this counsel, and drew after her the whole South in support—now, when the wrongs and outrages anticipated have been actually perpetrated, and the South, with her institution of slavery, is excluded from every foot of our territories acquired from Mexico—Virginia succumbs. Nay, more—she not only submits, but brings herself forward to obtain the submission of others. South Carolina, ready to follow her first noble lead, adopted her brave resolves, word for word. There they stand on the records of the State. No sophistry can expunge them. Dishonor, even, cannot obliterate them. They live, and must live forever, a bright memorial of our consistency and firmness in the vindication of our rights, or a foul stain on our yet unblemished fame, and a contemptible burlesque on the sovereignty of the States. Virginia now leads the way to submission. Excepting South Carolina, Mississippi alone seems capable of maintaining the first high counsels of Virginia. Her people certainly appear to be actuated by a deep sense of the wrongs of the South, and a resolute will to redress them. But Mississippi is practically a land bound State. She has no seaport suitable for transatlantic commerce. The depth of water on her bar does not exceed six feet. For this reason, if for no other, she cannot secede from the Union without her co-terminous States. If she secedes without Louisiana or Alabama, receiving all her supplies of foreign commerce through them, she would still be in the Union, so far as the taxes levied on her foreign commerce by the general government are concerned. The citizens consuming the goods imported from foreign nations, would pay, in their consumption, the taxes levied on them in the ports of other States. Mississippi would thus be not practically independent—not independent in that greatest function of all government, the greatest test of liberty with our Anglo-Saxon race—the imposition of taxes. She will, therefore, not go out of the Union with us. Co-operation with her is a measure of secession is out of the question, and probably it is better for us that she should not go out of the Union along with us. In the Union she will have a certain influence on the other Southern States, which we, out of it, would not possess. Our final object is beyond single State secession; and we will want States in, as well as out of, the Union to bring on that object to its accomplishment. With the failure of Mississippi to give us her co-operation, ends all Southern co-operation; no Southern congress will meet. Cowardly Southern States decline our solicitation to meet us in counsel. They tell us plainly, in declining our invitation, "We will not, or cannot, aid you; take care of your own destiny." Surely, if we now move on alone to redress our common wrongs, no charge of precipitancy, or of ambitious leadership, can, with any show of justice, be made against us. We have done all which a delicate regard to their position has required us to do. We have implored them to lead us. We have implored them to co-operate with us. They will do neither, after pledging themselves to do both. Now, then, that we take our fate into our own hands, are we not entitled to their sympathy—their hearty good wishes for our success? For my part, if they will give us these, it is all I would desire in the present state of things in the South. A Southern Congress now would be our ruin. With Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee—in such a Congress, what would be its counsel? Submission—submission for themselves—submission for us; and should we in disgust retire from the Congress we ourselves had invoked, or cast their counsels under our feet, might we not excite the resentment and alienation of our sister Southern States composing it? I rejoice, therefore, that no Southern Congress will meet; for no Southern Congress can meet to redress the wrongs of the South. Alone we must move; and alone it is best for us to move, in the present condition of things. To hint what would be the tendency of a Southern Congress that I should not be at all surprised, if, before long, one is got up by the administration at Washington, or is proposed to us by the most thorough submission States. General Jackson's cabinet, it is now known, was the author of Mr. Watkins Leigh's mission to South Carolina, in 1833. The General held out nothing but the most defying threats to us, as the administration now affects to do, whilst his secret fears were displayed in his secret instigation of this mission, to bring us to acquiescence in the tariff compromise. Stranger things than these may take place, if South Carolina secedes from the Union.

However matters may have stood formerly, the only alternative now presented to us, is submission or secession by South Carolina alone. Now, as we who have been for secession by South Carolina alone, heartily labored with our friends who were in favor of the co-operation of other Southern States, since their policy has become impracticable, ought they not to join with us in the last and only measure of redress that is left? They may have doubts of its success, as we have had of their policy; but, with their consciousness of the wrongs of the South, and the dangers which environ us, and their high regard for the honor of our State, can they counsel us to submission? Will they any longer divide from us, and spread weakness throughout our councils? Will they not rather join us, and make with us one brave and united effort for redress and independence, by the secession of South Carolina alone from the Union? They must and will soon be with us. They cannot join the Union party, which is soon to arise in South Carolina.

Secession, then—secession by South Carolina alone—is to be our policy. Let us look it fairly in the face, and try to estimate its probable consequences. Probability is all which exists for us justly in the future. Certainty is in the past and present only.

In the first place, in seceding from the Union, we would declare free trade absolutely, as it now exists, with all the States South of the Potomac and Ohio rivers. There would be no change whatever, so far as our action is concerned, in any of the relations we now hold towards these States. All their productions—cotton, wheat, tobacco, live stock, will enter our State as heretofore, free of all charge or duty whatever. With respect to the productions of the other States now in the Union, and all foreign nations, we would lay a small duty on importation, not exceeding ten per cent ad valorem, (seven per cent was the first duty laid by our ancestors in putting the present government into operation, with a heavy war debt to discharge.) Thirty per cent is the duty now exacted by the general government in all the ports of the United States, on the chief articles of importation. Our duty of ten per cent will thus be twenty per cent less than the duty exacted in the ports of the Union. The effect must be that goods in Charleston, must be twenty per cent cheaper than in the ports of the United States. To the agricultural interest of the State, no one can doubt the benefit. Our planters and farmers, and all other consumers in the State, must be supplied with goods twenty per cent cheaper than they have heretofore obtained them. It is clear, therefore, that to the great mass of the people of South Carolina, secession, under such circumstances, must be advantageous. Property of all kinds must be more valuable, because more profitable in South Carolina than where the greater burdens exist. There is but one interest which may be injuriously affected, and that is the mercantile interest. Trade is very timid. It is liable to panics; and when confidence is unimpaired it is not easy to change the channels of commerce without some loss, although that change may be from less to more profitable channels. Our merchants will have to change their importations from New York and Boston to Liverpool and Havre; but they will have their goods twenty per cent cheaper than in the ports of the United States. The merchants in the interior of our own State will have no inducement to go to New York, as they now do, to lay in their supplies. They will make their purchases in Charleston. Here is a certain demand on the commerce of Charleston, which does not now exist. And out of our State, will not the merchants of other States, for the same cause, pursue the same policy? So far as our importations from those States are concerned, we would be exactly as we now are. The only difference in our trade will be, that our merchants will be able to offer to those who send us their productions from other States, their supplies twenty per cent cheaper than heretofore. Will this interrupt their trade? The Northern manufacturers and producers, for whose benefit the high discriminating duties in the present tariff of the United States are laid, will certainly object to such a trade. They will be clamorous to enforce out of the people of Georgia and North Carolina, and the other Southern States, the collection of the thirty per cent duty they have laid by the general government on every Southern consumer for their benefit. They now control the general government, and, I suppose, will endeavor, by their custom house officers, to prevent the people of other States from buying from us. But all such efforts will fail, unless human nature shall be marvellously changed by our secession. In the opinion of a vast majority of the people of the Southern States, the present tariff, in principle, is utterly unconstitutional. It is only an expedient, by which tribute is exacted from the South by the North. But, independently of this, Hamburg lies opposite to Augusta, Purrysburg is not far from Savannah; whilst we have a common right to navigate the Savannah and Pee Dee rivers, from their borders to their mouths. Our trade with North Carolina is chiefly carried on by wagons. How long will custom-house officers on our North Carolina frontier, continue to seize the wagons of the North Carolina farmers and wagoners, on their return from South Carolina with their usual supplies? How long will the people of Georgia submit to a standing army of tax collectors on their side of the Savannah river, spying, seizing, fighting them, to enforce the collection of duties their abolition brethren of the North have laid upon them? We will have nothing to do with spying or fighting. On our side of the river we will have ease and peace. No controversy with the people of Georgia—no controversy with the general government, or its officers. We have goods to sell twenty per cent cheaper than they can be obtained in New York, or in any port in the Union—that is all. We will neither force other people to buy them, nor enter other States to sell them. The trade, if it exists, will be at the option of those who think proper to come to us and buy our goods. Relations of entire amity, and of mutual benefit, not of hostility or injury, will thus exist between us and the Southern States. I am inclined to think the trade of our merchants, under such circumstances, will not become quite extinguished. I am inclined to think that the same state of things which now exists on our Canada frontier, under the skilful address of our Yankee friends, will also prevail along the frontiers of South Carolina. Twenty per cent will not stop goods on an imaginary frontier. It gives immense activity to bales and boxes, as well as to mens' wits. It will not destroy our merchants. It will make our trade pretty nearly as free in going out as in entering our State. This is certainly the opinion of the merchants in our Northern cities. They, therefore, look upon the secession of South Carolina from the Union with alarm and terror, anticipating the loss of the whole import trade, which is occasioned by Southern productions. It will come to us, they say. I think they are right; for however fallacious their judgments may be on other subjects, in matters of money they are as near infallibility as human beings can be. We must gain what they lose; and our commerce will prosper beyond every other interest in the State. Charleston, the emporium of this commerce, must especially rise in prosperity. Every householder, every mechanic, every laborer, will feel the impulse which new demands for labor and capital must produce; whilst we will demonstrate to the world what liberty and just government can do for a people.

"All this seems very fair and clear," I think I hear an old merchant say; "but what of that blockade? If enforced against us, we will not be able to buy, much less to sell." I answer: The blockade is a humbug. It would probably be better for us, if it should turn out a reality; but as things are, I am compelled to say, from a regard to truth, that I believe it to be an unmitigated humbug. Blockade is war. If we secede from the Union, we will secede during the sitting of the next Congress. Congress alone can declare war. Congress must vote the supplies, and authorize the use of the army and navy against us. One of two alternatives Congress must choose—let us go peaceably out of the Union, or fight us. I believe everybody gives us the very common credit of not being very great laggards at fighting. If war is made upon us, we will fight—on land or sea we will fight—and if any one supposes that war in any form can be made on South Carolina without fighting, he is not worth reasoning with. Where there is a will, there is a way, in war as in other things. We will fight—fight long, and, if necessary, I trust, we will fight everlastingly, in defence of the sovereignty of our State, and of our dearest rights, liberties and institutions. What can the Northern people gain in such a contest, but inevitable defeat and disaster? Give them all they can possibly expect to accomplish. Suppose that they are not embroiled with other nations, for lawlessly interrupting a commerce as much theirs as ours, and that we are at last vanquished and subdued—will that preserve the Union? They may have a province held in subjection by military force; but can they make us, against our will, a State of the Union? Can they force us to elect Senators or Representatives to Congress? By our secession, the Union is dissolved, and will stand dissolved by our mere non-action. But if this policy of coercion is pursued, will disunion be limited to South Carolina alone? Does any man believe that the general government can carry on a war against a Southern State, for exercising her right of seceding from the Union, in defence of her liberties and institutions, and that no other Southern State will join her in the contest? The right of secession is the right of all. Surrender it, and they are no longer sovereignties. They are not parties to the constitutional compact, but mere provinces of one vast consolidated empire, under the absolute sway of the free States in the North, through the majority in Congress. The Southern States will have no defence, either in the Union, or out of the Union, to stay the strong hand of usurpation and abolition, growing stronger every day; and if they suffer South Carolina to be subjugated by the sword, her doom must soon be theirs, with the increased ferocity they will have inspired in our successful foes. I do not consider it to be a matter of doubt, that if the free States use the general government to make war on South Carolina, and she fights as becomes her ancient renown—a Southern confederacy is as sure to come as the succeeding year. The Northern people, as well as the general government, know that this will be the result as well as we do; and therefore I have no expectation that any bill will ever pass Congress to coerce South Carolina from going out of the Union. No such bill, I am satisfied, could have passed the last Senate of the United States. Will Rhode Island, the last State to enter the Union, or Delaware, consent to be disrobed of their sovereignty? What are they in the Union without it, but aristocratic funguses on the body politic, to be cut off in the Senate by the equalizing sword of democracy? Could the Northwestern democrats, who so lately maintained that the right of self-government was so sacred in a people that the emigrants in California had a right to set up a government for themselves throughout that whole magnificent region, although owning not a foot of the soil, deny to the people of South Carolina the right they thus accorded to the people of California, and force on them a government they have repudiated? Could the Northeastern democrats, resting on the limitations of the constitution, as their great leader (Mr. Woodbury) has so long and so faithfully done, find any warrant in the constitution to coerce a State? How many Senators from the South are prepared to try the strength of the general government in coercing a Southern State to remain in the Union? There may be two, and you will not find it difficult to name them. My friends, I am satisfied that if South Carolina thinks proper to go out of the Union, she will go without a single hostile gun being fired, or a single tombstone being erected to tell a tale of martyrdom. On expressing such conviction to a distinguished officer of our State, immediately on my return from Washington, he exclaimed, "No fighting! Well that is the worst news I have heard for a long time. How, in the name of heaven, are we to get the Southern confederacy?" I answered, "By just government, and a superior liberty." No. You will have no fighting, and I rejoice that the responsibility is not with us, whether we shall have it or not. We will have no fighting, not because you are loved, nor from any principle which restrains from shedding your blood. You are hated, no doubt, quite enough to bring on you any calamity which unscrupulous power, avarice, or fanaticism can inflict. But there is policy in power—there is policy in avarice—there is policy in fanaticism; and all these perceive that to attempt to coerce South Carolina in any way, is to secure their own defeat, and our speedy deliverance from their degrading thraldom. They acquiesce only in the necessity of things.

That this is the policy determined now in Congress, may perhaps be strongly inferred from two facts—the Army bill, proposing a considerable increase of the army, and the Fortification bill, both failed in the House of Representatives, at the close of the last session, by large majorities. The election in South Carolina to her Convention had then distinctly indicated her future course.

But I have heard it said, the general government will not blockade us entirely; they will only have a floating custom house in their ships of war off our coast, or exact the duties under the cannon of the forts in our harbor. I wish to meet all objections.

By this scheme of interfering with our commerce, it is not, in the first place, easy to perceive how duties can be collected on a whole cargo in bulk in the hold of a ship. To collect the duties the ship must be unloaded—the goods be seen, to be appraised; or seized if falsely invoiced, or not entered at all, to evade the duties. All of our custom house laws to prevent smuggling, and the evasion of duties, are based on the impossibility of collecting duties on goods in bulk in the hold of a ship. If it is the established law, that papers without the inspection of goods, or a captain's statement of what his ship contains, are to be the only proof of importations into Charleston, and the only criterion of the duties to be collected, the collection of duties will soon become a farce. Charleston will practically be a free port. Even ten per cent duties will hardly be levied on our imports. But the true answer to this mode of interfering with our commerce is, that it will be war. In seceding from the Union, South Carolina will exercise a right, which she, at least, deems unquestionable. When she has dissolved her union with her co-States, she puts an end to her copartnership with them—she puts an end to their common agent, the general government, so far as she is concerned. So long as the union between them lasts, their common agent, with her consent, and by no other means, discharges the duties which, by the compact of the constitution, she has agreed it shall discharge. But with our separation from the Union, goes all our relations with the other States of the Union. They are foreign nations—exactly on the same footing as Great Britain or France. Their government has no more right to interfere with our commerce, than the government of Great Britain or France. For either of these governments to attempt to collect taxes out of us, by forcibly controlling our commerce on the high seas or in our harbors, is nothing more or less than levying military contributions on us—making war. Of course we will be compelled to fight with all the means in our power, and with all the allies we can command. We must storm the forts if we can, where this aggression is carried on, and capture the ships of war employed against us. It will be war on all sides—war in the South to subject the South, which will only end in a Southern confederacy, or the utter extinction of South Carolina as a State. If the government holds on to our forts merely as property belonging to the United States, it may be a question whether we ought not to pay for any property our co-States, through the general government, might own in South Carolina. But in doing this, the account must be opened all around with our sister States. It will be upon them to show that the property in South Carolina exceeds our due proportion of expenditure from the treasury of the United States, when compared with the expenditure which has taken place in the other States of the Union. The public lands must also be brought into the account, with our navy and the public buildings in Washington. The debt for the war and purchase of California should be debited exclusively to the free States, since they have appropriated the whole of it to themselves. At all events, we will honestly and fairly meet any proposition to adjust any pecuniary liabilities our withdrawal from the Union may involve. But war cancels all obligations. If they choose it, we must accept of it. But I repeat, I do not believe that war of any kind will follow as a consequence of our secession from the Union, because war cannot prevent it, and will only lead to a wider disruption of the Union. It will be far easier, indeed, in my opinion, to get out of the Union, than to keep out of it. You see the movement already made in Virginia to keep us from going out of the Union. Such movements will be multiplied after we are out of it, to induce our return. Missions from our sister Southern States—concessions, with lavish professions of regard from the Nothern States—abolition cowering for the while—slavery agitation suppressed in Congress—tariff and internal improvements apparently abandoned—in short, everything will be done to conciliate the Southern States, and keep them from going with us out of the Union. In the meantime, our separation from the Union will be made as harassing as possible by the operations of the general government, to foster discontent in South Carolina, and defeat the advantages which will naturally arise from our separation. This will be our real time of trial. To hold on firmly to our purpose, of an entire redress for the past, and security for the future, or to keep out of the Union forever, will task all our fortitude and energy. Let them offer to us the constitution of the United States, with that equality of rights and privileges all its spirit breathes; equality in Congress, where the disparaging and insulting agitation of the subject of slavery shall no more enter forever; equality in taxation, without discriminations in favor of one pursuit of industry at the expense of another; equality in the expenditure of the taxes, by limiting appropriations to the objects expressly specified in the constitution; equality in our territories, at least as far as thirty-six degrees thirty minutes north latitude can bestow it, from our Indian territories to the Pacific ocean—let them offer to us these, and all of these, secured to us by new and distinct guarantees in the constitution, and we will listen to invitations to return into the Union. To all else we should turn a deaf, but respectful ear. These are now ours, by right, under the constitution of the United States. The free States have deposited us of them. If they wish such a Union as the constitution establishes and their faith pledged them to observe, they can have it, if they will propose it. Any other it would be insult to offer. Voluntarily to go back into degrading inferiority and bondage, will be more infamous than to have endured it under the steady usurpations of the Northern States. Disunion, and disunion forever, or all our rights, should be our fixed and unalterable determination. Fear is a very unreasonable passion—often the more unreasonable when there is least to apprehend. We have alarmists from fear of war; but as the prospect of war disappears, we have greater alarmists for fear of peace. To the imaginations of some, nothing is so terrible as to be unmolested—to be let alone by the general government. If it fights us, this is a terror by no means to be encountered; but then, we will have company. But not to fight us, is still greater terror. It is to leave us alone, without company. And what mortal man can face such a catastrophe? Why, gentlemen, I have thought that "*laissez nous faire*" (let us alone,) was the grand principle of free trade, for which we have been contending for the last thirty years. I have thought that to be let alone was the grand principle of all free governments. Justice from without, against the aggressions or wrongs of foreign nations—justice within, between man and man—prevention merely, this is the righteous and limited aim of all free government. As to all else, let us alone. What have we been asking, as to all the great measures of aggression, which have at length received the general government (no longer endurable to free men, but "let us alone?" Let us alone on the tariff. Let us along on internal improvements. Let us alone as to the currency. Let us along with respect to our institution of slavery. Keep to the simple purpose of prevention, for which you were created, and protect us against foreign nations. Such have been our demands. They are not heeded; and we cast off a tyranny which, like the frogs of Egypt, has come up into our houses, and our bed chambers, and the houses of our servants. And now, shall we fear being rid of it? Shall we tremble at being let alone? Are we afraid of ourselves? or are we incapable of ruling ourselves? If so, it is sheer nonsense to aspire to liberty or independence. Let us submit at once, without murmurs, and without efforts for deliverance, to be the colonies we are in reality. Blot out the proud motto from our arms, and let our flag, once free, never more greet the sun. If our enemies think proper, let them lay in waste a thousand miles around us. Let them make South Carolina an island on the continent—cut off forever from all sympathy or association with any other State in the Union. Who will suffer most by this policy? To reach us, the dagger must pass through others. The great world of commerce is before us, over the broad Atlantic. We can live, and if we can live free, it is enough. Better any fate than the slow torturing death which awaits us in submission. If our neighboring States choose this death, and think proper to let the general government stop up the channels of their commerce with us, let them do it. If they have not had enough of its interference in their affairs, they can take it still nearer home to their business and bosoms, although tainted with abolitionism itself. But I believe in the prevalence of no such policy. South Carolina, in the heart of the South, cannot be permanently isolated from them in policy, as she cannot be in interests and institutions. The general government may make some spasmodic efforts to produce this result; but if we stand still and firm, they will fail, as the passions of the present give way before the mighty tide of interests which must sweep the South together.

But secession will not only bring us isolation in the South, but heavy burdens in the personal military services we must render and the increased taxes we must pay. We are to live in military boots, with knapsacks on our backs, and have costly foreign embassies, and a standing army and navy to support.

It is not for freemen to count the cost of a free government. Let it cost what it may—life itself—they will be prepared to pay it. But free governments should certainly be the cheapest, because most just and most responsible to the people. I see no reason why South Carolina should be an exception to this general truth. Assuming to ourselves the conduct of our foreign relations, will, doubtless, add something to our expenses. A foreign mission may occasionally be necessary; but there will be no necessity of standing embassies to any foreign powers. Our policy, I think, should be—free trade, equal and just dealing with all nations, entangling alliances with none. Our productions and commerce will appeal to the interests of all nations to do us justice, and secure us peace. If any nation offends or wrongs us, we have a powerful means of redress or retaliation, by shutting them out of our commerce, and thus adding to the prosperity of other and rival nations at their expense. Navies we do not want; for we have no shipping on the ocean to protect. Not one bag of cotton in fifty, when it leaves our ports, belongs to our citizens. It belongs to the citizens of other nations, and goes on the ocean under their flags; and under the same flags all produce belonging to our citizens can easily reach foreign ports. We want no standing army beyond what will be necessary to man the forts in our harbor. We intend to assail or harrass no one on our borders. The advantages we will enjoy by our extrication from the oppressions and dangers of the general government, we will freely impart to others; and will expect to win that friendliness and confidence which all good officers should inspire. But to meet the extraordinary expenses to which we will be subjected, how great will be our additional resources through the customs! How great, too, will be the benefit, especially to the city of Charleston, of expending all the taxes thus raised within our own State, amongst our own people! The city of Washington, as well as all the great Northern cities, are standing monuments of what the mere expenditure of money amongst a people can do for their enrichment. There, on the Potomac, is a large increasing city, of fifty thousand inhabitants, where, a few years ago, there was an old field. It is a mere consumer, and exports not a dollar's worth of produce. I think the additional means secession will secure us, will more than meet the additional expenses we must incur by our independency.

I have thus, fellow-citizens, endeavored briefly to lay before you the probable consequences of the secession of South Carolina from the Union. I have argued the question of secession as if it was a final separation from all the States of the South. But is this a correct method of arguing this question? If our cause is the cause of the whole South—at least, of the cotton region of the South—will not the South in due time perceive the truth? If in origin, pursuits and institutions, we are one, how long will we remain apart, through the influence of those who have wronged and degraded us, and who now threaten our utter ruin in the overthrow of our institutions? Will they prefer a union with the free States, with inferiority and colonial dependence; or a union with us, with equality and independence? Safety and honor are on the one hand—danger and degradation on the other. Increasing power and respectability among the nations of the earth, whose prosperity we will hold in the hollow of our hands; or increasing weakness, with a government under whose prestige they and their institutions become the scoff of nations. These are the alternatives, which truth and experience must present to all impartial minds in the South. Where must they ultimately lead, unless but to a union of the South? If South Carolina secedes from the Union, and remains an independent State for five years, a Southern Confederacy must be the result, or the South will have enforced those guarantees which will give her that safety, liberty and equality, to which she is entitled. I have been battling in this cause for twenty-five years, and have now but a few more years to give to your service. I long to see it settled. As a citizen of South Carolina, I demand that she makes me free. Let her determine, now and forever, the fate of her sons. My counsel is, secede from the Union of these United States. "At every hazard, and to the last extremity," secede. If I was now about to draw my last breath, with that breath I would exhort you to secede. And above all, my friends, let us be united in secession. Our disunion will alone tempt an effort at coercion. Our disunion can alone bring us defeat. Let us be charitable to each other; and hold every man to be a brother who agrees with us as to the wrongs we have endured, and is intent on redressing them. When the State Convention shall determine on the mode of redress—when it withdraws this State from the Union, all these will be with us; and in their generous rivalry for the maintenance of the honor and liberty of South Carolina, they will perhaps surpass us all in patriotic energy and usefulness. Unite—and unite in secession, and, with God's blessing, redemption is at hand for us and ours.

Extracts from the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.

It has ever been the felicity of the American abolitionist to discern, at the close of each successive year of his experience, fresh proofs of the wisdom of his philosophy and the sagacity of his method, in the impress they have set upon the character, and the direction they have given to the current of events. The twelvemonth which has just expired is overshadowed with a cloud of these witnesses. The strides of this nation towards its destiny or its doom were never more rapid or more appalling. If there be any element of deliverance, any hope of safety, any way of escape from the fate which analogous crimes have drawn down upon the heads of less guilty because less enlightened nations, of which the memory only survives, it is to be looked for in the bitter but healing antidote which the abolitionists have mingled with the poisoned cup of the people's abominations. If there be any recovery for it from its present perdition, any possibility of its yet making this continent the theatre of the noblest drama ever presented to God or man—of a true republic whose laws are equal, beneficent, and just—a human translation of the divine government of the universe—it is only to be achieved by pressing forward in the footsteps by which the anti-slavery movement would lead it on to safety, happiness, and glory. These truths the facts of the past year's history have impressed more deeply than ever upon our minds. * * * *

THE SOUTH AND THE UNION.

The policy of the South, in its leading influences, has been, during the past year, marked by the same State craft and distinguished by the same success that has ever characterized it. The indignation which naturally pervaded it when it found that the conquests of the Mexican war, which had been planned and fought through for the simple purpose of strengthening its influence in the nation, by extending the dominion of its idea, were not all of them necessarily to be devoted to their legitimate purpose, was loud and deep. Its rage at the certain loss of the golden regions of California—regions so eminently adapted to slave labor—wrested from it by the Northern immigration that had peopled it with freemen, and at the doubt, not yet entirely relieved, which was spread over the destiny of New Mexico and Utah, by the fanaticism of Northern freedom, was as sincere as it was violent. It found vent in the resolutions of Legislatures, the messages of Governors, the vaporing of conventions, the rhetoric of the stump and of the pulpit, and the fierce diatribes of the press. In Georgia, a joint report and resolutions were submitted early in the year, recapitulating the injuries the South had endured at the hands of the North, and authorizing the Governor, in case Congress should abolish slavery in any territory, or the District, or admit California, or the other territories, with constitutions forbidding slavery, or if any slave should be refused to be delivered up by the authorities of any Northern State, to call a convention of the people, to take such steps as the general good should seem to make necessary. As at least one of these cases has arisen, and Georgia has not yet seceded, we may hope that she has reconsidered her stern purpose, and relented in our favor. South Carolina, too, has not been wanting in that noisy bravado which has constituted, for so many years, the political capital of that bullying commonwealth.

THE NORTH AND THE UNION.

Whatever reality the pretences at a purpose of secession at the South may have had, they had the effect of arousing the loyal spirit of the North to the rescue—not by a manly resolution to put down the southern malcontents, should they venture upon any overt act, but by servile declarations of its own willingness to do the dirty work appointed to it, as the price of averting one. These demonstrations were made in divers manners, from the beginning of the agitation of the Compromise question. The press, the pulpit, public meetings, all united in swelling the chorus of praise to the Union, and in giving voice to the devotion to it that inspired them all. The first public meeting in the long procession which has marched through the year, was held in Castle Garden, at the beginning of spring, before Mr. Webster's speech, on a call signed by men of all political parties. The Mayor presided; Messrs. Ogden, Joseph L. White, General Scott, and others, addressed it. Resolutions foreshadowing almost the very shape which the compromise finally took, were passed with enthusiasm, and as far as the city of New York was concerned, the Union was put in the way of being saved. This meeting, however, was but the precursor of another yet more emphatic, held in the same place, in November. Every effort had been made to procure a great array of signatures to the call, and many were extorted, under threats of exposing the delinquents to their Southern customers. It was composed, also, of men of all parties; but the fact of its occurring near an election, took from it something of the disinterested look so patriotic a movement should have, and gave it the appearance of a trick to procure the defeat of the Seward wing of the whig party in the State—a result that it very nearly accomplished. It was addressed by a mixed commission of whigs and democrats, and passed resolutions approving of all the compromise measures, the Fugitive law amongst them, declaring that they "will sustain that law, and the execution of the same, by all lawful means." * * * * * * *

Herein consists the hope of our deliverance. The anti-slavery agitation never can die out. It has been going on increasing, from the day of its small things, in spite of the steady opposition of the State and the church, and of all the usually controlling influences of society. It has taken possession of Congress, and turned it into a great anti-slavery debating society, with the whole country for an audience. Increasing attention to the subject must be followed by growing intelligence and a more earnest sense of responsibility and duty. These feelings will take various shapes, and will approach the object that excites them by different ways. But they will never cease to haunt it, and make it uncomfortable in its wickedness. Fortunately it does not take many to ring the alarm-bell, (that bell which Burke tells us we should rejoice to hear when the city is on fire,) and as it has been kept clashing for twenty years, with few hands at the rope, and with a neighborhood hating the disturbance more than the conflagration, we think it is more than Mr. Clay or Mr. Webster can do to silence it. That the American Union must come to an end, if the element of slavery be not eliminated, is as certain as that the Union between the thirteen colonies and England must have ceased, at some time, even if it had been postponed from 1776, or as it is that great changes must take place in the political arrangements of Continental Europe. It is merely a question of time. And all the professions of loyalty and allegiance with which our great great men and little great men think it necessary to garnish their speech withal, are symptoms not of health, but of conscious weakness. The true friends of the country are they who are proving that the Union is a delusion and a snare, as now constituted—strong only for evil and impotent for good. Increasing multitudes are growing up to the knowledge of this truth, and the day of its reduction to practice will be that from which history will date the birth of the republic. * * * * * * *

We look upon this Fugitive bill as a most significant, as well as a most important, event in the history of the anti-slavery revolution. Whence came it? From the degree of protection anti-slavery agitation had thrown around the fugitives whose evasion anti-slavery agitation had promoted. What is its design? To replace this matter where it stood twenty years ago, when escape was comparatively rare, and rendition absolutely easy. What does it prove? That there is less hostility to slavery than has heretofore existed? Nay, verily; but the direct contrary. Are there not as many abolitionists as before the bill passed? Yes, indeed, and their number will multiply faster than ever before. And yet the wire-pullers at Washington believe, or pretend that they believe, that they have put this agitation at rest, and pacified the country. We can tell them that revolutions never go backwards, and that a movement, like ours, aimed at the destruction of an element so closely entwined with our institutions as slavery, is a revolution. What the present stage of that revolution may be, cannot be told from a contemporary stand-point. But the time is not very remote when this imagined victory of the slave power will be seen as a certain sign of its weakness, and a sure forerunner of its downfall.

ARRIVAL OF GEORGE THOMPSON.

The past year will be long remembered by the abolitionists of Massachusetts, as the one that witnessed the return of George Thompson to the scene of his former labors and trials. Fifteen years ago, his fidelity to the American slave drove him from our shores, which were no more worthy of him. The blood-thirsty spirit which marked that reign of terror, and which had singled him out, in an especial manner, as the most acceptable victim to be offered by its Northern worshippers to the idol of the land, made his return to his own country necessary to the safety of his life. During the long interval, we have been in constant intercourse with him. He has kept himself accurately informed of each passing chapter in our history. We have watched his active participation in the great reforms in his own country, as they have successively presented themselves, and the growth of his influence and fame, until he was raised to the British senate by the most numerous constituency of the empire.

ESCAPING SLAVES.

Notwithstanding the stringent provisions of the Fugitive bill, and the confidence which was felt in it as a certain cure for escape, we are happy to know that the evasion of slaves was never greater than at this moment. All abolitionists, at any of the prominent points of the country, know that applications for assistance were never more frequent. This is inevitable in the nature of things, and from the extent of the frontier of slavery. During the summer, Mr. William L. Chaplin was arrested in the District, or just over the line of Maryland, in the act of conveying several slaves to freedom. For this act of humanity, and on charge of resistance of the officers employed for the recovery of the slaves, he was thrown in our prison, at Washington. A strong excitement was raised in his behalf, particularly in Central New York. Agents were sent over the country to raise the money necessary to liberate him on bail. After being thus released at Washington, he was re-arrested, and confined for several months, in Maryland, for an alleged breach of her laws. Very recently he has obtained bail to an excessive amount, and is now in this part of the country. So dangerous and expensive is it to yield to the simplest impulses of common humanity in this free and happy country!

THE CHURCH AND CLERGY.

Our narrowing space forbids us to devote to this head the attention which its importance demands. The action of the great denominational bodies has not been marked with any of those prominent features which have obtruded themselves upon us in former years—not that there has been any relaxation of the attitude of repulse which those sects maintain towards any attempt to act against slavery through their machinery. * * * * * * *

The head of Massachusetts orthodox theology, Moses Stuart, blesses the defender of the constitution for having recalled him to a sense of his constitutional duty of catching slaves, and fulminates a bull of interdict upon that conscience which presumes to condemn the constitution. The hierciarch of New Haven, Dr. Taylor, does suit and service to the supreme law of slavery, under the very droppings of the sanctuary of Yale. Dr. Hawks answers for the fidelity of the Anglican churchmen; and Dr. Dewey, the leader of the hosts of the unitarian secession, who sits in Channing's seat, vies with those of the elder faiths in the humility of his homage and the servility of his allegience to the demon that we serve. *

It is no uncommon subject of complaint that the old reverence for the clergy is on the wane, and various causes have been suggested to account for it. A favorite theory is, that it is owing to the systematic attacks which the abolitionists have made upon them;—a charge, false as far as the authority of the clerical office is concerned, but true in the sense of a constant watching and exposing of their shortcomings in this direction. It is our opinion that the present position of the American clergy, as a class, is not owing to abolitionism, or infidelity, or any other extrinsic cause, but to themselves. The mass of men do not approach their doctrinal opinions through the gate of abstract reflection, when they find themselves dethroning them and setting up new sovereigns; it is by the avenue of experience and in the clear light of facts that they enter into the Adytum of their thoughts, and lay iconoclastic hands on their idol ideas. * * * * * * *

Who have been the bitterest revilers of the abolitionists, even when the influence of their labors had made the former gross wickedness of clerical pro-slavery unwise and inexpedient? Who the readiest vehicles of defamation and lies? Men in pulpits, and having the control of the religious press. And, now, who is it that justify the abominable slave-catching law, that stand ready to bless slave-catching meetings, and preach passive obedience and non-resistance to wicked laws and wicked rulers, but the great leaders of the denominations? Calhoun, and Clay, and Hangman Foote, shine as moral teachers when contrasted with the black infamy of such men as Drs. Spring, Hawks and Dewey; for they do not pretend that slavery or slave-catching is a moral duty—but a political necessity. * * * * * * *

It is with religious as with political principles—the good must either prevail or go to the wall. God and slavery can no more be served together than God and mammom. We must hold to the one and deny the other. Slavery has well nigh perverted the political principles of the country, and made men reject the very ideas which first breathed the breath of nationality into its nostrils. It has gone near to make them deny the Lord that bought them, and to trample under their feet the religion they profess to wear nearest their hearts. As a people, they have done this. They have put the will of a set of puny beings, scarce six feet high, against that of him that holdeth the universe in the hollow of his hand. * * * * * * *

The facts of slavery are becoming daily better and better understood, and a sense of their own complicity is fast sinking deeper and deeper in the Northern mind. A public sentiment is thus in the process of creation which will compel our public men at Washington to make such protestations as will effectually ruin their hopes from the South