THE CONSTITUTIONAL.

C. W. BOYCE, PROPRIETOR. "THE UNION---ESTO PERPETUA." BENJ. TURNER, PUBLISH

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CARPENTER'S NOTICE.

MR. A. BARTUL,

WISHES to inform the citizens of Ale[xandria and] vicinity, that he is prepared to [do] all work [in his] line. He is an undertaker [and] Builder [and] Gins, &c. aug 4—

SPEECH OF HON. JERE CLEMENS,

Delivered at Huntsville, Ala.

FELLOW CITIZENS:—In the faces which I see around me I recognize the playmates of my childhood and the associates of maturer years. Some of you have been my companions amid the dangers and hardships of a soldier's life, and almost all of you have been my personal friends through every change of parties and politics. If, therefore I fail to satisfy you that my present political position is the right one, I know you will do me the justice to believe that it is the result of deliberate examination and earnest conviction, uninfluenced by any consideration but the public good.

I am here to advocate the election of John Bell and Edward Everett, whom I regard as among the wisest and purest of living statesmen, but in the discharge of that duty I have no warfare to make upon the friends of Stephen A. Douglas. Differing from them upon various questions of public policy, there is yet one link between us I would not willingly break. I believe them to be sincerely devoted to the union of these States, and as long as they are so, I could not hold myself acquitted at the bar of my conscience for treating them as enemies. Besides, it would be unjust to hold them accountable for the follies and corruptions of an Administration in which they have had neither lot nor part; but by which, on the contrary, they have been pursued with the bitterest persecution. In speaking of the Democracy I may not always distinguish between them and the Breckinridge wing, and for some of the causes of complaint to which I shall advert they must bear a part of the responsibility; but my business to-day is not with them. John C. Breckinridge is the residuary legatee of James Buchanan's Administration, and when I speak of Democratic sins I wish to be understood as referring to that Democracy which he represents.

Before entering upon the discussion of these questions which they have forced into the foreground, and designedly made the main issues in the present canvass I propose to strip from their shoulders the robes they have assumed, and prove beyond doubt or cavil that they have been false to every principle of the Old Democracy—that they have torn down every landmark erected by its founders—and have only retained the *name*, because it was still a spell of power among the people, and served to aid them in the accomplishment of designs full of danger to the Republic. For this purpose I shall take their party platforms, and proceed to try them by the principles there laid down. That of 1856 is before me. It has recently been reaffirmed at Charleston and at Baltimore, upon all the points to which I wish to direct your attention; and as it is their latest exposition, so I suppose it is the one by which they prefer to be judged.

That platform begins with a reaffirmation of all the cardinal principles of the Old Democracy. For the sake of brevity I shall state them in my own language. They were all based upon the general principle of a strict construction of the Constitution, and were:

1. Opposition to a Bank of the United States.
2. Opposition to a Tariff for protection.
3. Opposition to internal improvements by the General Government.
4. Strict Economy in the public Expenditures.

Those were the principles of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, and for twenty years they have been embodied in the resolutions of Democratic Conventions. Each and every one of them was esteemed vital, and the man who was proven to be false upon one, was held to be false upon all. Let us apply this test to the Buchanan-Breckinridge Democracy. Let us take up their published principles one by one, and ascertain how far history establishes their loyalty, or convicts them of infidelity to the pledges deliberately made to the people.

The Bank question has passed from the arena of politics. It is dead, and no one is seeking to revive it. That resolution therefore is without meaning and demands no notice. But the others are living questions. I begin with the Tariff. The platform pledges the party not only against the principle of protection, but in favor of "progressive free trade throughout the world." That was the promise. What has been the performance? With a beautiful consistency worthy the admiration of all mankind, they placed upon this Free Trade platform a man whose whole life had been devoted to the interests of *protection*—who had voted for the Tariff of 1828, which, but for Andrew Jackson, would have plunged the country into all the horrors of civil war—who had voted for the Tariff of 1842, which the Democrats of that day delighted to denominate the Black Tariff—and who had never upon any occasion raised his voice or recorded his vote against the highest duty the avarice of the manufacturer impelled him to ask.

The selection of such a candidate gives color to the suspicion that the Convention intended by their Free Trade resolution to deceive and mislead the Anti-Tariff States, trusting that the Tariff States would estimate its just value by the potency of a paper resolve so diametrically opposed to the well known opinions and life long practices of the candidate selected. Whether that was the intention or not, that was the result. Trusting to the platform, Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina rolled up overwhelming majorities for James Buchanan. Trusting to the past history of the candidate, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Louisiana gave him like majorities. It was evident that somebody must be deceived, and there never was a reasonable ground for doubt as to who would be the victim. A member from Pennsylvania is reported to have said at the Convention, that he swallowed the platform as he did opiuac—to throw it up again. The very next Democratic Convention which assembled in the State of Pennsylvania adopted a strongly protective resolution as an article of party faith, in direct conflict with the resolution of the National Convention, and the Democratic candidate for Governor was elected mainly on the ground that he was a better Tariff man than his opponent. In the Senate of the United States, Bigler of Pennsylvania, Thompson of New Jersey, and Slidell and Benjamin of Louisiana, are known and avowed protectionists. Mr. Buchanan, in his annual message, manifested his devotion to his old principles by recommending the substitution of *specific ad valorem* duties. His Secretary of the Treasury made a counter recommendation, but yet they jog amicably along together, and the nation is edified by beholding the wonderful power of "spoils" to smother away the roughness of political disagreements.

The conclusion from the record is irresistable, that, so far as relates to the Tariff, there has not been even a decent pretence of redeeming the promises of the platform. Beginning with the President, and running on through Senators, Governors and Legislators down to the lowest cross roads politician, there has been an open and shameless abandonment of the principle of Free Trade, and not one voice in the ranks of the party, from Maine to Louisiana, is raised in rebuke. The old rule was "false in one thing, false in all," and that was the rule insisted on by Wm. L. Yancey in 1848. In his "Address to the people of Alabama," of that year, he said:

"The Democracy has ever held—that no man could be unsound upon any one of the great points of the Democratic creed—to-wit: 1st, the raising of revenue; 2d, the keeping of the revenue; 3d, the distribution of revenue—without being unsound on all."

The Buchanan democracy are proven to be unsound upon the subject of the Tariff, and according to Mr. Yancey's rule they are unsound on all "the great points of the Democratic creed." He being judge the case is fully made out. But I shall go further. I intend to pile proof upon proof until skepticism is impossible, unless it is allied to idiocy.

The subject of Internal Improvements by the General Government, is the next which I shall notice. Upon that subject the promises of the platform were as clear and positive as the violations of them were prompt and disgraceful. When that platform was adopted Congress was in session. It contained then, as it has done ever since a large Democratic majority in the Senate. Before they adjourned—before the ink was fairly dry upon their written pledge to the nation—they passed some twelve or fifteen Internal Improvement bills by a two third vote over the veto of President Pierce. There was not, I believe, a single Buchanan democrat at the North, who hesitated an instant, when his local interests might be subserved, to break the faith to which he was pledged. At the West and South-west the same state of things is observable—the same abandonment of democratic principle is menifest. Johnson and Sebastian of Arkansas, Nicholson and Johnson of Tennessee, and Polk and Green of Missouri, habitually vote for bills of Internal Improvement, and yet they have been not only retained in the democratic church, but have been specially appointed to minister at the altar. Year after year, for the purpose of deceiving the people into the belief that they have not departed from the ancient faith, the democracy reaffirm this resolution against Internal Improvements. Year after year, and month after month, it is violated, until the fraud has become as palpable as if written with a sunbeam along the sky. With what feelings then must honest men regard the arrogant claim they set up to the inheritance of the Old Democracy? They are not legitimate descendants from that honored stock—nor adopted children, educated in the faith, and clinging with fond attachment to the principles by which it has been distinguished. They are not even bastard offshoots, whose birth, though sinful, has mingled in their veins a portion of the genuine blood. They are usurping parasites to whom the word democracy has no significance except as a means of obtaining office, and fattening upon the public treasury.

Strict economy in the public expenditures is another of the principles which you and I have been taught to consider essential to an honest administration of the government, and to the preservation of the Republican tastes, habits, parity and simplicity in these to whom the reigns of power are entrusted. The Convention which nominated Mr. Buchanan were not unmindful of the importance of making this a prominent article of party faith. They copied it in their resolutions with as little hesitation as other articles of democratic policy, and with as little intention of adhering to it. Mr. Buchanan's own idea of economy may be gathered from his letter of 1852 bemoaning the extravagance of Mr. Fillmore's administration, which he charged with running up the public expenditures to the enormous sum of $40,000,000. In March 1857 he was himself inaugurated President of the United States and clothed with power to correct the abuse of which he complained. In two years, instead of reducing he had increased the public expenditures to $80,000,000. Here was economy with a vengeance! out of power he denounced the expenditure of $40,000,000 as an outrage to which an honest people ought not to submit. In power he expends double the amount, and you are required to shut your eyes to this plain, palpable, and open violation of plighted faith—to recognize him as the head of the democratic church—and allow him to dictate for whom your suffrages shall be cast in the coming Presidential election. I cannot answer for you, but I answer for myself, that I repudiate his authority, deny his orthodoxy, and scorn his dictation. If he is a democrat I have not sufficient intelligence to comprehend the creed in which I was educated. If he has been faithful to his own standard of political principle, figures have lost their value, or I have lost the capacity to understand them.

You will bear in mind, fellow-citizens, that in all I have said I have confined myself strictly to facts established by the public records. I have relied upon no inferences; introduced no doubtful testimony; and called to the stand no questionable witness. The proof admits of no controversy. The only question is whether it is capable of satisfactory explanation. I say that it is not. I say that no excuse can be rendered for those who assume the name, while tramping on all that makes democracy respectable. They have banished the text books of Jefferson from their party schools, and not a vestige is left of the principles which brought Andrew Jackson into power. The old platform is gone. Plank by plank it has been torn away, and in holding the Buchanan-Breckinridge faction to a just accountability for all they have done, and of recreancy to the party among whom I grew to manhood, and beneath whose banner I have so often gone forth to battle. I am no rebel to the doctrine of Jefferson and Jackson, and raise no hand against their legitimate successors, but I am here to wage an unrelenting war upon those who have stolen their colors.

The old democratic platform was broad enough for you and me. It was not broad enough for them. They have made many additions, and the worst of it is, that they have been faithful only to those which are rotten at the core.

They adopted a resolution in favor of the Compromise of 1850, and against a renewal of the slavery agitation in Congress, or out of it, in any form whatever. They had adopted the same resolution in 1852, and violated it two years afterwards by repealing the Missouri Compromise. That, however, did not prevent them from readopting it in 1856. In 1858 they violated this second pledge, by urging upon Congress, the admission of Kansas, with not more than half the requisite number of inhabitants, and under a constitution whose adoption had been procured by fraud, violence, bribery and bloodshed. This constitution thus adopted, was thrown like a firebrand into the National Legislature, arousing all the worst passions of men, and exciting a sectional strife whose end is not yet, and the bitterness of whose fruits we are now fully able to appreciate.

They promised us, to maintain the freedom of the seas, and to enforce the doctrine that the National Flag protected the vessel at whose masthead it was flying. Yet never have so many of our vessels been detained and visited. Never have insults to our National Flag been so frequent; and never has there been such a mead and cowardly exhibition of patience under the wrongs and outrages to which we have been subjected.

We were told that the Gulf of Mexico should become an American lake, and over that sea no flag should float except by our permission. Over that very sea a Spanish cruiser has fired into American vessels, and British gun-boats detained and visited our peaceful merchantmen almost without remonstrance, and certainly without effective resentment.

In another resolution the right to annex all circumjacent islands and territories was broadly asserted, and an implied sanction given to the acts of American adventurers having that object in view. In the teeth of this resolution Gen. Walker and his followers were seized upon the soil of Nicaragua, and forcibly transported to the United States—his property destroyed—himself made prisoner, and his rights, whether regarded as an American citizen, or as President of Nicaragua, illegally and ruthlessly cloven down.

There is not one plank in that remarkable platform which has not been torn from its fastenings—not one promise which has been faithfully kept. The Kansas-Nebraska bill was a miserable cheat, if the seceders are to be believed, and now, after the fraud has performed its office, we are required to accept an explanatory resolution in full satisfaction, which is itself so unmeaning, and so worthless, that the attempt to force it upon the Charleston Convention wears the appearance of a desperate design to create disturbance—to break up the Democratic organization, and pave the way for the election of a Republican President.

In other times, when parties made some pretensions to honesty, the violation of any one article of their published creed was esteemed a grievous sin, for which they were held to a strict accountability; but here is a party who have proved recreant to *every one*, and still retain the strength to struggle for the control of the Government. The solution of this singular problem is to be found in the fact that they have excited and systematically kept alive a dangerous agitation upon the subject of slavery, and thus diverted the attention of the people from their misdeeds. The negro has been to them a cloak for every departure from Democratic principle. Loud and vehement denunciation of Northern aggressions has been accepted as an all-sufficient atonement for broken faith, tyrannical usurpation, and degrading corruptions. For one, I am disposed to question the merits of that atonement. I am growing suspicious of the designs of those who plead it, and conceding, for the sake of the argument, that some danger really threatens us, I propose to inquire how far the fighting Democracy are guiltless in the premises. If it should turn out that they have brought that danger upon the country, a due regard for public justice requires that we should hold them to account for this also, instead of allowing them to escape a righteous punishment for other sins through the evil consequences flowing from this one. In dealing with this branch of my subject, I shall speak with the plainness becoming a freeman. Avoiding the use of all unnecessary epithets, I shall nevertheless call things by their right names, and state facts without inquiring particularly upon whose ears they fall harshly. This is no holiday occasion. The existence of this Republic is at stake, and he who would perform his whole duty must throw aside the headless weapons of the sportive tourney, and grasp the battle-axe and the grinded spear. In this respect he may profit by the teachings of Nature. When Spring, with its balmy breezes, and genial showers, walks smiling through the land, the oak of the forest clothes himself with a green and beautiful foliage, but when Winter comes with its fierce tempests, and its gloomy skies, the Monarch of the woods shakes down his green glories to the earth, and prepares himself with naked arms to battle with the Storm. The political horizon is black with the signs of a coming tempest. The Winter is upon us, and what the people need to enable them to pass through it unharmed, is the naked truth, sternly and fearlessly uttered.

I charge the Democracy with having dragged the slavery question from the obscure pulpits of a few crazy fanatics, and thrust it upon a national theatre to disturb the peace and embitter the social relations of the different members of the Confederacy. Previous to 1840 no one had ever thought of exciting from slavery an element of political power. Occasionally some gloomy preacher, or discontented lecturer, held forth to sixty audiences upon the horrors of African slavery; but they were for most part regarded even at the North as run-mad philanthropists, or petty demagogues, ambitious of neighborhood notoriety. In that year the Democratic party found itself trembling on the verge of a defeat. The preceding years of Mr. Van Buren's administration had scattered the seeds of discontent so widely that it was evident he must be defeated unless the votes of the Southern States could be concentrated upon him. In this emergency a consultation was held among the leaders at Washington. A plan of campaign was adopted, and a circular letter addressed to the faithful throughout the slaveholding States. In that letter Gen. Harrison was charged with being an Abolitionist. The extreme sensitiveness of the Southern people to any threatened aggression upon their rights in this particular description of property, was well understood, and it was hoped that fifteen States might be driven by their fears into the support of Mr. Van Buren. From Delaware to Louisiana the cry was at once caught up by the Democratic editors and orators, and the hero of the Thames who had spent an ordinary lifetime in the service of his country; who was born in Virginia, and whose ancestors were sleeping beneath its soil, was arraigned as a criminal whose terrible fanaticism invited the application of the torch to the dwellings, and the knife to his kindred and friends.

It was here that the slavery agitation received its first dangerous impetus. The attempt to make political capital against Gen. Harrison at the South by charging him with hostility to slavery, had the necessary and natural effect of making capital for him at the North, where different domestic institutions prevailed. Worse than that, it furnished Northern politicians with a plausible excuse for charging us with a design to convert the Government into a grand slavery propagandism. It opened the eyes of the Northern demagogue to the use which might be made of the prejudices of his neighbors, and supplied the pretext for resorting to it.

It was in this way, and at this point, that the political agitation of the slavery question began. Who kept it alive, and who are now fanning the flames, are questions to which the citizens in this day of peril have a right to demand an answer. If he is true to himself, he will also inquire what plausibility there was in the first accusation, and how far it was justified by after events?

What Gen. Harrison might have done, we cannot know, except so far as an opinion may be formed from the history of his past life. He was called away before his policy was developed, and the grave closed alike on his mortal body and the plans of government he had formed or was forming. But happily we are not left in the same ignorance as to his opponent. Mr. Van Buren was the Democratic candidate. We were told that he was a "Northern man with Southern principles," and that in his keeping all the interests of the slaveholder would be secure. Eight years afterwards this same Martin Van Buren was the abolition candidate for President, and led on with remorseless energy the blackest of the Northern to the most fearful battle, which had yet been fought against the institutions of the South. Here then we have incontrovertible evidence that in at least one instance, the Democracy were fatally mistaken. Granting that they were honest, admitting that they dragged the slavery question into the arena of politics from the best motives; still the fact remains that they did it with such bad judgment, a prudent people should be very cautious in following their counsels.

In 1844 Henry Clay was the candidate of the Whig party. He, too, was a Virginian by birth and by education. A Kentuckian by long residence and association. He had been speaker of the House of Representatives, Foreign Minister, Secretary of State, and Senator. He had tried every walk of public life, and had been distinguished above his great compeers in all. But this did not protect him from accusations of the most disgraceful character. It was supposed possible to advance the interests of a party by charging him with pandering to Northern fanaticism, and the man at whose tomb a whole nation now kneels in reverential awe was covered all over with the slime of calumny.

In this canvass intolerance gave birth to another of that wicked and dangerous brood whom Providence as a punishment for our sins, has been permitted to be turned loose upon us. We were taught to distrust one another. Here-tofore it had been conceded that as every man at the South was equally interested, so every man was equally true and loyal to the constitutional rights of his section. Now for the first time that fidelity was called into question. The charge made against Mr. Clay was applied with as little hesitation to his friends, and is repeated this hour against such men as John Bell and A. H. Stephens, though R. Toombs, J. P. Benjamin, T. L. Clingman, and J. A. Pearce have obtained absolution by joining the Breckinridge ranks.

As might have been expected, such accusations did more to provoke enmities than to make converts, and if there be any Southern divisions which are justly to be lamented, we may look to this canvass as the fountain from which they flowed. If there be any sin or any misfortune attending them, the misfortune is here.

Mr. Polk was elected, Texas was annexed, and the war with Mexico followed. Throughout that war, the Northern and the Southern soldier fought side by side. On every battle field their blood was mingled in a common stream. Nor was this the only bond of fellowship and of sympathy between them. When those whom the cannon shot, the musket and the sabre had spared, were stricken down by the deadly disease of the climate, the Son of New England was stretched upon the same blanket with the Son of South Carolina. In that hour, who supposes that either inquired whether his fellow-sufferer came from the North, or from the South? If some one cursed with the gift of prophecy had ventured to tell them that, in a few short years they would be ready to cut each other's throats about a senseless question in reference to the domestic institutions of a Territory of which they had never heard, with what indignant scorn would they have scouted his evil forebodings?

In July and August, 1848, they returned to their native land, covered with scars, but covered with glory also. Their hearts throbbing with the remembrance of all the mutual kindness which had sweetened the darkest hours of suffering, and of danger, and overflowing with the warm gushing love of Brothers who had proved each other's truth amid the roar of battle, and in the more dreadful stillness which reigned along the pathway of the pestilence. Alas what an entertainment had the politicians prepared to greet these war-broken soldiers. They thought they were Brothers: they were told that they were enemies. They thought that all they had undergone was for the honor and glory of a great Republic, of whose benefits and blessings they were joint and coequal heirs. They were told that the Republic existed only in name—that faction and fanaticism had split it into fragments, and the hand which but yesterday had stanched a comrade's wounds, must be armed against that comrade's life to-morrow. Gen. Taylor was a candidate for the Presidency, and they heard with astonishment that the veteran Chieftain who had led them over the walls of Monterey, and whose cheering words they had heard in every interval between the murderous volleys at Buena Vista, was false to the country for which they knew his life and honor had been so freely and so recently staked. It mattered not that he was the owner of two hundred slaves. It mattered not that he was born in the South—lived in the South, and that all his interests were inseparably blended with it. The gross absurdity of imputing anti-slavery leanings to him, did not prevent the charge from being unblushingly made and stubbornly persisted in. As in the case of Mr. Van Buren, we were told that it was safer to trust a Northern man than one of ourselves, although that Northern man had publicly thanked God that he lived in a State where slavery did not exist, and was moreover the author or inventor of the doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty, which the Breckinridge Democracy now profess to hold in such detestation, but which they never made it convenient to understand until it became necessary to use it as a means of defeating Douglas, and breaking up the democratic organization.

I will not go as far as Gen. Cass did, and say, that no man with a thimblefull of brains had any excuse for doubt or misconception in regard to that doctrine prior to 1850, for up to that time I certainly misunderstood it myself. But I have never misunderstood it since, and the leaders of the Southern Rights democracy *did not misunderstand it before*. Gen. Cass testified in open Senate that he had fully and clearly explained the Nicholson letter to Mr. Mason of Virginia, Mr. Davis of Miss., and other Southern Congressmen; and if they could support him in 1848, with that knowledge, I confess myself unable to understand what principle prevents them from supporting Mr. Doug as now. If the doctrine is so pernicious as to justify their withdrawal from a party Convention in 1860, what excuse have they to render for allowing it to pass unquestioned in 1848—for lending their aid to its incorporation in the Kansas-Nebraska bill of 1854, and making it a leading principle of the Cincinnati platform of 1856. Then it was a practical question. Then there was a Territory whose political status might be affected by it, *and then they were silent*. Now there is no territory into which slavery can go, and the doctrine has no present application. If it is understood now for the first time the knowledge comes too late, and they are but faithless sentinels who only give warning to the nation after the mischief is accomplished.

It may be that the truth has just dawned upon them. It may be that they overlooked Mr. Buchanan's letter of acceptance—Mr. Breckinridge's Tippecanoe Speech, and Mr. Cobb's still more explicit declaration at Portland. It may be that all the arguments and all the remonstrances addressed to them failed to open their eyes. History is not without examples of similar hallucination, and all of us at some time had occasion to observe that the politician, like the fanatic

"Once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood hugs it to the last."

But in acknowledging the delusion and exercising the error which is its offspring, it is nevertheless a duty of patriotism to snatch the reins of government from hands unfit to hold them.

In 1852 the game of '40, '44, and '48 was renewed. This time Winfield Scott was the sufferer. He was a Southern man, and the fame he had already acquired made it impossible for him to trample on the Constitution, since the act would convert an immorality hardly won, into an infamy without example. But even that shield was unavailing.

It is one of the curses attending this wicked agitation that men are taught not only to ignore probabilities, and disregard all the rules of fair dealing, but to forget also the gratitude due for distinguished services, and patriotism. In their zeal to secure the defeat of Gen. Scott, reckless partisans forgot that from his earliest youth, whenever his country called, his sword had leaped from the scabbard as the lightning leaps from the cloud—that from Lundy's Lane to the City of the Montezumas his march had been from triumph to triumph—that his gallant brow was covered all over with laurels won on the battle fields of liberty—or rather, that he was himself a living laurel, whose vigorous life and glorious beauty had attracted the wondering admiration of other lands than ours, and bid fair to bloom with a fresher and a lovelier verdure through the long ages to come. The honest pride which every American ought to have taken in his great achievements was lost sight of, and the whole pack of party curs went yelping along the pathway of the veteran hero, inspired less malignity more remorseless than the instinct of the blood hound.

He had no political record upon which to fix a charge of abolition, but with the art of Belial they found a means to perplex the common sense of the nation. They said he was no statesman—that he was ignorant of the duties which would devolve upon him if elected, and would submit himself to the guidance of Wm. H. Seward. The old soldier, who had been accustomed all his life to say like the Centurion, to those about him, "go" or "come," and to see his orders obeyed without question, was suddenly transformed into the pliant, submissive tool of a cringing coward like the New York agitator, and men in abundance were found to credit the monstrous absurdity.

I am well aware that I am telling you nothing which is not already familiar. These things I am sure are as vividly painted upon your memories as upon mine, but it may be that you have not heretofore looked at them in the light they are now presented. In the political, as in the actual world, events are daily transpiring whose consequences we never think of calculating, but when they are pointed out we wonder at our blindness in not observing them before. In this connection allow me to direct your attention to the fact that in every instance the candidate against whom the charge of abolition was preferred, was a Southern man by birth and had been familiar with the institution of slavery from infancy. On the other hand, three or four candidates of the democracy were Northern men, whose earliest education had instilled into their minds the strongest prejudices against slavery—who still believed it to be a grievous sin in the sight of God and man, and lamented its existence among us. The selection of such men to defend slavery interests was either a gross folly, or it was an acknowledgment that all its tendencies are evil, and those who knew least about it could be best trusted to maintain it. There can be no escape from this dilemma. If Southern men by birth, by residence, and by interest were hostile to slavery, it could only be because it is wrong in principle, or deleterious in practice. It will not do to say that a majority of votes are at the North, and that to obtain those votes Southern men were willing to pander to Northern prejudices. That argument will not answer, because the democratic candidates were subjected to precisely the same influences. Mr. Van Buren wanted Northern votes as badly as Gen. Harrison, and there is nothing in his history to justify the belief that he was more scrupulous as to the means of obtaining them. So of Polk and Clay—of Cass and Taylor—and of Pierce and Scott. In every instance the weight of character, and evidence of patriotic devotion to liberty and the country were on the side of those against whom the charge was made. In every instance but one the democratic candidate was a Northern man, and had either openly avowed or in some other way manifested the strongest prejudices against the institutions he was elected to defend. Yet such is the blindness of party spirit that we believed the impeachable tale and thereby became the endorsers of a calumny upon Southern honor and Southern fidelity.

Let it be understood that I am not speaking in the spirit of the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men. I acknowledge my share of the guilt. I claim no exemption from political errors. I am conscious of having committed many in the past, and that consciousness teaches me to be less positive and dogmatic than younger or more experienced men are apt to be. I ask you to accept no mere opinion of mine as authority, but to weigh and consider the facts I submit by the light of your own reason, and decide upon them according to the dictates of your best judgment.

Fellow-citizens, the history I have given you of the slavery agitation would be incomplete if I paused here. I have shown you with whom it took its rise, and by whom it has been fostered and kept alive. The next inquiry is, what have been its results regarded from a Southern standpoint alone? Are we any more secure to-day than we were in 1840? Has all this wrangling secured for us an iota of political power? Have our rights been placed upon a firmer basis? Have our enemies grown weaker? or have we grown stronger? If none of these things have been accomplished, then what good has grown out of it? and what good may we expect in the future? The fruits that a tree has borne one year, are those which we may reasonably calculate upon its bearing the next? And so in political economy, the effects of a measure once fairly tried afforded the best criterion by which to judge of the effects of a second experiment.

In 1840 the Abolition candidate for President received a little over 7,000 votes. But the seed then sown grew and flourished, and in 1844 the Abolition votes swelled to 62,140. This was the first fruit of agitation—of forcing a moral, religious and domestic question into the politics of the nation. In four years the votaries of fanaticism increased nearly nine fold in numbers and more than a hundred fold in zeal. In 1848, after the lapse of another four years of agitation it had increased to 296,282. Mark the rapid rate of progression, and tell me as practical men, if it was not time to try some other remedy for this great and growing evil.

Fortunately there were those in the Councils of the Nation who were equal to the occasion, and still more fortunately there was a President in the White House worthy to be the successor of Washington. Calm and conciliatroy in his bearing; pure and unspotted in his character; honest upright, just and patriotic in every thought; firm and unwavering in the maintainance of the right, he looked out upon the storm, and bade the troubled elements be still. In a voice that echoed from one end of the Republic to the other, he proclaimed that agitation must have an end. The giant wonders of the American Continent, Clay and Webster, were by his side, and lent their voices to swell the mandate.

For the first time fanaticism paused in its career. For the first time waves more dreadful than those that refused to do the bidding of Canute, were rolled backwards by the magical power of wisdom and earnest truth. Milliard Fillmore stood upon the beach and the black and deadly waters shrank away from his presence. During his Administration the Abolition vote fell off to 157,296. Treasure that fact in your memories, and when you go home record it in your tablets, that Milliard Fillmore, the Abolitionist, as he was called, is the only President, who for the last twenty years has dealt an effective blow at the anti-slavery organization of the North.

Mr. Pierce succeeded Mr. Fillmore. He found a land at peace, and a people happy and contented. He had been elevated to the Presidential chair by a vote approaching to unanimity, and a revival of the Monroe era of good feeling was confidently predicted.

In an evil hour he lent his influence to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and thus necessarily reopened the whole subject of slavery. The monster we all thought dead inhaled new life and energy. Again its horrid head was erected, and again its hateful hisses sounded in our ears. The ballot box in 1866 told a fearful story. Mr. Pierce had increased the abolition vote to 1,341,812.

What Mr. Buchanan has done by his Lecompton agitation cannot be so precisely told. We know that he has lost the control or the House of Representatives—that he has increased the Republican strength in the Senate, and made the election of Lincoln, by a purely sectional party, at least a matter of doubt. And this is the end of Southern Rights Democratic statesmanship! This is the boon for which you have to thank those who would agitate *for your good!* Time and again they have addressed you in passionate harangues in favor of the rights of the South. Time and again they have assured you those rights were dependent upon the election of a Democratic President. Time and again you have listened to the Syren song, and time and again you have been deceived. Now they come to you with another remedy—disunion—the last, the worst—the most dreadful in its consequences; the most damning in its guilt. They have led you on as the veiled Prophet of Khorasen led his deluded followers. Like him they have extracted from hell itself, the argument to support a new delusion; and like him they offer you at last a fiery poison which has death in every draught, and torture in every drop. Let me hope that the simile will end here, and that they may not when you have plunged into disunion, lift the veil and exclaim,

"There ye wise saints behold your light your star,
Ye would be dupes and victims, and ye are!"

I beseech your patience, Fellow-Citizens, while I go back a little. It is no transitory or trifling interest which is at stake, and it should be dismissed with no cursory examination.

In 1851, a Convention of Southern Rights Clubs, assembled in Montgomery, officially announced that it was the duty of the people of Alabama "to put their house in order with a view to Secession." Of that Convention John A. Elmore, George W. Gayle, Samuel F. Rice, William L. Yancey, and other Breckinridge leaders of the present day, were members, and on 14th day of February, 1851, they published a Card declaring it to have been the object of the Convention "distinctly to establish a Southern Rights Platform, for the Southern Rights men of Alabama." There was no dodging the question. No covering up the issue under professions of attachment to Union. It was boldly and plainly made. Upon that issue they went before that people and upon that issue they were overwhelmingly defeated. Up to this time the conduct of the Southern Rights men had been manly at least; but with defeat came a change which took away from their cause the dignity of sincerity, and left nothing to inspire the respect of an opponent. They sought readmission into the party they had abandoned, for the purpose of betraying it, and working out their designs under the name of Democracy, thus adding the disgrace of party treachery to the deeper guilt of treason. They said, "we appealed to the people and the verdict is against us. We submit. We are willing to cease our warfare upon the Union, and go back to the party organizations. We beg you to meet us once more as brother democrats, and bury the remembrance of our late unhappy differences." This language was believed—this offer accepted; and in their anxiety for the preservation of *the party*, the Union Democrats deserted the Whig allies who had stood by them when the thunder rolled, and the tempest raged, and went over almost in a body to the standard which was still reeking from the hot bed of treason. They went further and submitted themselves to the irresponsible despotism of the Caucus System. Under its operation the Southern Rights party were vested with the absolute disposal of every office from Door-keeper up to United States Senator. How remorselessly they exercised the power they had obtained by trickery, it is not my purpose now to examine. My business is to show that their professions of submission to the will of the people were hollow and false; that they still nursed in their hearts the venom of 1850; and still eagerly watched for opportunities to strike at the integrity of the Union. During the wise and temperate administration of Millard Fillmore no excuse was furnished them for renewed agitation. But in Franklin Pierce they found an instrument exactly suited to their purpose. Weak and fickle—without the capacity to say "no" in a good cause or a bad one, and always the tool of any man of firm will who undertook to control him, Gen. Pierce enjoys the distinction of having inflicted more evil upon the country, with better intentions than any man who ever filled the Presidential office. Under his rule the Kansas-Nebraska bill was passed—the Missouri Compromise was repealed, and the Secessionists of Alabama were soon furnished with a new pretext for putting "their house in order with a view to secession." Denouncing in the bitterest terms the teachings of Garrison and Beecher they yet imitate their practices, and sent armed emigrants to Kansas to perform the duty of soldiers, rather than of citizens. Squatter Sovereignty had no terrors for them then, when it was to be maintained by the bayonet. They had no objection to the first settlers controlling the domestic institutions of the Territory, provided they were Southern settlers, and in order to insure it, they sent them there in organized companies, regularly officered, and provided with all the implements for cutting threats, instead of the more appropriate instruments of husbandry. No one ought to have doubted that bloodshed would be the consequence, and there is too much reason to believe that such was the object and desire of the leading spirits of the movement. There was a change that a strife once begun on the plains of Kansas would extend and widen until the whole Union was embroiled, and a general civil war desolate the Continent. That scheme proved a failure. That danger was Providentially averted. But the reckless spirits who controlled the Legislature of our State were not to be quieted. In the winter of 1857-8, they passed resolutions to dissolve the Union if Kansas was not admitted into the Union as a State, with the Lecompton Constitution. It is true they afterwards abandoned this position, and accepted the English Bill as *a better bill for the South*, thereby acknowledging that they did not understand the scope and effect of the very measure they had made a pretext for disunion. I will not say that this fact alone is conclusive evidence of loyalty, but I will say that it proves an eagerness to find causes of complaint, and a readiness to resort to extreme correctives, for doubtful wrongs unbecoming the character of peaceful citizens and dangerous to the liberty and happiness of the people.

The Legislature of 1859-60 was composed of like materials, and actuated by a like spirit. The Secessionists had unlimited majorities in both Houses, and extraordinary circumstances gave them an appearance of greater strength than they really possessed. The crazy *foray* of John Brown into Virginia had alarmed and inflamed the public mind, so that even conservative men hesitated to oppose themselves to any measure ostensibly looking to the protection of the South. On the other hand the Southern Rights leaders promptly availed themselves of the existing excitement. The most unfounded reports were daily put in circulation. The most inflammatory harangues were made; and the press teemed with articles calculated to blind the popular judgment and incense to madness the popular heart. I have here an extract from the Montgomery *Mail*, published at the seat of State Government, to which I invite your attention:

"The next breeze that blows from the North will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms!"

THE WAR BREWS.—Our dispatches yesterday show that there was a "large body of men approaching" Charlestown, Va., "from the direction of Wheeling."

So the soil of Virginia already receives the tread of open, defiant Free soil hordes. Let us thank God that the last excuse is about to be bayonetted out of every Southern man who has refused to believe that the fighting men of the North are all our enemies. Our willow-wielders know nothing, see nothing, do nothing, and—for all good to us—are equal to nothing."

By such means opposition was silenced, and the Legislature proceeded to adopt a series of measures, all looking to disunion—all revolutionary in their character, and mischievous in their tendencies.

I shall not have time to comment on those measures at length to-day, but my duty would be poorly discharged if I failed to notice them altogether. The first of the series are Joint Resolutions. I shall now read to you:

"WHEREAS, anti-slavery agitation persistently continued in the non-slaveholding States of this Union for more than a third of a century, marked at every stage of its progress by contempt for the obligations of the law and the sanctity of compacts, evincing a deadly hostility to the rights and institutions of the Southern people, and a settled purpose to effect their overthrow, even by a subversion of the Constitution, and at the hazard of violence and bloodshed; and whereas, a sectional party, calling itself Republican, committed alike by its own acts and antecedents, and the public avowals and secret machinations of its leaders to the execution of these atrocious designs, has acquired the ascendency in nearly every Northern State, and hopes by success in the approaching Presidential elections, to seize the Government itself; and whereas, to permit such seizure by those whose unmistakable aim is to pervert its whole machinery to the destruction of a portion of its members, would be an act of suicidal folly and madness, almost without a parallel in history; and whereas, the General Assembly of Alabama, representing a people loyally devoted to the Union of the Constitution, but scorning the Union which fanaticism would erect upon its ruins, deem it their solemn duty to provide in advance the means by which they may escape such peril and dishonor, and devise new securities for perpetuating the blessings of Liberty to themselves and their posterity, therefore—

1. *Be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Alabama in General Assembly convened*, That upon the happening of the contingency contemplated in the foregoing preamble, namely, the election of a President advocating the principles and action of the party in the Northern States, calling itself the Republican party, it shall be the duty of the Governor, and he is hereby required forthwith to issue the proclamation calling upon the qualified voters of this State to assemble on a Monday not more than forty days after the date of said proclamation, at the several places of voting in their respective counties, to elect delegates to a Convention of the State to consider, determine and do whatever in the opinion of said Convention the rights, interests and honor of the State of Alabama require to be done for their protection.

2. *Be it further Resolved*, That said Convention shall assemble at the State capital on the second Monday following said election.

[The 3d resolution declares that the election shall be held at the same as if for members of the Legislature etc., and pay, etc., the same.

The 4th requires copies of the preamble and resolutions to be sent to our Congressmen and to the Governors of the several States.]

I may be told, as I have been told, that men of all parties voted for these resolutions, and therefore no party is accountable. I beg leave to say this is a mistake. The Southern Rights Democracy had a majority in that body, and cannot escape responsibility for its acts by any such paltry plea. The common sense and common usage of mankind make a majority responsible for all the acts of a law abiding assembly. I do not care, therefore, who voted for the resolutions, or who voted against them, so far as fixing party accountability is the question, but it is right to say that the Constitutional Union party had no representative in that Legislature. It was then just struggling into life. A few patriotic men, presided over by the venerable Crittenden, had met and adopted the outlines of an organization, but as yet it had assumed no definite shape—it had no members, and could have no responsibility. Individuals who voted for this obnoxious measure may have since