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DEBATE IN CONGRESS.

MR. STRANGE'S SPEECH.

(CONCLUDED.)

But passing by the evil for the present, let us look a little to the remedy proposed. Even allowing, for the sake of argument, the evil to exist at all, it is comparatively a small one, while the remedy proposed would introduce evils of the greatest magnitude. It would be like cutting off the head to relieve the tooth-ache, or laying open the heart itself to diminish arterial action; it is striking at the very vitals of liberty to remove an unseemly pimple from her cheek. What are the evils which the bill would produce? They are numerous, and I will consider a few of them.

I. In the first place it introduces into our Legislation the odious principles of distinction. It disunites the interests of the people and the office holders, and places them on different grounds. The great principle of equality lies at the base of all our institutions, and distinctions, official or otherwise, except mere functionary distinctions, ought carefully to be shunned. If it were possible to have the functionary operations of the social compact carried on without singling out individuals to perform them, it would doubtless have been done; and so far our institutions would have more approximated the perfection at which they aim. But it was impossible, and the mere distinction of holding office must necessarily exist. But it is altogether unwise and foreign to the genius of our institutions to render this distinction more conspicuous, and it is in principle a matter of indifference, whether this distinction be privative, or one of addition; and indeed it is doubtful whether the former is not the more mischievous of the two. For the robbery you practice upon the office holders, they will seek to indemnify themselves, by assuming something to which they have no right, and their claim, with the aid of a little sophistry, will probably be sustained. "I am cut off from such and such privileges," they will argue, "and surely it is not unreasonable that I should enjoy such and such privileges in return." A generous people in some moments of weakness, will allow the plea, and custom, if not law, will establish the right. Besides, it stifles the benevolent feelings of the man, and forces him to pursue with more undivided aim, his own peculiar interest. Any thing which segregates us, as it were, from our kind, or renders us unlike the rest of our species, weakens the claim which that species has upon our kindnesses and services, and separates our interests from theirs. Does not experience prove this in the case of deformed persons? Are they not, with some honorable exceptions, suspicious, malicious and repulsive in their dispositions? Do they not seek to indemnify themselves for the contempt which they most unjustly suppose is generally entertained for them, by noting with peculiar severity the faults, the vices, the follies and the defects of others? Again, when distinctions, however degrading in themselves, are associated with honors, while all the other evil effects and degrading distinctions remain, it incites the subject of this distinction to magnify the honor with which it is associated, and to set upon it an unjust value. The mutilated Asiatic who trades an eastern count, forgets, for a time, the wrong done to his nature, in contemplation of the honor and power which it brings him, and glories in his shame, and knows no sympathy for those whom an arbitrary monarch may commit to his cruel dominion. Just so with the office holder in this land, upon whom you fasten any degrading distinction. He comes at once falsely to estimate the honors with which it is associated, and strives, as rapidly as possible, to appropriate to himself all that comes within his reach. In the present healthy state of public opinion, a public officer, who assumes official pomp and consequence, is certain to have the finger of scorn pointed at him; and this fixes upon his mind an abiding sense that he has no property in his office, that he is a mere public servant, *pro hac vice*.

II. If this bill does not read from their places, the pillars of the Constitution, it saps the foundation upon which they rest. It has been well remarked that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." By this bill you propose to close the eyes, stop the ears, and seal the lips of those whose peculiar duty it is to watch, and whose positions enable them to watch to most advantage. Constantly employed in the public service, they acquire an intimate knowledge of public affairs and public men. They stand, as it were, upon an eminence, from whence they can look around and see danger approaching from afar, and from any quarter. False alarms they will doubtless often give. But in political matters the story of the boy and the wolf does not apply. No matter how often the alarm is given, there will be plenty to listen to it; the difficulty is in recurring to be given. How foolishly, then, should we act in stopping the mouths of those who are best situated for it! The proposal of the Opposition to pass this bill reminds me of the fable of the sheep and the wolves. While their dogs remained with the sheep, they were comparative safety; but when the dogs were persuaded to surrender their dogs to the wolves, the wolves fell upon the sheep and devoured them.

III. But not only would the pillars of the Constitution be shaken by the passage of this bill, but a breach would be made in its own fabric. Congress has no right to pass any law not expressly authorized by the Constitution, or necessarily incidental to the exercise of some power expressly granted. So at least every Democrat in this body holds. Now, that clause in the Constitution expressly authorizes the passage of this law? To what authorized power is it incidental? If the power lists in either form, under the Constitution, no man can point out the clause in which the grant is contained. They have not done

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so, and I defy them to do it. Nay, not only is the act not authorized, but it is expressly forbidden. By the first article of the amendments to the Constitution, it is declared that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." And is not, I would ask, the liberty of speech assailed by this bill? Does the Constitution make any exception to the exclusion of office holders from the protection of this clause? Yet the Senator from Virginia says, let us hear no more of arguments drawn from the alien and sedition laws, and their fate under the denunciations of the people of this country. Why should we hear no more? Are not those laws and the present bill so similar that they might well pass for the offspring of the same parent? The bill, as it now stands, is subject to all the objections to the sedition law, and if modified as the Senator from Kentucky proposes, it will then become subject to all the objections to the alien law also. Let us look for a moment to the language of the sedition law. "That if any person shall write, print, utter, or publish, or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered, or published," &c. What is the language of the bill under consideration? "That no marshal, &c. shall, by word, message, or writing, or in any other manner whatsoever," &c. How similar in their objects, the act and the bill! How immediately are both levelled at the liberty of speech and of free discussions. What, then, were the objections of the patriot of 1798 to the sedition law? I will read from that celebrated report of Mr. Madison. "The second object against which the resolutions protest, says Mr. Madison's report, is the sedition act: Of this it is affirmed: '1. That it exercises a power not delegated by the Constitution. 2. That the power, on the contrary, is expressly forbidden. 3. That this is a power, which more than any other, ought to produce universal alarm; because it is levelled against the right of freely examining public characters and measures, and of free communication thereon, which has ever been justly esteemed the only effectual guardian of every other right.'" The report then goes on to show that all these objections apply to the sedition law; and is it not obvious that they apply with equal force to the bill under consideration? And shall we pass a law containing all these odious features, which has been so fully exposed to the American people, in the very able report from which I have read the extract? But I said, if the bill was amended as proposed by the Senator from Kentucky, the objections to the alien law would be brought to bear upon it also. What are those objections? I will call them to the attention of the Senate, from the same source to which I have just adverted. "Of the alien act," says the report, "it is affirmed by the resolution: 1. That it exercises a power not where delegated to the Federal Government. 2. That it unites Legislative and Judicial powers to those of the Executive. 3. That this union of power subverts the general principles of free Government. 4. That it subverts the particular organization, and positive provisions, of the Federal Constitution." It will be found by the reasoning in the report, under the second objection, (with which I will not occupy the Senate,) that the indefinite terms in which the law was couched, gave force, if not extent, to that objection. And with a law so indefinite as the one under consideration, commanding the President to dismiss from office all who shall be guilty of the acts against which the law may be supposed to be directed, will he not be constituted, to a certain extent, legislator, judge, and executive officer? No other judge, or even jury, intervenes to inquire into the facts; and so indefinite are the terms of the bill, that the field of construction is so wide as to amount to legislation, and then the President himself is to execute the law. The President first says what the law shall mean. He then adjudges the culprit to have violated it, as so construed, and finally performs the Executive act of dismissal. If this is not confounding all the powers of Government in a single individual, it is difficult to conceive what would be. The bill under consideration, then, combines all the objections to both the alien and the sedition law, and ought to be subjected to the same condemnation, and will doubtless arouse the same popular indignation, should it become a law. I know it may be said that this law operates upon a peculiar class only, and can never endanger the freedom of the citizens generally. The same might have been said of the alien law. But it was not said, or at least it was not successfully urged. And is it not obvious that, if the principle is once conceded, the security of all is gone? If Congress has a right to legislate with regard to one class of citizens, why may it not with regard to all upon the same subject? It is contended that this is a mere condition annexed to official tenure, and that Congress has a right to prescribe the terms upon which office created by itself may be held. If the latter position be true to any extent, it can be so no farther than may be necessary to ensure official fitness and fidelity. It cannot be that Congress has an unlimited and capricious right to attach conditions to official tenure. If so, it might require a man to live single; to be deprived of some of his limbs or members, and under the pretence of official conditions, compel him to submit to every species of tyranny and degradation, and to barter all his rights as a citizen, for the poor privilege of holding office. It is only *qua* officers that any law can be made to operate upon those who may hold office, which may not be made to operate upon every other citizen of the country. Can it be pretended that because a man accepts office, he is bound hand and foot to Congress, that he is so far segregated from the rest of the community, that Congress acquires over him a power

greater than that of a master over a slave. All the powers of Congress are to be rigidly and rationally construed, and especially such as may be abused to the oppression and disfranchisement of any citizen. But in reply to the objection against the removal from office, by the President, it is said that he already possesses that power to an unlimited extent, and this bill will add nothing to it. There is great fallacy in this reply.—The present power of removal is held by the President, as the general Executive officer of the Government, who is responsible to the people for its proper conduct; and ought, therefore, to have it in his power to dismiss any agent for whom he is not willing to be responsible; and when an officer is removed under that authority, it is only because the President judges him not qualified. His want of qualification may consist in moral delinquency, or in want of capacity, but in either case, he is dismissed not as a punishment for the past, but as a security for the future. But the bill under consideration enjoins removal expressly as a punishment, and in so doing confounds all constitutional distinctions, and creates evils similar to those for which the odious alien law was responsible.

But the Senator from Virginia, [Mr. Rives,] in reply to the constitutional objection to this bill, cites several cases in which he supposes Congress has or may abridge the liberty of speech, and quotes, in the first place, the law passed at this session prohibiting the carrying or sending a challenge to fight a duel. In the answer, it is proper to remark that this expression in the Constitution, "liberty of speech," has a specific and well settled meaning, and is synonymous with the right of free discussion, the very thing against which the bill under consideration is levelled. But a right of free discussion is not involved in sending a challenge to fight a duel, which is a thing *ultra vires*, and forbidden by the laws of every civilized nation. The right of Congress, therefore, to prohibit the sending a challenge, is not negatived by that clause of the Constitution which forbids the passage of any law "abridging the freedom of speech;" and her right to legislate upon that subject within the District of Columbia is part of her general exclusive legislative power over this District, beyond which she has not attempted, and could not, exercise it.

The Senator next supposes the case of an office holder writing a letter or sending a message to a voter, by which he informs him, if he will vote for such a man he will give him such an office; and asks if Congress cannot prohibit and direct the punishment of such an act. I answer, within the District of Columbia it can unquestionably. Such an act, if not actually bribery, is so very like it that no moral distinction can be drawn between them; and I promise the Senator, if he will introduce a bill to prohibit and punish such an act within the District of Columbia, I will willingly vote for it, and if I thought the power of Congress over the subject extended so far, I would vote for it throughout the Union. But how does it happen that no such provision is included in this bill? I suppose, either because no such thing has been practised, or the laws in relation to it are already sufficiently penal. The Senator lastly refers to the case of a judicial officer going about among the crowd at a court-house, and soliciting jurors to give their verdict in a particular way, and the Senator asks, if this would not be a breach of official dignity, and subject the transgressor to impeachment? Unquestionably it would, but as I see no similarity between the case supposed, and the one under consideration, it would be an idle undertaking to point out their differences.

IV. I now proceed to another objection to the bill under consideration, and that is, that it is based upon a radically false notion and estimate of the people of this country. A belief seems to pervade the whole Opposition party, that the people are stupid, ignorant, gullible, and altogether unfit for self government, and require to be guarded by law against themselves. This I hold to be utterly untrue. If a man acquires influence among the people, it must be upon the strength of a character for integrity and devotion to the interests of the commonwealth, and a capacity for understanding well those interests. But so far from this influence being increased by his promotion to office, it is often, if not generally, greatly diminished. The people are, if any thing, over suspicious, but it is erring on the safe side, and, therefore, I will not complain of it. Let them for a moment suspect a man to have any private interest in a question, and his influence however great before, is at once paralyzed. This interest they are ready enough to suspect in an office holder, whose established moral worth does not defy suspicion; and hence an office holder is generally dead at the polls, if he does not actually injure the cause he attempts to support. All experience is in favor of this position, and wherever the Administration has most office holders, there are its defeats the most signal. It is true, though an office holder cannot be efficient in favor of the Administration under which he acts, he may be very much so against it. Apparently, then, he is acting against his interests, and the soundest judgment would infer that nothing but the deepest convictions of right, founded upon unquestionable means of knowledge, would induce him so to act.—But a man advocating the Administration under which he serves, is scarcely believed, although he backs his assertions by the most convincing proofs. The people are ready enough to adopt the idea that he who has the control of a man's bread, has the control of the man, and to act with correspondent distrust; and in that distrust is the true security against improper influence, and not in legislative enactment. It answers well in declamation to hold up this idea to the people "that control over the man's bread is control over the man," in order to keep them watchful, and the politician deserves no blame for so doing. But it is a fit subject only for declamation, as

applied to the politics of our country; for however true as an abstract proposition, there are no facts to give it application. It is not true that the President has control over the bread of the office holders, for he can neither increase nor diminish their salaries. It is true he may dismiss them from office, but he cannot do so without danger to himself, except upon sufficient reason. So far is it from being true, that the President can exercise this control, that it has become exceedingly fashionable for the office holders to be clamorously against him; and it is little less than a libel upon the people of this country to say that there is danger of their being controlled by the office holders, or that they may be seduced by them into giving improper votes. A few individuals here and there may possibly be influenced, but no general control can be exercised. Man is frail in his best estate, and may be corrupted; and if the means existed to sufficient extent, bribery might control the elections. But stopping short of that, the agents of the Administration, should I think proper to employ any, would be worse than useless in procuring votes. Happily, the means of bribery are very limited, and the offence is already sufficiently checked by the laws of the States, who possess the only competent authority upon the subject.

V. But there is an objection to the bill, which, if possible, lies still deeper than those before noticed. Whether taken as it stands, or amended as proposed, it is essentially one of the most tyrannical measures ever proposed in this body. I. In the first place, it sets forth the offence proposed to be punished in terms so very indefinite, that an act, inconsiderable in itself, may become the subject of most enormous punishments. It is a maxim lying at the foundation of all wholesome government, that the punishment should, in the sense of the community, bear some proportion to the offence. This principle is by this bill utterly disregarded. If a man shall but say a certain candidate is well qualified for the office to which he aspires, he must, in the present form of the bill, be declared infamous, and fined five hundred dollars, and either in its present or amended form, be dismissed from office. Now does any man perceive a just proportion here between the offence and the punishment? Well might the report say the people of this country would never consent to the execution of such a law. They never would agree that a man who holds an office emanating from them, should be thus bowed down in a slavery more grinding than that of any African in the country.

Second. It is tyrannical in that it invades the sanctity of the private circle, and begets suspicion and jealousy, and caution, where the most unbounded confidence and freedom should forever reign. Under it, a man's own household may furnish enemies for his destruction. As the bill stands, the hope of gain is held out to them, to induce its members to become so; and should one of them think proper to charge him falsely, there is no mode of rebutting the charge; he cannot prove a negative. The son may unwillingly be made the accuser of his own father, nay, in the progress of depravity, one may be found a swift witness in the destruction of a venerable parent. English history furnishes such instances. The consciousness that the slightest expression may be construed into a persuasion or discussion, will cause one member of the same family to look with suspicion upon, and speak with caution before another. The great value of our institutions of Government is the security and protection they throw around the domestic circle; but when they are rendered the destroyers of all its confidence and innocent freedom, they may truly be said to be worse than war, pestilence, and famine. Let us suppose a case: A venerable man, surrounded by sons and sons-in-law—who has grown gray in the service of his country—is the holder of an office; his sons and sons-in-law hold conversation, in his presence, respecting some pending election, and he finds them all inclined to vote in favor of a man whom he knows to be a Cataline at heart, and ready to seize the earliest opportunity of prostrating the institutions of his country; yet he is condemned to silence, or doomed to endure the penalties of this ruthless law! Or, to make the case still stronger, one of these persons, who are by nature entitled to the fruits of his wisdom and experience, turns to him and asks his opinion. His lips are sealed; he dare not utter a word; and, from one of the holiest offices of paternal love, is cruelly cut off. Can a bill producing such results, deserve any countenance from the Senate? Does it not fill every bosom with horror in their contemplation?

Thirdly. It is tyrannical, inasmuch as it interferes with the rights of common conversation among neighbors. If a man is so unfortunate as to hold an office, however intimate the footing upon which he may be with a friend, politics, that subject so interesting to every man under a free Government, must be altogether excluded from their conversation. It is impossible to conceive of tyranny more absolute than that which stands forth embodied in this bill.

Fourthly. Again: this tyranny is rendered doubly oppressive to its victims, from its partial operation. Distinctions are made by it between different classes of office holders.—Misery loves company, and the sorrows of the captive are always embittered by contrasting his condition with that of those who are sporting in the air of freedom. Why is this distinction made among different classes of office holders? Are those upon whom the law is intended to operate, more likely to be mischievous than those who are left free from its fetters? Surely not. The humble officers are the subjects of the law, while the aristocratic officers are left free. The district attorneys, those gentlemen on whose lips dwell the notes of soft persuasion, are left at large to practice such electioneering arts as may suit them. Unfortunately, but few officers are found friendly to the Democratic cause.

This is not the time or place to inquire into the reason, but it is a melancholy truth that a very large portion of the lawyers and merchants of the country are opposed to a Democratic administration of the government.

Fifthly. A fifth objection to the bill is, that it forces upon the Executive removal from office. I speak not of it now as I did when I objected to it as an invasion of the Constitution, similar to that of the alien law, but in a totally different point of view. How frequently do we hear upon this floor of Executive patronage, and what complaints are made whenever the President exercises his constitutional power of removal? It never happens but the motives of the President are impugned, and the torch of party strife is lighted. The bill proposes greatly to multiply and aggravate this evil. Whenever any one shall be removed under it, the elements of civil strife will be set in motion. Every man removed, will have his friends, who will question the propriety of the act. They will conceive that a stigma has been unjustly placed upon one whom they esteem and love, and in their efforts to remove that stigma, they will endeavor to haul the magistrate from his place. Politicians will lay hold of this excitement, and political feuds, now sufficiently bitter, will more and more distract the nation. The fabled apple of discord, if caused to roll abroad through the country, could scarcely be more fruitful in the production of strife.

VI. Another objection to the bill is, that it is calculated to degrade, morally, the holders of office. It will fix upon them a disgraceful mark, and lower them in their own estimation. Who does not know, who has not felt, the sustaining power of a consciousness of being held in high moral estimation by his fellow men against the pressure of temptation? As long as a man can maintain a consciousness of his own moral elevation, there is little danger of his falling into disgraceful acts; but as soon as you force him to place a low estimate on his own moral worth, you accomplish one step, at least, in his downward progress. When you fix upon him the stigma of baseness, you go far towards preparing him for base deeds. Upon the general moral elevation of our citizens depends the permanency of our institutions. By degrading our officers, you tend towards the degradation of the people also. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;" and with still more rapidity does moral contagion spread through society. This, to me, a powerful argument against the bill.

But all arguments in favor of the bill having failed, an effort is made to rest it upon that which is always resorted to for the support of that which has nothing else to sustain it—precedent. And from whence is the precedent drawn? From England! And at the mention of the very name of England, the heart of the Senator from Virginia [Mr. Rives] seemed to be warmed with a sacred fire, and he burst forth into an impassioned eulogium upon her institutions. I could not but be reminded of Mr. Hamilton's remark, that the British constitution, with all its corruptions, was the most perfect system of government that ever existed. We have heard enough, in by-gone years, of English institutions—

[Here Mr. Rives disclaimed having eulogized British institutions as they existed. He spoke merely of the great principles they contained.]

I certainly did misunderstand the Senator, as he has explained himself, as I doubt not, correctly. But it is not singular I should have misunderstood him, for the drift of the argument was calculated to mislead me. A precedent is cited from England, and the object is to give force to that precedent. The natural mode of doing so was to laud and commend to our favor those institutions, of which the precedent constituted a part, and not to eulogize mere abstract principles, which had no particular connection with the precedent. But let that pass. I believe myself the British constitution has many excellences, but I believe also it is thoroughly soaked with corruption through all its pores. I do not believe, with the Senator, that the free principles of our government were derived from the British constitution. Those great principles had their existence in the clear heads and pure hearts of the framers of our constitution. They did not engraft them into our constitution because they were in the British. They eschewed the evils of the British constitution, but they did not throw away anything that was good because it happened to be there. I admit they surveyed the long track of ages, and gathered from it a large stock of experience. The history of England formed a portion of their study, and helped them in maturing their great designs; but the principles upon which they acted existed without the British constitution. Our constitution contains many things in common with the British, but it is purged of its corruptions; and, I, for one, am unwilling to see them restored. Was it because British institutions were free and equal, and just in their operation, that our forefathers fled from the comforts of home and civilization, to build us an empire in the western wilderness? I have always heard it was for a very different reason. It was, as I have learned, that they might rear a fabric of liberty, in which they might enjoy, unmolested, those rights and privileges inestimable to them, which the British constitution did not secure. But it is not only insisted that we ought to follow this English precedent, but that, in fact, there is a greater necessity for such a provision here than in England. We are told, in substance, that liberty is in more danger from the encroachments of the President of the United States than from those of the King of Great Britain, and that because the one is elective and the other hereditary. And is this indeed so? It is wonderful, then, that our forefathers, in their admiration of the British constitution, had not borrowed from it an hereditary monarch along with the other admirable features. It is strange they did not guard

against the dangers of an elective Chief Magistrate. Their views, I fancy, must have differed from those of the Senator from Virginia. The Senator then proceeds to point out the enormities which gave rise to the precedent, and draws a glowing picture of the tyranny of the Stuarts. It is a little singular that, among the many tyrannical kings of England, whenever gentlemen wish to portray a tyrant, they point upon one of these unfortunate Stuart kings. I am not the advocate of the Stuarts, nor do I deny the right of the British to expel this family and choose their own rulers, but I must insist they were not the most tyrannical of the British kings, and that when Britain exchanged the weak and bigoted James for his ungrateful son-in-law, (to say the least of him) they did not commit themselves to the government of one who was no less a tyrant. But what were the tyrannical acts of these odious Stuarts to which the Senator has called our attention? The first is cloistering with members of Parliament; and it is intimated that similar acts have been practised in this country. When, I would ask? If the Senator had specified time and place, perhaps a more definite answer might be given to the charge. But how does the Senator know that it has been practised? Has he any thing but vague and uncertain rumor? I admit, if it has been practised in the sense intimated by the Senator, "it is a grievous fault, and grievously should Caesar, (or any body else) answer it." But does the Senator speak *ex cathedra*? Does he mean to say it was practised when he is supposed to have had, in a peculiar degree, the care of the Executive? If so, he ought to have informed us of this before. There was a time when it was his right, and even his duty to have made the disclosure. But after having slumbered upon, I will not say his rights, but his duty, for so long a time, it seems a little out of place to make the charge now. It forcibly reminds me of an anecdote which is said to have occurred some years ago in my own town. There resided a certain preacher, remarkable for his eloquence, and equally so for his high estimate of his own powers. There also resided a lawyer, far advanced in life, who, although not much interested in matters of religion, yet for fashion's sake, or the pleasure derived from listening to the eloquence of the preacher, occasionally went to hear him, and especially of an evening, when a hearty dinner, washed down with a glass or two of good wine, rendered the lawyer rather inclined to doze. Under these circumstances, even the eloquence of the preacher did not serve always to keep him awake. This rather nettled the divine, who could not bear to think that any intelligent listener could fall asleep under his exhortation. One Sabbath evening he took the lawyer to task for this violation of decorum, and by way of enforcing his admonition, "do you not know," said he, "that I will be called upon at the last day to testify against you for all these things?" "If you should be called upon," replied the ready lawyer, "I do not doubt you will willingly testify, for I have always heard the greatest rogues are apt to turn State's evidence." Now I do not mean to apply any approbrious epithet to the Senator from Virginia, or to insinuate that he has acted dishonestly. I only mean forcibly to convey the idea that a man bringing such charges against an Administration of which he once formed a part, and with which he has since fallen out, does not stand in an enviable position. But if, as I believe, the Senator had nothing but idle rumor whereon to ground his charge, he is certainly to blame in lending the sanction of his name, from the place he occupies, to an accusation so grave, upon such authority, and basing thereon a serious argument.

The next complaint against the Stuarts is, that circulars were issued advising, commanding, and seducing the people to vote for particular candidates; and the Senator again intimates that the same thing has been practised in this country, and singles out the Secretary at War as the guilty person. He then burst forth into an impassioned eulogy upon the distinguished gentleman whom he supposes to have been the victim of this interference. Now I am not at all disposed to question the merits of the gentleman on whom the eulogy is bestowed, or to deny its justice. But I must be pardoned for saying, it is out of place at present, as the defeat of that gentleman has nothing to do with the subject under discussion. I have high authority for declaring that the charge against the Secretary is altogether founded in misapprehension. If the gentlemen on the other side have any cause to complain of him upon that subject, it is for refusing to intermeddle in the election. It is known to every eye, that up to the time of his taking office under the present Administration, no man stood higher before the country for his talent, his patriotism and moral worth, than the Secretary of War. On an important occasion he signalized the honor of your flag, more than he could have done, had he borne it in triumph over an ensanguined field. But no sooner does he become a member of the Administration, than the shafts of malice are levelled at his fame. Such is the Moloch spirit of party, and that, too, among those who cry out the loudest against party! Nay more, upon the vague surmises of a party press, a charge is solemnly brought against him upon the floor of the Senate.

These were some of the evils complained of under the Stuarts, and this is the precedent of facts. And these evils, we are told, the glorious Whigs of that day attempted to remedy, and I fancied there was something in the manner and tone of voice, in the allusion to the glorious Whigs of that day, which seemed to glance off to the glorious Whigs of the present day, on this side of the Atlantic.—And I thought there was an intimation that the glorious Whigs of this day should imitate the glorious Whigs of that in their noble achievements. There was a time, I think, when the Senator from Virginia would not be found cheering on the Whigs of the present day to any enterprise; when he would have looked upon any triumph of theirs, as a triumph over the true interests of the country. What then has wrought this change in his opinion and feelings? But I do not desire to assume the office of catechist to the Senator, or to render him my political catechumen. I will content myself with the inquiry, if the Senator does not desire the triumphs of the Whigs of the present day, why this significant