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[From the Nashville National Union.

JOHN BELL'S RECORD.

Mr. Bell entered the public service, as a rep resentative in Congress, at the age of thirty-one years. It was in 1827, towards the close of the Presidential term of John Quincy Adams, and ahortly preceding the election of Gen. Jackson to the Presidency. During the marked and eventful Administration of the latter, many great and exciting questions arose and were de-cided, for good or evil. All the strong passions of our nature were roused and brought into acsides, and the very fabric of the Government was shaken and convulsed to its centre.

Though seting, throughout this exciting period, with a party, with the principles of which he in the main agreed, and to which, so far as principle was concerned, he was ever faithful, yet, Mr. Bell was at no time so blindly attached to the one party or opposed to the other, as to be insensible to the motives which probably actuated both. More intent upon watching and noting the pe culiar tendencies of our system of government— the dangers which most beset it—the points most exposed to attack, and those to be particularly guarded—more intent upon the solution of these problems, than zealous in the success of every sure of some of his party friends for what ap-peared to them indifference to the interests of "the party."

The truth is, that the qualities of Mr. Bell's mind, and the views which, at a very early period of his public life, he formed of the nature and tendencies of our Government and of the duties of American statesmen, usterly disqualified him for ever becoming the blind follower of any party leader, however great and distinguished, or a successful party leader himself, if the condi-tion of such leadership were a ready compliance on his part with all the dictates of mere party ex-

What these characteristic qualities of Mr Bell's mind are-what his views of the tendencies and dangers pertaining to our system of government and of the duties of American states. erned him throughout the whole of his long pubtie life, can be made very clearly to appear by reference to a few passages in his political record.

MR. BELL IN 1829.

His Opinions as to the Safest Mode of Constru ing the Constitution—the Principle of Com-

The following passage occurs in a speech de-livered by Mr. Bell in the House of Representatives, on the 10th of February, 1829, on a bill for the preservation and repair of the Cumberland

"While I am upon the subject of this diversity of opinion which exists as to the safest mode of construing the Constitution, I hope it will not be considered improper or presumptuous in me to make a remark or two in regard to the two great parties which divide this country upon all questions of this kind. They had their origin as far back as the formation of the Federal compact. Their foundations were laid in the difference sentiment which prevailed at that time, as to the wisdom of the provisions of that instrument. They are, in short, the fruit of that discord of opinions and feelings, without a compromise of which at the time, we should have had no Constitution at all. One opinion was, that sufficient power was not conferred upon the Federal Government to assure the quiet, happiness, and pros-perity of the country; while the opinion of others was, that the power actually conceded would prove too strong for the preservation of lib-erty. The most zealous and active of the partis on both sides, never abandoned their creeds both parties became sufficiently powerful to propagate their opinions; and as one or the other pre dominated in the administration of the Govern ment, a tincture of the favorite notions of each was infused into its measures. Both have sought, by construction, to make the Constitution what they wished it to be in fact; the one by enlarging its powers beyond its letter and spirit, the other by narrowing them down to the standard of their wishes. Although it will be seen that I know and feel what party has had the ascenden cy for several years past, and where the great danger is, yet, it may be said that both these great parties are in some degree hostile, not to liberty, not to their country, but to the Constitution as is written; to that instrument which we are bound by the most sacred obligations to support; to that instrument, to which, for one, I am isposed to cling, with or without such modifications as may be effected by amendment. Both the great parties to which I have alluded, seem to me to have abandoned the principle of compromise. I would adhere to it as the only principle by which the States were able to agree upon any compact, and without an acquiescence in which we are not destined long to enjoy the blessings of the one adopted. He, sir, who shall renounce the extremes of both of these great parties, as dangerous to order and union—he, who, by his talgents, experience and weight of character shall succeed in placing himself at the head of a great Constitutional party, and shall become the advocate of the administration of the Government upon the principle of compromise, as it was understood to have operated in the formation of the Constitution, will deserve the highest gratitude of his country."—See Congressional Delates of the Constitution of the Constitution

particularly in South Carolina, at the working of the protective tariff, many of our readers are ac-quainted. To this discontent and its threatened consequences, Mr. Clay advected in his opening speech on the subject of the tariff, in the Senate, during the session of that year. In allusion to meaaces of disturion which had been heard from menaces of disunion water and the patriotic per South Carolina, he entreated "the patriotic per ple" of that State "to pause, selemnly pause! and contemplate the frightful precipice which lay before them." "To advance, was to rush on certain and inevitable disgrace and destruction.'
The danger to the Union, however, did not lie he thought, on the side of persistance in the American system, but in that of its abandonment! Could it be expected that two-thirds, if not three-fourths, of the people of the United States would consent to the destruction of a poli cy believed to be indispensably necessary to their prosperity? Let New England, the West, and and the Middle States, together with the mam-moth States of New York and Pennsylvania, become firmly persuaded that their industry was paralyzed and their prosperity blighted, by the enforcement of the British colonial system, under the delusive name of free-trade-let them feel that they were the victims of a mistaken policy, and despair of any favorable change, and "then, indeed, might we tremble for a costinuance of the

"Here," in the language of an eminent states man now deceased, "was an appalling picture presented: disolution of the Union on either hand, and one or the other of the alternatives obliged to be taken. If persisted in, the opponents to the protective system at the South were to make the dissolution: if abandoned, its friends at the North were to do it!"

With this brief reference to the condition o the country at the time, we shall the better appreciate the course of Mr. Bell, as a representa tive in Congress at this perilous crisis.

"This debate," said Mr. Bell, "it seems to me, was not commenced in the most fortunate spirit, nor has it been conducted altogether in the manner which the nature and intrinsic delicacy and difficulty of the subject demanded. A dis-position has been manifested, and sentiments avowed by some gentlemen, equally unexpected and abhorrent to my feelings. It has been openly attempted to prejudice this question by holding it up as a contest between free labor and slave labor; between laboring States and those whose citizens, it is alleged, do not labor. It is openly and vauntingly proclaimed, by one gentleman, to the complaining sections and interests, that, if they shall not be content to abide by what he is pleased to call the established policy of the coun-"they may take the consequences!" and hear connected with the subject, when I look to the growing distractions of the country, I feel myself justified in designating the sum of what I shall say upon this question, as a plea for the Union! Upon such a subject—upon an oc-casion so interesting, I shall not consider myself as the representative of any particular section or interest. I shall not consider myself either as a tariff or anti-tariff man. I claim to be considered and to be heard as a representative of the whole country, most anxiously concerned for its permanent prosperity, its stability and glory. I claim to be heard as the advocate of higher interests than those which are the immediate subject of consideration. It is no longer a question whether the farmer shall get seventy five cents or one dollar and twenty-five cents a bushel for his wheat; whether the wool-grower shall receive forty or seventy-five cents a pound for his wool; whether the planter shall get eight or twelve cents a pound for his cotton; or whether the manufacturer shall make twelve and a half or twenty per cent. upon his capital. The interest of wool nd woolens, of cotton, of iron, of sugar, and of the whole range of domestic products sink into insignificance in comparison with those which now force themselves upon our attention, and claim our guardian care and protection. The in-

terests of domestic peace, of free government, of liberty itself are involved in this question."

State of the Union in 1832. "What, then, Mr. Chairman is the state of the Union? In a time of profound peace, * * *
in the midst of the greatest abundance of all the necessaries and even comforts of life, that God in his providence, ever decreed to be the rewards of virtue and industry," "discontents, jealousies, and rancorous sectional hates have arisen and are encouraged. Fostered by these unhappy feelings, disaffection to the Government itself makes a slow but steady progress in the hearts of thousands of nonest and patriotic citizens. A want of confi dence in the mutual justice and forbearance of brethren of the same political family manifests itself. Confidence in our system, consequently, in every quarter, has diminished and is diminishing. minds are set to work in new and unwont ed channels, and upon new theories of government for a country of such diversity of pursuits and interests; upon theories thought to be exploded, or rendered useless, by the practical operation of the established government, until lately. The value of the Union itself, its date, and the consequences of its disruption, begin to be tolerated and canvassed in private discourse-nay, in public debate in this Hall, when, but as yesterday in the period of our existence as an independent people, to breathe such discourse would have been thought little less than downright blasphe-

Condition of parties in 1882—extreme doc-trines of the infallibilty of the Supreme Court on the one hand and of nullification on the

"It is now more than forty years," continued Mr. Bell, "since the adoption of the Constitution, and has the contest between the original elements answer, no! The war between them acquiring new vigor from the infusion of selfish, political ment in reference to their own interests, without and mercenary calculations, on both sides, has, at a due regard to the interests and condition of

It cannot but be recarded as a most extraordinary coincidence, that, more than thirty years after the utterance of these opinions, "a great Constitutional party" should rise up, which, "respectively of the conflict between the extremes, and recard the constitutional party" should rise up, which, "respectively of the conflict between the extremes, and the constitutional party" should rise up, which, "respectively of the conflict between the extremes, and recard the unit of the conflict between the extremes, and recard the c in order to secure the benefits of their conquest the same object. These are the tests to which all questions of power under the Federal Government are proposed to be brought for final decision. But is it not manifest that both these newly invented doctrines are equally hostile to the spirit of the Constitution? Not to the Union, for both parties I verily believe are friendly to the Union, but to a Union upon their own terms? Is it not manifest that this is a contest between two extremes, equally distant from the true medium point of the Constitution?"

Importance to the Country of a Middle or Moderate Harty-Moderation and Compromise the only Salvation for the Country.

"Mr. Chairman, in the almost interminable waste of hope which lies before us there is one bright spot to which the patriot may direct his eye, in some confidence that relief may come. In all the past civil strifes and revolutions which have egitated this country, and sometimes threatened its institutions, there has always been a moderate party of sufficient strength and influence to turn the balance between the extremes, and to impress upon the action of the Government some portion of that spirit of moderation and compromise which are characterestic of the Constitution itself. This middle or moderate party is never in much esteem with the extremes on either side. It is said to be composed of men who are more disposed to submit to oppression, than to preserve unimpaired the rights of freemen. Still, to this party I choose to cling; and we shall see who good feeling which, I trust, notwithstanding the and brought them to terms of compromise. It is this public sentiment which has still caused the Republican party, when in power, to become less standard. rigid in their construction of the Constitution, than when in opposition. It is the same public sentiment which, when the Federal party, being in power, have indulged their enlarging propensities too far, either displaced them, or restrained their action within reasonable limits. I trust here yet remains a portion of that pure and unaffected public sentiment to preserve the country from the confusion and discord which now menace The contest may become even more violent. What to-day is only a breeze of popular discontent, may to-morrow swell into a very tornado, threatening to overthrow and prostrate in the dust all the

lidity of their foundations. The Duties of American Statesmen. "To calm [said Mr. Bell] rising elements liscontent; to assuage the feverish symptoms of the body politic is the business of every American statesman. An American statesman! and what are the duties and attributes of an in the support of both branches of the American American statesman at this day? They are, or they ought to account themselves the high-priests liberty, administering herrites for the benefit of her disciples in every country; for this favorite-peoplet first, and then for all nations. Such is the high and noble calling of an American statesman. What is the first great care of an American statesman? To preserve our free institutions. I will not go into an argument to show that the only effective mode of discharging this great trust is to preserve and cherish the Union. That is an axiom in American politics, I trust, too firmly established to be overthrown by the theories of any new professors in the science, however distinguished for genius and talents. What is the next great duty of American states men? So to administer their offices, as to secure comfort and happiness to the greatest possible number of the citizens of this free country. These are the whole law and the prophets for the guidance of our statesmen. These are the sum of all the commandments in the book of our political

sacred edifices dedicated to freedom on this side

of the Atlantic! But still my trust is in the so-

Majorities and Minorities-he Connsels Mutual Concession for the Safety of the Union.
"I maintain that each representative is, by the theory of the Government, a representative of the whole people of the United States; that the prinple of a representation by States or districts was dopted for convenience in making the selection of representatives by the people, and for the pur-pose of securing to the National Legislature that knowledge of the interests, sentiments, and condition of the whole country, which can be only had through a representative chosen by each small section or district. The interests and conditions of each section are entitled to be considered and respected in the legislative enactments, but only in the proportion which they bear to the aggregate interests and sections. It may and often must happen in the career of this Government, without any concert or design, that a ma-jority either large or small shall fashion the legislation of the country and administer the Govern-

prising that in a contest which menaces the re-pose of the country, the leaders, on both sides, should start new and untried theories, for the stances could afford. If the present action of purpose of effecting their respective objects. Ac- the Government is to continue with unabated cordingly, we find that on the side of the victors, energy and vigor, it is surely fortunate that the means of redress are convenient and acceptable forever, the doctine of the infallibility of the Su- to the oppressed interests; but if under the preme Court is avowed as the only means of se- smart of temporary injustice, the bands which curing the stability of the Government. On the bind the Union shall be precipitately sundered, side of the vanquished or Republican perty, the doctrine of nullification has been invented, and is cilities for so instant and fatal a remedy. I trust proclaimed as the only infallible mode of effecting there is no settled purpose in any portion of the oppressed sections, to avail themselves of the means of redress which they may have at their disposal; but I conjure those who sway the power of the House, seriously and earnestly to consider the alternative of modifying a system of policy sustained upon the principle I have described, or of beholding sooner or later, the Union broken up, and this last and noblest sanctuary of freedom polluted and destroyed. I trust I do not offend by lifting up an admonitory voice upon this subject at this slarming juncture of our affairs. I speak in the sincerity and with the fervency which belong to the representatives of a portion of the people of this country, who, so far from having any disposition to countenance disunion, regard such a catastrophe as the last and direst calamity which fate can have in store for their country, short of absolute slavery and oppression. But they cannot close their eyes to the dangers which stare them in the face, and they invoke, through me, their brethren everyhere-of every quarter of the country, of every party and of every pursuit, to concede something to this greatest common interest—the safety of the

In the same speech from which the foregoing extracts are taken, Mr. Bell said, the " immediate and practical question" before Congress and the country was, as to "the degree of protection which ought to be given to manufactures, under all the circumstances of the country"—whether the then existing tariff system should be "enwill prove the stoutest defenders of the liberties forced with rigor or in a spirit of concession and of the country. This party has always found its moderation." Believing the system to have been support in the good sense and moderation of the great body of the people. It has, in fact, owed it had "been the means of bringing the country its existence to the sound practical judgment and to the very verge of disunion," he expressed his "strong conviction of the necessity, in the existvices of the time, still constitute the leading traits | ing state of the country, of modifying it." It in the American population. It has been the was modified by the celebrated Compromise Tariff sound, uncorrupted sentiment of the great body of the American people, which has always, here. When, however, under the practical workings of of the American people, which has always, here-tofore, stepped in between the combatant leaders this act, the degree of protection afforded by it,

> Extremes of Party in 1832-Nullification and the Force Bill.

Three years afterwards, in his celebrated speech at Vauxhall, Nashville, referring to the excesses to which the protective system had been carried-to Nullification which grewout of those excesses, and to the Force Bill which grew out of Nullification, Mr. Bell said : "I have not yet shown how it happened, that

ten years came to excite so unusual a degree of heat and violence. Need I attempt this seriously? What! have we so soon forgotten, that while the party to which we belong [the Jackson party;] while it was contending for the mastery, and even for years afterwards, in some of fierce and doubtful, each party, one in order to gain, and the other to maintain, party ascendency, and both utterly regardless of all other consystem, the tariff and internal improvement? In all history, there is not a more striking and characteristic instance of the absurd and headstrong spirit of party. In regard to the tariff, all men of unprejudiced feelings and judgment must have seen, and did see, from the first, that the result would be either a reaction which might reduce it below a just and expedient standard. or that the Union itself would be severed. The immediate consequences of the extremes into which the supporters of the tariff in one section of the Union, were driven, in a struggle for political power, was to excite an extreme antago-nist action in another section. The leaders in the anti-tariff region sought to counteract the excesses to which they saw the protective policy was likely to be carried by a combination in its favor, between both political parties to the North and East, thought it necessary to proceed to squal or greater extremes in order to protect the interests of the minority to the South. This state of parties gave birth to Nullification, by which the projectors of it sought to equalize the action of the Government, by questioning the validity of its regular enactments, and seeking to set them aside upon the authority of a separate State and local construction of the Federal power. Before a sufficient time was allowed for reason to resume her sway, in correcting the excesses into which the spirit of party had hurried both sides, so many political interests, so many personal views and resentments commingling in the strife, that an extreme remedial action [the Force Bill] of the Government itself became a necessary expedient, in the judgment of moderate and unprejudiced men, though involving in its issues, civil war, disunion, and a total overthrow of the Constitution."

MR. BELL IN 1835. EXTRACTS FROM A SPEECH DELIVERED AT VAUXHALL. NASHVILLE, OF THE 23D OF MAY, 1835.

" It will be a circumstance, in my

Mr. Madison said :

the questions which have arisen within the last the large States in which the contest was most constitutionally authorized; but even if its sequences, contended which should go farthest | was supposed to apply for an unconstitutional intract:

Excesses of Party.

which, as long as I live, I can revert with conscious satisfaction, that I have ever opposed, what appeared to me to be the excesses

bad men, who have, or may sequire, an ascendency in one or the other of the two parties, which must ever have a decided influence upon the action of the Government. Even, then, some the consolidation of power in any one set of men, or any party, founded upon unworthy or bad motives and principles. As LONG AS MOD-ERATION AND THE SPIRIT OF CONCILIATION shall preside over the administration of the Federal Government, any faction which shall seek to divide the Union, either by rousing a sense of injustice and inequality in the action of the government in one section, or by seizing upon the delicate and inflammable question of slavery in the other, can always be shorn of its strength and defeated in its object, without the slightest convulsive sensation in our system."

The Real Danger to our System of Government. "The real danger to our system, as in every other system of free Government, is a violent party action of the Government itself. A pro scribed and disregarded minority, respectable for its numbers, its talents, and even for the virtues of many of its members-for virtue is never the exclusive attribute of any one party-such a minority is always tempted, in resentment for its real or imaginary wrongs, in redress for its violated privileges as American citizen in being deprived of all actual participation in the government of the country—compelled to obey laws and be the subjects of a policy, prescribed and directed exclusively by their opponents: such a minority, I repeat, is constantly tempted to seize upon every evexed and irritating question-to make common cause with the spirit of fapaticism itself, in an effort to right, for, at all events, to avenge their injuries. This is the danger of our

MR. BELL AND THE SLAVERY QUESTION-1840. . Abolition Petitions.

The reader will note the difference between rejecting the prayer of a petition, and rejecting or refusing to receive the petition itself. in 1790, three years after the adoption of the Constitution, the Society of Friends, of Pennsylvania, forwarded a petition to Congress praying its interference with the African slave trade, the petition was received, although it contained an pressly prohibited by the Constitution, for twenty fell below "a just and expedient standard," Mr. was made, although its reference or commitment Bell favored the policy of raising it to that to a committee, with a view to its being reported to a committee, with a view to its being reported upon, was rehemently opposed by some of the Southern members, on the ground that it asked Congress to do that which was unconstitutional. Mr. Madison advocated its reference.

"Gentlemen," he said, "might vote for the commitment (or reference) of the petition without any intention of supporting the prayer of

On a subsequent day, the debate still continuing,

"The debate has taken a serious turn, and it will be owing to this alone if an alarm is created, for had the memorial been treated in the usual way, it would have been considered as a matter of course and a report might have been made so as to have given general satisfaction. * * The petition prayed in general terms for the interference of Congress so far as they were prayer was in some degree unconstitutional, it might be committed, as was in the case of Mr. Churchman's petition, one part of which

terference by the General Government."
From 1790 down to 1835, when the question reception of Abolition petitions was first made in the House of Representatives, all petitions couched in decorus and respectful terms were received by Congress, whatever their subject-matter might be. This fact was stated by the late Felix Grundy, in a speech made by him in the Senate of the United States, on the 2d of March, 1836, from which the following is an ex-

Mr. Grundy on Abolition Petitions. "Therefore, if there was no constitutional doubts existing, (as the right of Congress to re-fuse to receive the petitions,) he would, as a matter of expediency, vote to receive the petitions, prayer. But he confessed that the constitutional right to refuse to receive a petition was very far from being clear. The right of petition existed before the formation of the Constitution. It was well understood by the framers of that instrument; and although it only declares that Congress shall pass no laws to prevent citizens from peaceably assembling and petitioning for a redress of grievances, it never could have entered into their minds that those to whom the petitions were to be addressed would refuse to receive them. Of what value is the right of petition, if those to whom petitions are addressed will not receive them and act upon them? The framers of the Constitution remembered that the Parliament of Great Britain had passed laws prohibiting citizens from assembling, consulting, and petitioning for a redress of grievances. They recollected the acts commonly called the riot acts, and therefore they inserted the provisions contained in the Constitution. But it never entered into their minds that petitions, when signed, would not be received by those to whom follows: they were addresed. It was a matter of very those who have the power to act upon the sub-ject-matter of the petition. To his mind these any way whatever."

arguments were too strong to be disregarded; and he was unwilling to give the Abolitionists the benefit of them. At present, they have no foundation on which to stand. They are giving way to the pressure of the public intelligence in the non-slaveholding States. But if we shall enable them to blend the right of petition with their Abolition schemes, they may raise a storm which will abake the very foundation of this Government. From the your 1790 down to the present day all petitions have been received by this body which were respectful and decorous, whatever the subject matter of the petition might be; and at every session, the petition of the Sobe; and at every session, the petition of the Society of Friends, clothed in similar language with the present one, has been received. Mr. G. would not depart now from the established usage. He considered the reception of the PEXITION and

the rejection of the prayer as the strongest course against abolition that could be adopted."

To the same conclusion with Mr. Grundy—namely, that the petitions ought to be received and acted upon—came Mr. Bell; as will be seen by the following extract of a letter written by him to the late Hon. Geo. R. Gilmer, of Georgia, in 1840, and published in a number of the newspapers of the day :

Mr. Bell in 1840-Abolition Petitions.

"When the abolition movement at the North of these poculiarities are useful, rather than in- had reached a point of excitement which began They present formidable obstacles to to be felt in Congress, I was actively engaged in solidation of power in any one set of the canvass between Judge White, and Mr. Van Buren. The question was of such a nature as to render it almost impossible, in an assembly com-posed of so many ardent and impulsive spirits as the Congress of the United States, that it should not become, in some shape or degree, connected with the party conflicts of the day. Some of my most valued and cherished friends thought Mr. Van Buren fairly and justly assailable in the South on the ground of his vote to instruct the Senators of New York against the admission of Missouri. The favor which his friends and supporters at that time showed to abolition petitions, by voting for their reception, and also for their reference under Pinckney's resolution, appeared to them to afford a proper gound of attack before the people. I remonstrated earnestly with my friends against the policy of such a course, and against any proceeding whatever which might tend to bring about a division of parties, to any extent, upon such a delicate, not to say dangerous issue."

> "At the period to which I refer (1836) the opposition to Mr. Van Buren in the South and Southwest, with few exceptions, took the position that the right of petition did not exist in this case. This opinion was maintained upon the ground that Congress had no right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; and it was contended that a petition to do an unconstitutional act was not entitled to notice, and ought not to be received. The argument was carried still further. It was strenuously urged that the admission of the power to abolish slavery in the District would be fatal to the South.

"My opinion was, that, whether the petitioners had strict right on their side or not, sound policy dictated the reception and reference of their petitions. I believed that any unusual course in regard to them would give undue importance to the novements of the abolitionists, furnish new ground for agitation, and rather increase the existing excitement than allay it."

Under these convictions, Mr. Bell only, of all the Southern representatives in Congress, (save unconstitutional request—Congress being ex- Mr. Bouldin, of Virginia,) voted against the second clause of the fifth of

The Atherton Resolutions,

which provided that all petitions "relating, in any way, or to any extent whatever, to slavery, as aforesaid, or the abolition thereof, should, on the presentation thereof, without any further action thereon, be laid on the table, without being

debated, printed, or referred." The origin of these Atherton resolutions was as follows: On the night of the 8th of December, 1838 -Martin Van Buren being President-there was a meeting in Washington of a few Administration members of the House of Representatives from the South, and a few from the North. The meeting was called at the instance of the Hon. R. B. Rhett, of South Carolina, who, since the days of nullification, has had the strongest proclivities towards disunion, and is now an open disunionist, to consider certain resolutions which he had prepared on the subject of slavery. The resolutions were considered and adopted, and as it was deemed expedient that they should be offered by a Northern man-Mr. Atherton, of New Hampshire, was selected for that purpose. Accordingly, he presented them in the House three days afterwards, made a speech explanatory of his reasons for offering them, and concluded by calling the previous question, so as to cut off all debate and amendments. Gov. Wise was, at that time, a Whig representative from Virginia. He denounced the whole proceeding in the most indignant terms on the floor of the House; and on a subsequent occasion, in a public address to a portion of his constituents, he stated that these resolutions were prepared in secret so far as the Whig representatives from the South and North were concerned, and agreed upon by some few or more Van Buren men of the South, with others from the North, without permitting the Whig slaveholding members of the South to know anything of the matter until it was sprung upon the House with a call for the previous question. He said these resolutions, thus prepared and brought forward, were "the first of a strict party proceeding" known to our national history.

This was the first organized effort at slavery agitation for strictly party purposes. The concoctors and authors of the proceeding were Southern Democrats, who contrived to secure the co-operation of a portion of the Northern Democrats of the House. Mr. Rhett, who prepared the resolutions is a confessed disunionist. Mr. Atherton, who was induced to offer them, voted in 1847 for the Wilmot Proviso. And Mr. Van Buren, of whose Administration the parties to the movement were all supporters, became, in 1848, the free-soil candidate for the Presidency, on the Buffalo platform-receiving the support of a majority of the Democracy of New York over General

The same patriotic considerations which moved Mr. Bell to vote against the clause in the Atherton resolutions, impelled him to vote against the

Twenty first Rule of the House of Representatives, which was as

"That no petition, memorial or resolution, or little consequence to citizens that they are per-mitted to assemble and petition for a redress of the District of Columbia, or any State or Territogrievances, it, after they have done so, their petitions are not to be received or considered by ries of the United States, in which it now exists,