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MR. M'DUFFIE & COL. CUMMING.

From the *Middlesex (Conn.) Gazette.*

**DESSUSO.**  
The controversy between Mr. M'Duffie of South Carolina, and Col. Cumming of Georgia, has excited considerable interest throughout the Union, and has, in some instances, occasioned remarks, suggestions, and assertions, which would not probably have been made, had the circumstances of the case been more generally understood. The subject, indeed, has very probably attracted more attention than the private controversy of any individuals would seem to merit. Yet, as it continues to be occasionally adverted to in newspaper paragraphs, it seems proper to have it presented in such a point of view that those who deem it in any respect worthy of their notice, may so far at least understand its origin and progress, as to be enabled to found the opinions they express, upon facts, rather than upon surmises. And this seems to be the more necessary, as, from several recent publications, this unpleasant affair has been attributed to causes which had no influence in producing it, and to mistakes and political differences with which it had little or no connection.

It will be understood, however, that it is for the purpose of exhibiting facts only, and not with a view of expressing opinions, that this communication is made. The author of it has long held both the parties in this case in such respect, that he should be unwilling to find either of them the subject of misrepresentation. The differences between them arose from the following circumstances.

Some time before the meeting of the last Legislature of Georgia, the election of the Governor of that state became a subject of very general interest there, and many publications appeared in the newspapers, in which the re-election of Governor Clark was advocated, and opposed, with the freedom and earnestness usual in most political contests; and, in many instances, no doubt, the spirit of party mixed sufficiently with the spirit of patriotism, to give full as much animation to the discussion as the public good required. Among other articles on this subject, there appeared in the *Augusta Herald*, a publication signed "Baldwin," in which the re-election of Governor Clark was opposed on various grounds, and particularly as he was known to be unfriendly to Mr. Crawford, the present Secretary of the Treasury, whose pretensions to the Presidency of the United States, the writer seemed to think, ought at least to have the friendly countenance and support of the executive of his own state.

To this publication, an answer appeared in the *Augusta Herald*, of Sept. 1821, under the signature of "The Spirit of Georgia," in which an attempt was made to remove what was conceived to be unwarrantable and groundless charges against Gov. Clark, and to advocate his re-election independently of any influence it might have had what the writer considered the important and interests of the state. To "The Spirit of Georgia," a reply, under the signature of "Baldwin," appeared in the *Augusta Herald* of the 28th Sept. 1821, which commenced in the following manner:—

"A reply to 'The Spirit of Georgia,' which, we are under the necessity of importing from Carolina.  
"At a certain (court) during the summer (if we are not mistaken) we did see an attorney; and hear him also, not being entirely deaf, was uttering herod, upon a note of mine, his eye in a fine *Nisi Prius* frenzy rolling; his hands belabouring the devoted pine, till Butler himself must have acknowledged that the drum ecclesiastic could be scarcely beaten with more animation than the drum forensic. There are wonderful resemblances in nature; and one of them is between the gentle barrister and that Spirit which, enjoying more than a witch's privilege, is enabled to pass the stream of Savannah. We will have some words with the courteous stranger."

In this introduction, originated the controversy between Mr. M'Duffie and Col. Cumming. It was not distinctly known who was the author of the piece signed "Baldwin," but it was very well known who was the individual caricatured in its introductory paragraph. For it had so happened, that Mr. M'Duffie had been employed as a lawyer in a case in the superior court of Richmond county, which sat at Augusta, some time before this piece appeared. The case had been one of some interest, and Mr. M'Duffie had exhibited considerable professional zeal and animation in arguing it; and he was the only member of the South Carolina bar at that court. It was evident, therefore, that he was the person alluded to in the introductory paragraph. Of this he had no doubt himself, when he was in Augusta, the day after the piece appeared, and he probably perceived that the allusion could not be misapplied to Augusta, and from a conviction, that the charge of his being the author of "The Spirit of Georgia," was without foundation. It is known to the author of

this communication, that Mr. M'Duffie neither wrote the piece signed "The Spirit of Georgia," nor ever saw or knew of it till it appeared in the paper. After reading the publication of "Baldwin," therefore, he thought proper to reply to that part of it which related to himself, by a handbill, in the following words:

"To the citizens of Augusta.—On my arrival in town, this morning, I was not a little surprised to find myself alluded to in a very unbecoming and indecorous manner, by a scribbler in the *Herald*, who assumes the name of 'Baldwin' only to disgrace it. This writer, who seems to consider truth of but small account, when it stands in the way of a bastard witicism, has taken the liberty of indicating me, in a manner which you cannot misunderstand, as the author of a party publication, signed 'The Spirit of Georgia.' Unwilling to encumber the columns of a newspaper with personal matters, and determined not to labour under the imputation for one moment longer than is unavoidable, I have accepted this mode of repelling it. I do, therefore, pronounce it, unquestionably, false. I am not the author of the production imputed to me, nor have I ever read it, farther than to glance over it and catch the general drift. More attention than this, I never bestow upon the electioneering paragraphs with which the Georgia papers have lately abounded. If 'Baldwin' himself does not feel bound, by every principle of honour, to retract the imputation cast upon me, in the same public manner in which he has made it, I shall certainly not envy him his pretensions to the character of a gentleman. I should feel that I degraded myself, if I were to interfere in the party squabbles of any state. Even in my own, in those elections which personally interest me, I have never descended from an austere and forbidding dignity, which denied to my fellow-citizens the common civilities of life, to the humble sycophancy of electioneering, by whiskeys, at a petty muster. And I take this occasion to announce to all the grinning authors of puppy stories, and to all the puppies themselves, who may take any interest in the matter, that I have never published one syllable upon 'Georgia politics,' and, if God continues to bless me with the use of my reason, I never shall."  
"GEORGE M'DUFFIE."

It may be proper to remark, that Col. Cumming was, at the time of this publication, a candidate for a seat in the Legislature of Georgia; and, to render in some degree obvious the allusion in the latter part of the handbill, it may be proper also to observe, that, previous to the discussion relative to the Governor, or about the time of it, there had appeared, in one of the *Milledgeville* papers, a series of numbers by "The Trio," in which the administration of the general government had been pretty freely and severely censured, and in which almost every member of the American cabinet had been charged with a departure from what the writer of "The Trio" considered the orthodox standard of republican faith; and it was pretty openly and clearly intimated in these numbers, that Mr. Crawford was the only member of the cabinet, whose republican principles could be safely relied upon. To the publications of "The Trio," there had appeared, in numbers published in the *Georgia Advertiser*, printed at Augusta, a series of masterly replies, under the signature of "One of the People."—These numbers were, by many persons, suspected to have been written by Mr. M'Duffie. They related exclusively to the politics of the Union, attracted much attention, and were thought to evince very superior capacity. About the time of the appearance of one of the pieces signed "Baldwin," the following squib appeared in the *Augusta Herald*, of Sept. 25, 1821:

"Anecdote extraordinary.—It happened, not long since, that a boy in a neighbouring town in our sister state, South Carolina, was seen in the streets crying 'Fine Georgia puppies for sale.' An inquisitive genius requested to know to what political party they belonged. The boy replied, they are now in favour of Governor Clark, but in nine days, when they get their eyes open, they will be in favour of Col. Troup. 'One of the People,' coming up at the instant, purchased the whole litter; it is supposed on political speculation."

To this, the following counterpart appeared in the *Herald*, of 28th Sept.

"Sequel to the anecdote.—As a matter of mere curiosity, a gentleman called, a short time since, on the person who purchased, 'on political speculation,' the 'whole litter' of 'fine Georgia puppies,' mentioned in the 'Anecdote extraordinary,' in the last *Herald*, and found that their eyes were not only opened, but that they were all barking at a most vociferous rate. On inquiring why they made so much noise, he was informed that they were barking at the Governor of Georgia. Four things, said the gentleman, what effect can their noise produce, and what cause have they for such discordant notes? Oh! said their owner, cause or no cause, they think they must join in the pack engaged in hunting down the Governor, and they don't know but that barking is necessary to promotion."

These articles, it is believed, Mr. M'Duffie first saw about the time he read the piece signed "Baldwin." He did not know, nor could he have known the author of either of them. But, knowing that the numbers signed "One of the People," had by some persons been attributed to him, he no doubt supposed himself alluded to as the South-Carolinian who had made the purchase stated in the "anecdote extraordinary," and his remarks about "puppy stories," were produced by what had probably been thought by its author a witty anecdote. A squib of this kind would not here be brought into view, if a notice of it were not necessary by way of explaining expressions in the latter part of the handbill, which might seem to be without meaning, or might otherwise be considered as evidence of a disposition to employ epithets, in a manner neither dignified or becoming.

The day after Mr. M'Duffie's publication, a reply to it in another handbill appeared under the signature of "Baldwin," in which the writer expressed some surprise at the course taken by Mr. M'Duffie, when, by an application at the printing office he might easily have obtained the real author of the piece deemed exceptionable, and from whom "he might receive any species of honourable satisfaction which the case might require."

Here the matter rested for some time. Mr. M'Duffie went on his professional business, and it was hoped by many that the correspondence was at an end; but in the *Augusta Herald* of October 30th, 1821, the following article appeared:

"Several weeks have elapsed since Mr. George M'Duffie published his petulant and vulgar handbill against a writer in the *Herald* who had adopted the signature of Baldwin. The latter, with equal publicity, immediately signified, that he could know the author as soon as he desired. This plain intimation he has disregarded. Though his silence might for some time be imputed to professional engagements, the supposition is no longer probable. Nothing therefore remains, but to pronounce Mr. George M'Duffie a vapouring swaggerer, more inclined to attack a name, with ribald abuse, than to be confronted with a real person. Such however as he is, he can still procure authentic intelligence of me at the office of the *Augusta Herald*. But he will please distinctly to understand, that only one species of communication from him will be noticed; and that private, direct and explicit; any other will be merely regarded as a confirmation of the opinion here expressed. I now subscribe my assumed name, because the delicacy has no right to know my real one; and delicacy forbids a gratuitous disclosure. If Mr. M'Duffie is ignorant of it, the means of information have been pointed out; if already informed, the two signatures with respect to himself are precisely equivalent."  
"BALDWIN."

*Herald*, October 30, 1822.  
At the time this article appeared, Mr. M'Duffie was on the circuit in S. Carolina; when he received it, he made to it the following reply.

"It is with much reluctance I am compelled to obtrude individual bickerings upon the public attention. But the extraordinary course which 'Baldwin' has thought it expedient to pursue, imposes upon me the duty of proving him to be precisely the 'vapouring swaggerer' which, with peculiar unaptness and impotence, he pronounces me. The following facts disclose the true state of the controversy: A publication on Georgia politics appeared in the *Augusta Herald*, signed the 'Spirit of Georgia,' which 'Baldwin,' equally regardless of truth and decorum, ascribed to me, by the following allusion, which was the introduction to a piece published by him in the *Herald*.—'At a certain (court) during the summer, (if we are not mistaken) we did see an attorney; and hear him also, not being entirely deaf, was uttering herod, upon a note of mine, his eye in a fine *Nisi Prius* frenzy rolling; his hands belabouring the devoted pine, till Butler himself must have acknowledged that the drum ecclesiastic could be scarcely beaten with more animation than the drum forensic.' There are wonderful resemblances in nature; and one of them is between the gentle barrister, and that spirit, which, enjoying more than a witch's privileges, is enabled to pass the stream of Savannah. We will have some words with the courteous stranger.' This could not be mistaken by the citizens of Augusta, who knew I was the only member of the South Carolina bar, who had argued a case in Augusta, the preceding summer. Personally, I disregarded the imputation; knowing it to be as impotent as it was contemptible, in relation to myself; and nothing was more remote from my thoughts than the idea of dignifying the author by sending him a challenge. The course I adopted, and which 'Baldwin' affects to consider 'swaggering,' distinctly puts a negative upon any such idea. I determined to inflict a sort of castigation, better suited to his conduct, and to expose the meanness which could conceive the pitiful artifice of promoting party views, by holding out the idea that a member of Congress from a different state, had been guilty of an interference with local politics, unbecoming his character and situation. More, therefore, to punish the insolence of 'Baldwin,' than to redress myself, published the following handbill.

(Here was published the above handbill of Mr. M'Duffie, and which it is unnecessary to reprint.)  
"In reply to the above handbill, 'Baldwin' published another; in which he informed me that I could ascertain his true name by calling on the Editor of the *Herald*, and should receive any species of honourable satisfaction which the case might require."

"Now it cannot but strike any man of ordinary powers of perception that 'Baldwin's' offer of 'honourable satisfaction' was the most ridiculous and misplaced of all 'vapouring' gasconades.—Even before the publication of my handbill, it would have been inexpressible folly in me to have hunted up an anonymous scribbler, for the purpose of challenging him. Nothing but an ambition to contend with assassins, could prompt any man to search out with that view, every wretch who might take the liberty of introducing his name into a public discussion. But after I had published my handbill, in which I took the most ample satisfaction for 'Baldwin's' impertinence, nothing can be more absolutely nonsensical than the supposition that I could have any cause or desire to challenge him. If I had been inflicting the cowl upon him, and he had exclaimed in his flight 'you know where I live—I will give you honourable satisfaction,' it would not have been more downright 'swaggering' than his offer of 'honourable satisfaction,' under the above circumstances."

"The matter rested here more than a month, when 'Baldwin,' goaded on by public opinion, or some motive less excusable, published the dying squib which appeared in the *Herald* of the 30th October, and which accidentally met me on my circuit at Spartanburg. He pretends to have been waiting on account of my 'professional engagements,' and yet publishes the contemptible squib aforesaid, when I was in the midst of those engagements, and in the most remote part of my circuit. It is apparent that he has involved himself in a dilemma; and that every attempt at extraction increases the awkward embarrassment of his situation. If he conceives me to be the injured party, his last publication proves him to be destitute of every principle which should characterize an honorable man; if he conceives

"The substance of this handbill is given from recollection, the copy of it having been lost."

himself to be the injured party, upon what principle could he be skulking behind the flimsy and tattered veil of an anonymous signature? By a foolish affected kind of special pleading, he seems to consider all that I have said, as applying to his 'assumed name' and not to himself. Now I wish it to be distinctly understood that it is the real author, and not to the 'assumed name,' to whom my remarks, now and heretofore, have been applied. If 'Baldwin' expects to gain any advantage in an eventual contest by eliciting a challenge from me, I wish him distinctly to understand that he will not accomplish his object. It is quite sufficient condescension in me to meet a man, under such circumstances, on equal terms. It has always been in his power, and still is, to find me out without inquiring of an Editor. As an anonymous writer, this is the only notice I shall bestow upon him."  
"GEORGE M'DUFFIE."

This correspondence from its apparent tendency occasioned considerable conversation amongst the friends of both parties, and was eventually followed by a challenge from Col. Cumming, who it is believed, (though this fact is not here asserted) had previously intimated to Mr. M'Duffie that he might be considered the author of the pieces signed "Baldwin,"—and there can be little doubt that Mr. M'Duffie supposed this to be the case when writing some at least of his publications. The challenge was handed Mr. M'Duffie when he was on the eve of setting off for Washington City to attend his duty as a Representative in Congress from S. Carolina, and an acceptance of it, was therefore, the only attention it could then receive. Col. Cumming afterwards went to the City of Washington, where it was supposed a meeting was expected; but the friends of Mr. M'Duffie deemed it proper that he should discharge his duty to his constituents, before attending to any such private calls as might deprive them of his services. After Congress adjourned, a meeting of the parties took place at a spot, not it is believed, acknowledged to be within the jurisdiction of either Georgia or South Carolina, and the result of the interview is known to the public. Mr. M'Duffie's pistol it has been stated, went off accidentally before he had raised it—he received the ball of his antagonist more in the back than in the side—it ranged near the spine, and was by some supposed to be lodged in the body—whether it is so or not, has not it is believed, been certainly ascertained—it was never found, and from some circumstances mentioned by Mr. M'Duffie himself, the writer of this supposes the ball still to be in him, though of this he pretends not to be a competent judge.

It will readily be seen from these particulars, that most of the publications, as to the cause of this duel, have been erroneous—was not produced, as has been alleged, by any controversy about the Presidential election, nor occasioned, as has been stated in the *Philadelphia* paper, by any disappointment experienced by Col. Cumming in not being elected to Congress.—The *CJ.* was never a candidate for Congress. It was the subject matter of the piece signed "The Spirit of Georgia" the cause of the controversy, for the piece contained nothing exceptionable—it originated, as has been shown, in the erroneous, and what the party considered the indecorous attempt to designate the author of that publication. Had any apology been offered for this, the subsequent correspondence would have been prevented; and perhaps an apology was in some measure prevented, by the asperity with which this error had been corrected.

There can be no doubt but that Col. Cumming and Mr. M'Duffie entertain very different sentiments as to Mr. Crawford's qualifications for the first office in the gift of the American people—but their opinions on this subject were not brought into view on the recent controversy—nor was "The Spirit of Georgia" in any degree intended, as has been intimated, to "defend Mr. Calhoun from charges" against which his own character was a sufficient refutation. Nor was it in fact, a matter of much moment who was the author of the piece signed "The Spirit of Georgia" or what was its import—for its author was openly avowed, and its import was disregarded in the course the dispute had taken.

The intended meeting of the parties in this case, had some how in an unprecedented manner become public, and so much solicitude had been manifested as to its result, that many persons felt gratified that the interview had not terminated more seriously, and after it had taken place it was believed the controversy was for ever at an end. A few days subsequent to the meeting, such an account of it was published in the *Augusta Chronicle* as Mr. M'Duffie considered as injudicious and uncandid, and he therefore published what he thought to be some necessary corrections, accompanied by a statement from his second and surgeon. This it is stated, occasioned his being again challenged, and the newspapers it is known have announced arrangements for a second meeting. It is hoped, however, that this may be prevented. It is to be presumed that the parties themselves, on a dispassionate exercise of their reason, may readily perceive the impropriety of persisting in a course, which however occasionally sanctioned by custom, is expressly forbidden by the laws both of God and man.

The following are copies of the letters of the gentlemen who attempted the mediation between Col. Cumming and Mr. M'Duffie, and their replies.—  
Augusta, June 1, 1822.

GENTLEMEN,  
We take the liberty, which we hope you will pardon, of addressing you upon a subject not only interesting to yourselves, but in which your country feels a deep interest; such an interest as is highly honorable to you both, and which you can not learn with indifference, or treat with disregard. It is this deep interest which has been already and distinctly expressed from various quarters of the highest respectability, and in which we participate largely, that will furnish an apology to you, we flatter ourselves, for addressing you on a public subject—you will, no doubt, perceive that this communication has reference to the affair of honour, which is understood to be pending between you, and which has excited the greatest anxiety among your numerous friends, and indeed in a very large portion of our common country.—With an assurance of our perfect respect and regard for you personally, will you permit us to be the interpreters of the public feelings and wishes, and to interpose in this business, so far as to endeavour by our best offices to put an end to the subsisting controversy, and if possible, to reconcile the discordant feelings which exist between you? We are persuaded that your dispute can be honorably adjusted, if you will permit gentlemen friendly to both of you (as we profess ourselves to be) to examine and consider the subject in dispute, and to decide thereon. We, therefore, call upon you for ourselves, and in behalf of a vast number of the respectable citizens of Georgia and S. Carolina, and we may justly add of the United States, to consent to submit your controversy to the examination and decision of five or more gentlemen of the most distinguished character, designated by yourselves, or by us, or by any other friends you may name. Should this communication be met by the spirit in which it was made, we cannot doubt of a happy issue of this distressing affair, and a result honorable to yourselves, and grateful to your country, to which we all owe, in some degree, the sacrifice of private feelings and resentments. That such may be the result, gentlemen, our most ardent wish, and sincerest prayer to the Almighty ruler of hearts. We are yours, &c. &c.

To Col. Cumming and Mr. M'Duffie.

MR. M'DUFFIE'S REPLY.

*Edgefield C. H. 2d June, 1822.*  
Gentlemen—I duly appreciate the feelings by which you have been prompted to make the recommendation, contained in your joint letter of the 1st inst. in relation to the affair now pending between Col. Cumming and myself; but, situated as I am, I confess I feel some embarrassment in giving you an answer. I have been invited by Col. Cumming to an interview of a particular kind. The invitation was direct and explicit, so as to preclude even an inquiry into the grievance for which redress was demanded. In addition to this, it has been stated in the most public manner, upon the authority of a friend of Col. Cumming's, that he would permit no mediation. Under these circumstances, (if the latter be not founded on some misconception,) it would seem to be a nugatory act, on my part, to agree to a course which Col. Cumming has predetermined not to pursue. I am, however, determined that no imputation shall rest on me, on the one hand or the other. If I could believe it necessary to convince the world of my courage, by fighting, I should not think my reputation worth defending. It is possible, nay, probable, that many things have been exaggerated, and even falsely stated, by rumour, and that these may have contributed to the state of feeling, out of which the controversy between us has grown until it reached the present crisis. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that, if the affair can be honourably adjusted, without recurring to the last alternative, I should be ashamed of my own weakness if I were to refuse my assent to any proposition, calculated to produce that result;—but it must, at the same time, be distinctly understood, that I am not in a position either to seek or avoid the contest, and that my acquiescence is to constitute no part of Col. Cumming's inducement to accede to your proposition. I must, therefore, request that you will not communicate my answer to Col. Cumming until you shall have received his. Your obedient servant,  
GEORGE M'DUFFIE.  
(Signed)

COL. CUMMING'S REPLY.

*Augusta, 2d June, 1822.*  
Gentlemen—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 1st inst. For reasons which it is unnecessary to state, I cannot adopt your suggestions concerning the affair in question; but while I thus decline the proffered mediation, you may be assured that the kindness of your purpose and the manner in which it was expressed, have made a deep impression on my feelings. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, with the highest respect and esteem, your obedient servant.  
WILLIAM CUMMING.