S. O. Mullen

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"LET ALL THE ENDS THOU AIM'ST AT BE THY COUNTRY'S, THY GOD'S AND TRUTH'S."

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The Plunder of Eleven States by the Republican Party.

SPEECH OF

HON. DANIEL W. VOORHEES,

OF INDIANA.

DELIVERED IN

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MARCH 23, 1872.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."—*St. Matthew, 7; 16, 17.*

The House having met for debate as in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—Mr. VOORHEES said:

Mr. Speaker: The condition of many of the States of this Union excites to-day the mingled pity and indignation of the civilized world. They are the theme of sorrowful and of bitter comment wherever the channels of human intelligence penetrate. They engage the attention of all the departments of this Government. Executive proclamations spread evil tidings about them, and hurl every principle of their liberties, every monument of their safety to the ground. Congress enacts laws against them which utterly destroy every vestige of freedom, and forge and rivet on their helpless limbs the fetters of despotism. It also sends forth its powerful missionaries of mischief in the form of committees, backed by the money and the power of the Government, whose labors are to blacken the character and fame of their people under the guise of official investigations and official reports. The head of the Department of Justice, the late Attorney General, he who led his people into the war and then returned to plague and lay waste the hearth stones of his followers, superintended in person the inquisition and the torture inflicted upon the descendants of those who fought in the battles of the Revolution. The Army of the United States in a time of profound peace is launched like a bolt of destruction into their midst. It is engaged in seizing, without sworn charge or warrant of law, the youth, the middle-aged, and the gray-haired grandsires, in the sanctuary of American homes, and driving them like headed beasts into crowded prisons. The odious service of Claverhouse, Kirke, Dundee, in the bloody oppressions of Scotland, which gave their names more than a hundred years ago to the everlasting execration of mankind, is being repeated hourly on American soil. And the President himself, in his recent message, prepared, as he says, in haste, as if he had affairs of greater importance to engage his attention, yet found time to give his sanction to all this and to add his indignant mite to the general arraignment and accusation.

Surrounded and confronted by this disastrous state of public affairs, I rise to address this House in behalf of free institutions, of impartial justice, and of the oppressed and outraged citizen, wherever his home may be planted. I shall speak by the authority of those who sent me here. To them I am beholden for all that I am, and to them alone I acknowledge myself responsible in this world for what I utter on this floor.

Sir, who has filled one third of the boundaries of this Republic with all the curses and calamities ever recorded in the annals of the worst Governments known on the pages of history? Nearly seven years ago blessed peace, like a merciful, white-winged angel, came to the land. Who, since then, has poured upon the unresisting and helpless South the floods of disorder, corruption, bankruptcy, crime, oppression, and ruin? Every result has its distinct and specific cause in the moral and political world as well as in the mathematical realms of the physical sciences. The greatest thinker and writer of the present century has said:

"In the moral world, as in the physical world, nothing is anomalous; nothing is unnatural; nothing is strange. All is order, symmetry, and law. There are opposites, but there are no contradictions. In the character of a nation, inconsistency is impossible. Such, however, is still the backward condition of the human mind, and with so evil and jaundiced an eye do we approach the greatest problems, that not only common writers, but even men from whom better things might be hoped, are on this point involved in constant confusion, perplexing themselves and their readers by speaking of inconsistency as if it were a quality belonging to the subject which they investigate, instead of being, as it really is, a measure of their own ignorance. It is the business of the historian to remove this ignorance, by showing that the movements of nations are perfectly regular, and that, like all other movements, they are solely determined by their antecedents. If he cannot do this, he is no historian. He may be an annalist, or a biographer, or a chronicler, but higher than that he cannot rise, unless he is imbued with that spirit of science which teaches as an article of faith, the doctrine of uniform sequence; in other words, the doctrine that certain events having already happened, certain other events corresponding to them will also happen."

But this great doctrine of uniform sequence, of cause and effect in all things, has even yet higher authority than the powerful and philosophic Buckle, or than any other earthly sanction. When the traveler over desert plains finds a cooling and healthful stream he knows there is a fountain of sweet waters above; but if the stream is impure and poisonous, it needs no argument to convince him that the source from which it descends is likewise bitter and unclean. The apple and the pomegranate, the olive and the grape, all proclaim by their own good qualities the generous and bounteous trees and vines on which they grow; but the noxious weed, the deadly creeper, and the useless bramble furnish no such evidences of their merit and worth to the husbandman. And when the mighty Nazarene made his brief but awful sojourn upon earth he pointed to these productions of the laws of nature, and proclaimed, not merely to his followers in Judea, but to the people of all the continents and all the islands of the seas, and to the remotest generations of mankind, that the same unerring certainty also existed between the visible results of human conduct and the absolute causes from which they arise. He warned the whole world against false, corrupt, and plundering leaders of the people, and announced the means by which their spurious pretensions shall always be determined:

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

Let this unchangeable standard of truth, established by the physical and moral sciences, and sanctioned by the voice of Divinity, be applied to the party in power, and o its unbridled and unrestrained dealings with the people and the States of the South. Who has planted and nurtured the thick growth of thorns and thistles there? We have heard endless speeches here and everywhere in regard to the fruits of the war. By whose wicked devices have they been turned into apples of Sodom and the Dead sea, and been made to mock the hopes and the expectations of the anxious beholder? By whose conduct and policies has every blessing of free government been scourged from the face of a country containing over twelve million people and larger in extent than many of the foremost Powers of Europe? I call upon the majority in this House to answer. Have you not had all power from the beginning of what you call reconstruction over that subject? Has there been anything wanting to your absolute authority? What has stood in the way of your wishes, your partisan plans, your lawless fanaticism?

The Constitution has been no restraint upon your actions. It has been trampled under foot, dwarfed into a dead letter, or widened and extended by fraudulent amendments, according as the unscrupulous purposes of a powerful party would be best promoted. To quote the dear and hallowed principles of that immortal instrument here now is only to excite the displeasure and the sneers of those who are bloated and overgrown with the insolence of office and a long lease of power. To express a reverence for those who bought its original draft with their blood, and to hold it up as it was before the hand of modern vandalism had assailed it, is denounced as treaaon. The great charter of liberty has not even been a stumbling-block to your feet in your swift encroachments upon the rights of all the people and the States of this Union, and especially upon those of the South. You have taken all the powers it gave you, and you have usurped every power you desired besides. No law, however revolutionary, barbarous, and destructive, was ever found by your construction to be in conflict with its provisions, if it was demanded by the interests of your party. Your own will, without let or hinderance from any quarter, has been the measure of your legislation.

The Army of the United States has also been made ready and obedient to your command. It has been the irresistable instrument with which to execute your pleasure on a prostrate people. You say, "Go, and it goeth; come, and it cometh;" and nothing has withstood the accomplishment of your purposes.

The purse of the nation, too, has been in your grasp as well as the sword. The taxpayers of America have toiled for you, as the serfs of Russia have not for their rulers. Their streaming floods of golden tribute have poured into your coffers with every motion of the pendulum of time. You have taken the laborer's earnings and lavished uncounted millions on your baleful schemes of government under a southern sky.

You have likewise controlled Presidents. When one, of your own election rose up and stubbornly confronted you with your own precedents and solemn commitals in regard to the inviolable existence of States, and their perpetual right of representation, you sought his overthrow and ruin with a fury and a hate until then unknown in the history of legislative bodies. While you barely failed to hurl him from his place you were completely successful in rendering him powerless to execute his policy or to prevent you from executing yours. This House was purged in a memorable way, in order that you might have the two-thirds majority with which to pass unconstitutional laws over presidential vetoes. Expulsions of members took place under the thin and flimsy guise of contested elections until the minority here was sufficiently depleted and you became paramount over the Executive and absorbed all his official functions. Lawless legislation then broke loose upon him, by which he was bound hand and foot, and made as powerless as a manacled prisoner in the depths of a dungeon. Andrew Johnson no longer divided with you the responsibility of the Government; you weilded it alone. The Executive who has succeeded him submits willingly and unconditionally to whatever Congress may propose. You hold all his powers in your hands and level them against any liberty or right of the citizen which you may wish to destroy. He avows his purpose to run any career you may point out to him, with no more mind of his own than the orderly who holds his horse. I pause not now to ask how you have obtained this degrading control. Whether it is the cunning of a vaulting ambition on his part, which with a pretended humility has been known to push aside the imperial crown in order to be a little further persuaded, or whether it springs from his ignorance, matters not for the purposes of my present argument. The great fact, that you possess all the powers and control all the departments of this Government is what I demonstrate.

The Federal patronage, with its immense and corruptive influences, has also come into your hands with the surrender of the Executive. The venal and the mercenary have been seduced into your support by your offices and your profligate expenditure of the public money; while the timid have been overawed by the bayonet and the cannon. Every application by which men have ever been subdued to tyranny has been held and used in profusion by the party now in power, from the day that the war closed on the bloody soil of Virginia until the present hour. In proof of this let the specific details of long-continued usurpation, evil goverment and maladministration be presented to the candid judgement of the country.

Sir, the absolute destruction of free institutions from the Potomac to the Rio Grande commenced with the earliest dawn of peace. Sherman received Johnston's surrender upon the precise basis on which the war had been prosecuted at every stage. He stipulated that the soldiers of the South should lay down the arms of their unequal warfare, return to their States tes, whose existence had not then been denied, and resume the pursuit of industry when they had left off, subject only to the destruction of slavery, which was wrought by the movements of armies, and not by proclamations. He had more than a thousand precedents in the deliberate and recorded action of this Government for his conduct. He was sustained by both branches of Congress in innumerable ways, by four years of incessant and voluminous legislation, by the enactment of apportionment laws throughout the States whose people were in rebellion, by districting them for judicial purposes, by levying upon them direct taxes as members of the Union under the Constitution, by the constant reception of their representatives on this floor and in the Senate, by the most solemn and binding joint resolutions, and by every other mode in which this department of the Government can commit and pledge itself. He was upheld by every document also to which the name of the Executive was attached during the war; by every message, inaugural, proclamation, and order of that prolific period. The courts added their weighty sanction, from those of the lowest and feeblest jurisdiction to those of the loftiest pretensions and powers. No Government in the wide-spread history of the nations of the earth was ever under voluntary and self-imposed obligations of greater force and magnitude. The word and the honor of the Republic had been plighted over and over again to its own civilized world. The moment, however, that resistance ceased, and the way was opened for the long pent-up purposes of revolution, centralization, and raphae, the party in power broke with shameless hastedis most sacred faith, flung aside the mask it had worn for years, admitted that its previous pretension and promises were fraudulent, and clamored with wild ferocity against the hero of the march to the sea, because he had believed they were true and sincere, and had acted on them. The terms which Sherman gave to a fallen foe had often been tendered to that foe before he fell; but they were now madly thrust aside in the hour of victory, and the general himself denounced far and wide as a traitor to his country. The hue-and-cry was raised against him as if he was a fleeing-fugitive from justice. The memorable and disgraceful outburst cannot be covered with oblivion. It more resembled the enraged scream of a beast of prey about to be baffled out of its victims than the reasonable expression of human beings. The victim, however, was surrendered to the clutches of an inflamed and victorious party, and the work of demolition and ruin was at once commenced. From turret to foundation you tore down the government of eleven States. You left not one stone upon another. You rent all their local laws and machinery into fragments and trampled upon their ruins. Not a vestige of their former constructions remained. Their pillars, their rafters, their beams, and all their deep-laid corners, the work of a wise and devoted generation of the past, were all dragged away, and the sites where they once stood left naked for the erection of new and different structures. You removed the rubbish, pushed the Aarmy into the vacant ground, established provisional governments as you would over territory just acquired by conquest from a foreign power, and clothed brigadier and major generals with extraordinary function as Governors.

This was the beginning of the present organizations; those odious and unsightly fabrics which now cumber the earth, and which stand as the open, reeking, and confessed shambles of corruption, pollution, and revolting misrule. They embrace not one single element of popular consent. They are the hideous offspring of your own unnatural and unlawful force and violence. The great body of the people of that unfortunate section had no more share in rebellion of their local governments than the sepoys of the East Indies have in the affairs of the British empire. They were excluded from all participation by the most elaborate and minute schemes of legislative proscription of which history makes any record.

The first duty of the provisional governments which you established was to call conventions to frame new constitutions for these old States, and to prepare them for re-admission into that Union from which you had sworn so often and so solemnly that no State could ever withdraw. These conventions were provided for by laws enacted here. The number and the quality of the delegates to them were here specified. Who should be eligible was your work, and not the work of the people who were to be governed. You not only said who should be elected, but you likewise determined who should elect them. You fixed the qualifications and the color of the voters. You purged the ballot-box of the intelligence and the virtue on which alone popular liberty can be safely founded, and you admitted in their stead the suffrage of the most ignorant and unqualified race now inhabiting the globe.

Mingled with this dark and turbid tide of dense ignorance came all the vices of this lower race, together with the crimes of a more powerful and a more profligate class, with pale faces, from the North, now and then receiving their worst recruits from the apostates of the same complexion in the South. You winnowed the threshing floor, but you rejected the wheat. You accepted the tares, and sowed them, and now you curse the soil because you have reaped nothing but tares for your harvest. You built upon a foundation of shifting sand, and now you rail at everybody but yourselves because the house has not resisted the winds and the rains that have beat upon it. When these conventions met they represented the wretched constituency which spoke them into existence, and they went to their servile tasks with the bayonet of the Federal Government at their throats. They sat in every instance within point-blank range of shotted cannon. The delegates crept about and framed constitutions with the eyes of military governors upon them. The sword rested lightly in its scabbard, and was ready to leap forth at any moment and upon the slightest pretext to assist in devising fundamental laws for a people said to be free. The State constitutions that were thus created and thrust upon the country could not fail to partake of the depraved nature of their illegitimate origin. They sprang from the loathsome union of ignorance, vice, and despotism; and they have inherited many of the ugliest features of each one of their progenitors. The despotic principle is strongly marked in them all. It is there in obedience to the mandates of Federal power, as well as in accordance with the character of the instruments who were used to fasten it upon American citizens. Proscription and ostracism are the leading elements of every State government in the South. Intellect and virtue, public and private worth, spotless character, splendid attainments, graceful culture, and the experience and wisdom of age were all passed by under the reconstruction of violence and fraud. Those who were possessed of these traits and acquirements were pushed aside, and made to give place to the most degraded classes of mankind. The people were not allowed to select their official agents from among those who were qualified for public station, but were driven into the purlieus of ignorance and vice to choose their rulers.

In the reorganization of all the States whose present condition is matter of such sore complaint and such bitter accusations, the dominant party here and in those States excluded from office and deprived the people of the services of every man who by his talents, industry, and integrity had sufficiently acquired the confidence of his fellow-citizens before the war to be made Governor, secretary, auditor, or treasurer of State; attorney general, judge, clerk, or reporter of the supreme court; superintendent of public instruction, member of either branch of Congress, or of the Legislature of his State; clerk, sheriff, treasurer, auditor, or recorder of his county; judge of a probate court, whose jurisdiction follows the inevitable footsteps of death, and whose functions are those of benevolence toward the orphans and the widows of the human race; justice of the peace, or constable of his township, or notary public. Every man who had been called in former days to fill any one of these stations, and many more that might be enumerated, and, whoduring the conflict between the sections was clothed with the slightest responsibility or charged with the smallest official duty by those with whom his destiny and his home had fallen, was marked by the blight by indigibility, and like the leper of old it was made a crime for the people to again reach forth to him the hand of friendship, confidence, and support. Even the sacred instincts of human nature became disqualifications for office. The ties of kindred were made criminal under this new and revolting system. He who gave a cup of cold water and a crust of bread to his thirsty and faraished son, under arms for a cause which he believed to be right, and for which he was willing to die, was branded with dishonor and driven out from the councils of his countrymen. The loving mother who sheltered her weary and wounded boy, laid him in his own familiar bed at home once more, kissed his feverish lips, wiped away the gathering dews of death, and with a broken heart closed his dear eyes forever, was condemned for these acts of angelic ministering, and incurred the penalties of confiscation. He who dismounted and gave his horse to a brother in the moment of danger and close pursuit; the sister who wrought and sent clothing to him on the toilsome march; the maiden who prayed for her lover as he lay dying in the Wilderness or at Stone river, all fell under a common curse. Even the white-haired grandmother of four-score years, whose youthful husband perhaps was at the Cowpens, Eutaw Springs, and Yorktown, or, may be, fought under Jackson at New Orleans in the war of 1812, was deprived of her pension, that small morsel of bounty from an ungenerous Government, if her heart yearned or her aged hand was extended in sympathy to her children and her children's children on the plains of the South. A more sweeping and universal exclusion from all the benefits, rights, trusts, honors, enjoyments, liberties, and control of a Government was never enacted against a whole people, without respect to age or sex, in the annals of the race. The disgraceful disabilities imposed upon the Jews for nearly eighteen hundred years by the blind and bigoted nations of the earth were never more complete or appalling. Who denies a single statement I make? I challenge and defy contradiction. Every fact that I here proclaim is contained in the laws and in the recorded transactions of this Government, and will constitute, "after some time be past" and the passions of the present have subsided, the most frightfull and crushing arraignment which history ever summed up against a ruling political party.

Sir, shall a people thus bereft of every attribute of self-government be held responsible at the bar of public opinion, or at the judgment-seat of God, for the consequences which have overtaken them? If so, then the doctrine of free agency, in measuring the accountability of man is a snare and a delusion. As well might you go to the galley-slave and accuse him of the misrule and the tyrany which chained him to the oar. As well might you denounce the banished exile in the snows of Siberia for the despotism of the Russian Czar. With the same propriety you may visit the prisons of all lands and rail at their inmates through their iron-grated windows on account of the evil administration of the Governments to which they belong. The fierce and marauding highwayman with the same justice can accuse his victim, at whose head he presents the loaded pistol, of obstructing the public road. The story of the wolf with his false accusation against the lamb, and of the prompt manner in which he tore the helpless and unoffending thing to pieces for muddying the stream from which he drank, although it stood by the brink of the waters far below him, is familiar to us all, and is being reenacted at this time on a vast scale in American history. The stream has been defiled by the party now in power, and it rends and tears the unresisting people of the South for its own offense. This shall no longer be done without exposure and warning to the country. I call upon that party to assume its just responsibility and not to shrink back now from the bad eminence it has attained in the conduct of southern affairs. To it much has been given, and from it much is demanded. More than the ten talents have been intrusted to its care, and the present and future generations will exact a rigid account at its hands. But now, as the ghastly and hideous results of control in the South appear on every square mile of that oppressed and plundered section, it starts back with horror and disclaims its own offspring, the fruits of its own unholy rapine and lust. With pale lips and affrighted mien it ejaculates, "Thou cans't not say I did it." But the deeds which it has committed are of imperishable infamy, and they will not go down at its bidding, nor can all the waters of the ocean wash away their guilty stains.

Having, however, now shown where the absolute, thorough, and minute management of every interest, right, and privilege of the southern States and their people has been lodged during the whole process of pulling down and rebuilding their local governments, I shall proceed next to call upon the results which have followed.

Let the great State of Georgia speak first. The preparations which she underwent were prolonged, elaborate, and complete. The work of her purification was repeated at stated intervals until she was radiant and spotless in your eyes. One reconstruction did not suffice. You permitted her to stand up and start in her new career, but seeing some flaw in your own handiwork, you again destroyed and again reconstructed her State government. You clung to her throat, you battered her features out of shape and recognition, determined that your party should have undisputed possession and enjoyment of her offices, her honors, and her substance. Your success was complete. When did the armed conquerors ever fail when his foe was prostrate and unarmed? The victim in this instance was worthy of the contest by which she was handed over bound hand and foot to the rapacity of robbers. She was one of the immortal thirteen. Her soil had been made red and wet with the blood of the Revolution. But she contained what was far dearer to her despoilers than the relics of her fame. Her prolific and unbounded resources inflamed their desires. Nature designed Georgia for the wealthiest State in this Union. She embraces four degrees of latitude abounding with every variety of production known to the earth. Her borders contain fifty-eight thousand square miles; eleven thousand more than the State of New York, and twelve thousand more than the State of Pennsylvania. She has one hundred and thirty-seven counties. The ocean washes a hundred miles of her coast provided with harbors for the commerce of the world. Rivers mark her surface, and irrigate her fruitful valleys from the boundaries of Tennessee and North Carolina to the borders of Florida and the waves of the Atlantic. All this vast region is stored with the richest and choicest gifts of physical creation. The corn and the cotton reward the toiler of the soil, and coal and iron, tin, copper, and lead, and even the precious metals, gold and silver, in paying quantities, await the skill and the industry of the miner. This is not a picture of fancy. The statistics of her products even heighten the colors in which I have drawn it. Georgia was the fairest and most fertile field that ever excited the hungry cupidity of the political pirate and the official plunderer. She was full of those mighty substances out of which the taxes of a loboring people are always wrung by the grasping hand of licentious power. She was the most splendid quarry in all history for the vultures, the kites, and the carrion-crows that darken the air at the close of a terrible civil war, and whet their filthy beaks over the fallen; and they speedily settled down upon her in devouring flocks and droves.

Sir, let us refresh ourselves at this point with some reminiscences of the former history of Georgia, and in that way fix a basis for comparisons between her condition in the past and the present deplorable state of her affairs. When the calamities of war broke upon the country in 1861 she was free from debt. If she had any outstanding obligations at all, they were for merely nominal amounts. Her people felt none of the burdens of taxation. The expenses of her State government were almost wholly paid by the revenues of a railroad between Chattanooga and Atlanta, which was constructed and owned by the State. Taxes throughout all her widespread borders were trifles light as air. The burdens of government were easy upon her citizens. Her credit stood high wherever her name was mentioned; and when the war closed she was still free from indebtedness. If she had incurred any during the four years of strife, she was required by the Federal Government to repudiate it upon the advent of peace. Now look at her to-day, after six years and a half of supreme control by the Republican party. She had been a member of this Union more than seventy years when the war came, and found that she owed no man anything. Her rulers in the olden times doubtless had faults in common with the imperfections to which we belong, but larceny of the public money was not among them. You took her destiny into your hands a few brief years ago, incumbered by no liabilities, and you now present her, to the amazement and horror of the world, loaded with debts which reach the appalling sum of at least $50,000,000. A large portion of these debts are officially ascertained and stated, and the remainder are sufficiently well known to warrant the statement I make. The mind recoils, filled with wonder and indignation, in contemplating this fearful and gigantic crime. It had no parallel in the annals of all the nations and the ages of mankind until the ascendency of the Republican party and its inauguration of State governments in the South. Now all the seven vials of the Apocalypse have been opened on that great and beautiful, but unhappy region; and the crime against Georgia is but one of many others of kindred magnitude inflicted by the same party on other States.

The authors of this stupendous burden, however, are not even entitled to the benefit of the full time since the incoming of peace for its creation. It was mainly the work of only about three years. In 1868, a year more fatal to the interests of the people of that State than the scourge of pestilence, war, or famine, the most venal and abandoned body of men ever known outside of the boundaries of penal colonies, State prisons, or southern reconstruction, was chosen as the legislature of Georgia; not by the people, but by virtue of the system which you enacted and put in force. It contained a large majority of your political adherents, men who vote your ticket, support your candidates, and with whom you embrace and affiliate on all political occasions. They were the leaders and the representatives of the Republican party.

With them, too, came into office one who speedily secured a national reputation, and became a controlling power in your national councils. At one time Rufus B. Bullock dictated the legislation of Congress and the actions of the Executive in regard to the great and ancient Commonwealth that was cursed by his presence. It was his potent finger that pointed out the pathway which led to your second assault upon her State government; and it was his voice and his presence in and about these Halls that commanded and cheered you on to the breach. He was mentioned in many quarters as the probable candidate of his party for that exalted place now held by a distinguished citizen of my own State, the second highest in the gift of the American people. He was a successful, conspicuous, and brilliant specimen of your system. His advent into Georgia was as the agent of some express company. He had no permanent interests there. I have been reliably informed that his poll was his entire tax when he was elected Governor. He neither knew nor cared for the people or their wants. He was there as an alien and a stranger, spying out the possessions of a land that was at his mercy, and embracing every opportunity to seize them. He is now a fugitive from justice, a proclaimed and confessed criminal, with stolen millions in his hands. He went into the South on that wave of reconstruction which bore so many eager, hungry, and inhuman sharks in quest of prey; and, having in a few short years glutted his savage and ravenous maw, he now retires into the deep waters of the North to escape punishment on the one hand, and to enjoy the comforts of his plunder on the other.

With such a Governor and such a Legislature in full and perfect sympathy and harmony with each other, morally and politically, a career of villainy at once opened on the soil of Georgia, which will go down to posterity without a peer or a rival in the evil and infamous administrations of the world.

The official existence of the Legislature lasted two years, commencing in November of 1868. The Governor was elected for a term of four years, and served three before he absconded with his guilty gains. Pirates have been known to land upon beautiful islands of the sea, and with cutlass, dirk, and pistol proclaim a government, pillage and murder their inhabitants, and from the shelter of their harbors sally forth on all the unarmed commerce that the winds and the waves brought near them. Bandits have been known to rule over the secluded wilds and fastnesses of mountain ranges, and with bloody hands extort enormous ransoms for their prisoners; but the pirate and the bandit have not been worse or blacker in their spheres than the Republican Legislature and the Republican Governor of whom I am speaking, were in theirs.

Sir, I hold in my hand the official statistics on which I make this charge. The reports of the comptrollers general of Georgia show that for eight years, commencing with 1855 and ending with 1862, there was expended for the pay of members and officers of all her legislatures during that entire period the sum of $866,385.53. This is the record of her administration under the management of her own citizens. During the two years' existence of the Republican Legislature elected in 1868 the report of the comptroller general shows that there was expended for the pay of its members and officers the startling sum of $979,055, only a fraction less than $1,000,000. One Legislature is thus discovered to have cost $112,669.47 more than the Legislatures of eight previous years in the single matter of its own expenses. There has been no increase in the number of members. On the contrary, there are fewer now than under the former apportionment.

In earlier times the clerk hire of the Legislatures of that State did not average over $10,000 per annum. That item alone reached the sum of $125,000 for the one Legislature whose conduct I am discussing; more than equal to the expenditures on that account of any ten years of the previous history of Georgia. Her General Assembly consists of one hundred and seventy-five representatives and forty-four senators, making two hundred and nineteen, taking both branches together. The record discloses one hundred and four clerks in the employ of this body while the Republican party had the ascendency there. One clerk for every two legislators is a spectacle which I commend to the consideration of the American tax-payer and voter everywhere. Who can doubt that such a body was organized for the purposes of robbery and extortion? There is another high-handed outrage, however, in connection with the payment of its members and officers which surpasses the deeds of even a professional highwayman. The children of the State did not escape. By the constitution of Georgia the poll-tax of its people is made a part of the Common-school fund, and set aside as sacred to the cause of education. Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars had accrued from this source when the ill-omened Legislature of 1868 convened. Before it finally adjourned this whole amount provided for the cause of learning and human progress was swept away. Not a single dollar was left. An appropriation for their own expenses placed it all in the pockets of the members, clerks, and other officials. They took this money, belonging to children white and black, as pay for their own base services in the cause of universal destruction, bankruptcy, and misery. They robbed the rising generation of both races, deprived them of school-houses and seminaries, and left them to grope their own unaided way out of the realms of ignorance.

The hand of the spoliator at times in the history of the world has taken consecrated vessels from the altar and plundered the sanctuary of God. Even the hallowed precincts of the grave have sometimes been invaded and the coffin rifled of its contents; but human villainy has sounded no lower depth than was here fathomed, in stealing the very books of knowledge from the youth of the land.

Having given these evidences of inherent depravity, this most memorable Legislature proceeded naturally to its work of more gigantic peculation, fraud, and corruption. The limits of my time on this floor will permit me to bring forward only a few of its deeds, but like the specimen ore of the mines, they will satisfy the explorer that strain, veins, lodes, and layers of rascality lie under the surface beyond. The treasurer of Georgia, in his recent report, informs the public that prior to the year 1868, and since reconstruction commenced, there were issued in State bonds $5,912,500. He further states that he has ascertained the amount of $13,756,000 to have been issued since the year 1868, and then proceeds to say:

"Governor Bullock had other large amounts under the same act engrossed and sent him. But this office does not know what has become of them."

The treasurer has pushed his discoveries to nearly twenty millions, and then finds that large amounts of other bonds have been issued which are not registered, and which are now in unknown hands. The extent of these floating, vagrant liabilities may fairly be estimated by the character and conduct of those who created them. Let us, however, examine one transaction which will serve as a key to the whole history of that Legislature. A charter was granted to construct what was to be known as the Albany and Brunswick railroad, a distance of two hundred and forty-five miles. For this work the Governor was authorized to issue the bonds of the State to the extent of $23,000 per mile, making a subsidy in money to one railroad corporation of $5,639,000. The bonds have been issued, put upon the market, the money realized for them, and their redemption will fall upon the tax-payers of the State. In the mean time the road has not been built, and the proceeds of these bonds have gone into the coffers of private individuals. This fact is not disputed; it stands confessed; and no words of mine can darken the hues of its infamy or increase the horror and indignation with which it will be regarded by the American people.

Other railroad schemes followed in rapid succession as the easiest method of plunder. The Macon and Brunswick railroad, the South Georgia and Florida railroad, the Cartersville and Van West railroad, the Georgia air-line railroad, the Cherokee railroad, the Alabama and Chattanooga railroad, and many others, were all made the recipients of subsidies from the State, by which uncounted millions were stolen from the tax-payers. The traces of vast sums of squandered money can be found on every hand, except upon the railroad lines themselves, in whose names the work of fraud and plunder was conducted.

But while the Legislature of Georgia was thus engaged in its unparalleled career of crime, the Governor in his sphere was also busy, and by his individual deeds proclaimed to the world that a perfect harmony, not only of political faith but of official practices, prevailed between the executive and legislative branches of the State government. He ranged in his peculations from the smallest to the greatest objects and amounts; from the petit to the grand larcenies of this new era of felonies. From a bill of $76,432.95 paid for extra printing to partisan newspapers without warrant of law and without consideration in work actually performed, up to the fraudulent issue of State bonds by the million, nothing seems to have been too small or too great to escape his eager eye or his rapacious hand. He has left the impress of his grasp everywhere. But his exploits in connection with the State railroad will more especially be remembered by the people of Georgia. This road, as I have heretofore stated, was built by the State of Georgia nearly twenty years ago, from the city of Atlanta to Chattanooga. It connects the regions of the Tennessee river and the lines of travel descending through them from the North with the cotton belt of the South, and with the railroad routes which come up through it and concentrate at Atlanta. It is one hundred and thirty-seven miles long, and there is not a road of equal length on this continent which is more important in its trade and connections, or which is more valuable to its owners under an honest and competent management. We have seen that before the war its proceeds paid into the treasury almost defrayed the entire expenses of the State government, and in an official report made July 1, 1867, Colonel Jones, the treasurer of the State, and who had for eight years received the earnings of this noble public work, estimated its net products for the following year at $600,000.

In February, 1870, Governor Bullock appointed one Foster Blodgett, recently a claimant for a seat in the United States Senate, superintendent of this road. He held that position eleven months. During the entire term of superintendency he paid into the State treasury only the sum of $45,000; less than the net proceeds of one month before he took the place. The repairs which the ravages of war had made necessary had been completed at a heavy expense under the administration of Governor Jenkins. The road was in good condition, and but few expenditures outside of the regular course of business were needed when Blodgett assumed his ruinous control. Its freight and travel were greater than ever before, and yet its earnings, as accounted for, were comparatively nothing. In 1867 we find it paying all expenses and yielding besides $50,000 per month. At the same rate there are $500,000 now retained in the hands of Blodgett and his accomplices. What answer can be made to this? Will any one pretend that such a vast sum was properly expended in equipping a road already equipped; in repairing a road already repaired, in stocking a road already stocked? I find one item of expense which may, however, indicate the character of them all. Twenty-one thousand dollars were paid as lawyers' fees to partisan favorites for alleged legal services in behalf of this peaceable corporation during these disastrous eleven months of its existence. It might perhaps more properly be said that there was a division of a general plunder under the head of expenses incurred. But the work of spoliation did not stop with the close of Blodgett's management. A law was obtained from the Legislature of which I have spoken, authorizing the road to be leased in the interest of Bullock and his friends. Under that law it has been leased for $25,000 per month, about one half of its real value. One of the lessees under this most valuable contract is a member of the present Cabinet, and was so when the lease was made; and another is a distinguished Republican member of the other branch of Congress.

Sir, there was but one thing more to be done by this shameless adventurer whom your policy had made Governor of Georgia against the consent of her people. He completed his record and finished his work by corrupting the hannels of justice. He rendered the courts powerless to enforce the laws and punish criminals. The emissaries of convicted felons crowded his ante-chambers and trafficked with him for his pardoning power. The record shows that the verdicts of juries were thus wiped out, the doors of the prisons opened, and the guilty turned loose to prey again upon the peace of society to an extent never before known in American history. He pardoned three hundred and forty-six offenders against the law, out of four hundred and twenty-six who made application to him! His amnesty for crime was almost universal. Indeed, his zeal in behalf of those under indictment was so great that his grace and clemency was often interposed before the trial of the culprit. He granted seven pardons in advance of trial to one man in the county of Warren who pleaded them to seven separate indictments when he was arrested and brought into court. This special object of favor is one J. C. Norris, who haunts committee-rooms and swears on all occasions to fabulous outrages and the imperfect administration of the law in the South. As a spared monument of Bullock's mercy, with manifold villainies unatoned for, he is always to be seen lurking around investigating committees, and pouring into their ears the black and concentrated malice of an apostate against a people whom he hates because he has betrayed.

Other instances like this might be cited, but enough is here shown to account for even greater disturbances than any that have taken place in Georgia. The confidence of all classes in the supremacy of the law was destroyed. They saw the will of one unscrupulous man supplant all its authority. It afforded them no security for life or property when its most solemn decisions were set aside every day in the year. Its uplifted hand was arrested in the court-room before their indignant gaze, and the judicial blow was averted from the guilty head of the law-breaker at the bar. If the violence of the mob thereupon ensued, the curse came from those who were charged with the execution of the laws, and who, instead of doing their duty, interposed to shield villains both before and after their conviction. If this is not the true philosophy of mankind, I have studied its motives and its conduct all in vain.

And now, Mr. Speaker, at this point I must take leave of the State of Georgia, her plundered treasury, her oppressed taxpayers, her railroad schemes of robbery, her squandered school funds, and her mocked, insulted, and baffled courts of justice. Other impoverished fields cry to us in piteous tones for redress, and have long cried in vain. Let us at least for a few moments hearken to the story of each one's woes, whether we are willing to enter into righteous judgment with them or not.

I turn to South Carolina, once the proud land of Marion and Sumpter, now the most wretched State that the sun shines on in its course through the heavens. There is no form of ruin to which she has not fallen a prey; no curse with which she has not been baptised; no cup of humiliation and suffering her people have not drained to the dregs. I am told that disorder has reigned in some counties within her borders, and we behold martial law, worse than the lawless tyranny of the Dark Ages, ravaging her firesides and scattering her households. Bad governments are fruitful of such calamitious results. History has taught this lesson in every age. The wickedness of corrup rulers breeds outbreaks among citizens. How has South Carolina been governed? The Republican party has held undisputed sway there every hour since the overthrow of the rebellion. Her entire delegation in both branches of Congress belong to the party now in power. Her State officers and Legislatures, of all colors, have been of the same political faith. What are their works? What trophies of progress and civilization do they bring to propitiate the judgment of the world? Not one good deed adorns the polluted pages of their record. At the close of the war the valid debt of the State amounted to $5,000,000. A committee of investigation, in an official report made December 26, 1871, but a few weeks ago say:

"In regard to the State debt the committee declare they cannot believe other than the fearful truth which stares us in the face that the bonds and stocks printed by the American Bank Note Company, $22,540,000, represent the liabilities of the State, for which the faith and credit of the State, however unlawfully procured, has been pledged for payment. The contingent liability incurred by railroad indorsements swells the total up to nearly twenty-nine million dollars."

Add to this $10,000,000 more that is disputed as fraudulent and we have an increase of $34,000,000 in the debt of the State since it fell into the hands of its present destroyers. All the lands in South Carolina are not worth over $55,000,000; showing that more than every alternate acre is now absorbed by her crushing and frightful indebtedness. If she was sold at public auction for two thirds her appraised value she would scarcely more than meet the demands that have been accrated against her within less than seven years. The New York *Tribune* of December 19, 1871, announces that over six million dollars of her bonds have been fraudulently issued by her Republican Governor; but no mode by which the toiling tax-payer can escape their payment is pointed out to him. Taxation for the support of a good government often becomes a grievous burden, but when it springs directly and avowedly from fraud and forgery, it is a curse intolerable and not to be borne.

The New York *Tribune* also states that one ignorant and mongrel General Assembly of South Carolina drew from the Treasury the enormous amount of $583,651 14, to defray its own expenses for one session, and incurred a debt of $91,500 besides for furniture for the State House which it so foully disgraced. A session of the