

The North Carolina Standard.

THOMAS LORING,

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE UNION OF THE STATES—THEY "MUST BE PRESERVED."

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SPEECH OF MR. STRANGE, OF NORTH CAROLINA,

In Senate, Thursday, February 27, 1840—On the assumption, by the Federal Government, of the debts of the States, and in reply to Messrs. Clay and Crittenden.

MR. PRESIDENT: I may say with honest pride—but with much more sincerity than he did, "I do repent me that I did not do it." I do most sincerely regret the rashness which has imposed upon myself a task to which my state of health is so inadequate—the undertaking to address the Senate upon a subject which opens and has already afforded so wide a field of debate. But the good humored assaults made upon me on yesterday by the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. Crittenden,] excited me to a degree that made me unmindful, for the time, of my weakness. Perhaps he brought me somewhat into the state of the Prince of Denmark when witnessing the extravagances of Laertes over the grave of his sister, he exclaimed, "Nay, an thou'lt mouth, I'll rant as well as thou." His prophetic visions produced a correspondent delirium in myself, and tempted me to efforts to out-prophesy him. Time must, as in other cases disclose whether the four hundred who foretold success to Ahab at Ramoth Gilead, or Micaiah the son of Ihab, who prognosticated defeat, are the truer prophets.

Neither of us, I fear, can boast much of unctious from above; and while it is forbidden to us to look even upon the shadows of coming events, we must be content to speculate by the pale light of reason, and to draw from the experience of the past, analogical deductions for the future.

When I said to the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Crittenden] on yesterday, that I differed from him with less regret than I did with the Senator from Pennsylvania, [Mr. Buchanan,] I said it in no spirit of unkindness; indeed, had I done so, I should have misrepresented my own feelings. I am not one of those who cannot do justice to a political opponent. No one, I am sure, within this chamber, listens to that Senator with more pleasure than myself; no one more admires the dexterity with which he wields his blade, although myself may sometimes feel the keenness of its edge. But I cannot but regret that the same sagacity and skill with which he wields it are not displayed in the selection of the cause in which to draw it. I should be happy to fight upon the same side with the Senator from Kentucky, did not sad experience convince me that if I ever do so, I must be content to take the wrong one.

As usual, the debate upon the report and resolutions submitted by the chairman of the Select Committee, the Senator from Tennessee, [Mr. Grundy,] has taken a very discursive range, and the whole field of party strife has been traversed as suited the tastes of the various speakers. Upon its first introduction, the report was met by the most extraordinary fusillade ever witnessed in this chamber, and the vigor of the attack plainly indicated the heart cherished value of the object against which the report and resolutions were leveled. And yet the resolutions contain four simple propositions, which the report sustains by able and unanswerable arguments. The first three of these propositions are:

1. Resolved, That the assumption, directly or indirectly, by the General Government, of the debts which have been, or may be contracted by the State for local objects or State purposes, would be unjust, both to the States and to the people.

2. Resolved, That such assumption would be highly inexpedient, and dangerous to the union of the States.

3. Resolved, That such assumption would be wholly unauthorized by, and in violation of, the Constitution of the United States, and utterly repugnant to all the objects and purposes for which the Federal Union was formed.

Neither of these propositions had any one the temerity openly to question, and with all the fearlessness ascribed by the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Crittenden] to American Senators, in the discharge of official duty, and justly, as I trust, no one here has bold enough to dispute the truth of either of them.

But it is said their assertion in this form, and at this time, is irregular, unnecessary, and impolitic. Irregular, because no legislative action is proposed, either by the report or the resolutions. This is an extraordinary objection to come from a party who passed the resolution, condemnatory of General Jackson, through this body, by acclamation. It is true that resolution was subsequently expunged, but the ground of its expunction was not that it contemplated no legislative action. But it is true, that our duty here is confined to the mere passage of laws?—Does the steering of the vessel of State depend exclusively upon the passage of laws? And if not, is Congress to leave that steering to other hands, and take no thought of the direction in which the vessel is tending? If, from the look out point which it occupies, it beholds rocks and shoals, and whirlpools, and quicksands lying before her, is no warning voice to be lifted up? Can there be a doubt that this is one of the most important duties which our constituents expect us to perform; that we should make diligent use of all the talents which God has given us, and of the advantages of our position, to search out political truth, keep it steadily in view, and

proclaim it to our fellow-citizens? Does not the whole usage of the nation prove it to be so? In my opinion, sir, were we to neglect this, we should neglect the most important half of our duty. The report and resolutions then are not irregular, unless, as is further contended, they are unnecessary.

They are denounced as unnecessary because the assumption of the State debts by the General Government has never been contemplated by any one. Who that has looked upon the signs of the times can feel this security? Are not the newspapers of a certain class full of suggestions upon this subject, and have not the circulars of bankers been put forth indicating its propriety and even its necessity? But the Senator from Kentucky, who addressed us some days ago, [Mr. Clay,] demands, with an appearance of scorn, if we are to pay any attention to newspaper suggestions or bank circulars? I answer, unhesitatingly, yes. He asks if our action is to be at all affected by them? Again I answer yes. The day has gone by when the press is nothing, or money kings are to be despised.—The latter great personages plant their feet upon the necks of those who control empires. How long has it been since the stamp of a banker's foot and his declaration that, if a certain war was declared, he would not be seen again for many months upon "change, had an important bearing upon the measures of one of the first powers in Europe? This happened on the other side the Atlantic; but are we without similar experience on this? Is it for us, yet panting after a struggle with one of these mammoth powers, to affect to despise them? Is it for us, who have lately witnessed bulletins and proclamations and letters issued from the marble palace, as the ocean is stirred up by the breath of the storm, to talk about being regardless of bankers circulars? And when we hear the murmur of the coming tornado, are we to wait until it strikes us before we prepare ourselves to meet it in safety? When we see the opiates preparing for the people, and the chains being forged which are to bind them in endless slavery, is it our duty to wait until the drugs have been administered and the chains fastened not only upon their limbs, but around their hearts, till they are bound to the earth, manacled and fettered, before we warn them of their danger? No one contemplates assuming the State debts by the General Government! Did not the Senator from Kentucky, who addressed us the other day, [Mr. Clay,] pour forth notes of lamentation over the hapless condition of the States, pressed down with debt? One might have almost fancied them the plaintive exclamations of the poetic King of Israel over the untimely fate of his son Absalom. Did he not speak of the intimate relationship existing between the States and the General Government? Were not the States commended to our sympathy, and spoken of as bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh? That if one suffers, all partake of the suffering? &c. And why was all this? From the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. Why speak to us of the woes of the States, and the sympathy due to them, if we were not expected to bring relief? Do men spend their breath in detailing their grievances, and appealing to the pity of those from whom they expect nothing? A politician, as old, and experienced, and skillful, as the Senator from Kentucky, speaks not without an object; and to me, the inference is clear, that, like leaven, his words are cast into the mass to create a ferment in the public mind until it throws out some food for the cravings of the States, or rather of the British bankers. The objection, then, that these resolutions were unnecessary, is as groundless as the one that they are irregular.

And this is further conclusively proven by the third objection brought against them, to wit, that they are impolitic. How impolitic? Because, forsooth, they will injure the credit of the States. It cannot be the mere declaration that the States owe so much money that can injure their credit, because that was before a matter of public notoriety. The debts of Governments, and especially free Governments, can never be a secret to any one who desires to know the truth. They are contracted in the face of day, and are evidenced by records continually spread open in the broad light of the sun. What, then, is the discrediting matter? It is the declaration that this Government will not assume to pay them. But if it was known and believed before that this Government would not assume to pay them; if the conviction was firm and unwavering, would a declaration to that effect operate in any way upon any mind? Surely not. Suppose this Government were to declare that it would not assume to pay the debt of Great Britain; would that effect the credit of Great Britain? No!—And no one imagines that it would. Why?—Because the wildest visionary that ever lived, never for a moment imagined that the Government of the United States would assume the British debt. If, then, the public mind on both sides of the Atlantic were equally clear of the impression that the General Government would assume the debts of the States, as that it would assume the debts of Great Britain, could the credit of the States be any more affected by the declaration that she will not assume their debts, than would be the credit of Great Britain by a similar declaration? Surely not. The argument, then, that the credit of the States will be affected by the declaration that the General Government will not assume their debts, must be founded upon the supposition that such an expectation exists somewhere. Now, as it is admitted on the other side that no one ought to have the folly to contend for such an assumption, it follows that such an expectation is erroneous.—And is it right and just to suffer any one to remain under it? If no one entertains this expectation, the declaration that it is erroneous is at least harmless; and if any one does entertain it, it is but just to apprise them of their error.

But the secret that such an impression does exist somewhere, and the true origin of that impression, are disclosed farther by a metaphor resorted to by the opponents of these resolutions to show their impolicy. They speak of this Government being the father, and the States the children. From this figure the principle of consolidation is distinctly seen peeping out, and its fallacy ought to be at once exposed. Does the son beget the father, or the father the son? Is the procreator or the offspring anterior in existence? There can be but one answer to these questions. Now as the States made the General Government, & not the General Government the State Governments, and as the State Govern-

ments existed for years before the General Government, the General Government cannot be the father of the State Governments. But waiving the correctness of the figure for the present, for the sake of argument let it be conceded that the relationship does exist as supposed. Assuming this, the argument on the other side is that it is impolitic and unkind for a father to proclaim the indebtedness of his children, and declare in advance that he will not assume their debts. But in this argument two important facts are overlooked in the case of the particular family spoken of viz: in the first place that the indebtedness of the children is known to every one before the father speaks, and in the next place that the father cannot speak to his children without all the world hearing him. The question then arises whether such a father, knowing that his children were largely indebted, and that designing persons were endeavoring to persuade them that it was the duty of the father and the interest of the whole family that he should assume their debts, while he himself firmly believed that such a step would be ruinous to all, and unjust to many branches of it, he ought not to warn his children against listening to pernicious counsels—counsels tending to render them indolent and extravagant—and distinctly to apprise them that, according to his views of justice, expediency, and the family relationship, such a thing was totally inadmissible? So much for the first three resolutions.

4. Resolved, That to set apart the public lands or the revenues arising therefrom, for the before-mentioned purposes, would be equally unjust, inexpedient, and unconstitutional.

And here the gentlemen on the other side make their stand and fight against the resolution, and insist that it is both constitutional, just, and expedient, to distribute the proceeds of the public lands among the States. On all these points I take issue. 1. I say it is unconstitutional.—Why? I assume it as a political axiom, disputed by no one, that this Government has no power to raise money for any other purposes than those set forth in the Constitution which gave that Government existence. I assume further, what I suppose no one will question, that distribution among the States is not one of those purposes. Does it not follow, as an inevitable conclusion of right reason, that whatever might be the constitutional power of Congress over a fund on hand, which it was evident could never be absorbed in the proper outlay of the Government, it would be a manifest breach of all constitutional trust to make such a distribution when the effect would be to create a necessity for raising further sums by taxation to supply the place of those so diverted by distribution?

But I understood the Senator from Kentucky who addressed us the other day, [Mr. Clay,] to consider a portion of these lands as a specific trust to be applied to certain purposes distinctly pointed out in the deeds of cession.

The following is the language used in the cession made by the State of Virginia, on the first day of March, seventeen hundred and eighty-four, to wit: "That all the lands within the territory so ceded to the United States, and not reserved or appropriated to any of the before-mentioned purposes, or disposed of in bounties to the officers and soldiers of the American army, shall be considered as a common fund, for the use and benefit of such of the United States as have become, or shall become, members of the Confederation or Federal alliance of said States, Virginia inclusive, according to the usual respective proportions in the general charge and expenditure, and shall be faithfully and bona fide disposed of for that purpose, and for no other use or purpose whatsoever."

The language used in the deeds of other States is substantially the same. It is very obvious that distribution is not one of the objects of the trust, or it would have been set forth. The object, after certain reservations, is one, and that is "to be a common fund for the use and benefit of all the States, according to the usual respective proportions in the general charge and expenditure." It is well known that, at this time, our Federal Constitution had not been adopted, and that each State contributed by taxing and collecting from her own citizens so much to the general charge as Congress declared to be her quota. The object of the trust declared in relation to the public lands, was then manifest—that a proportion equal to what each State contributed to the general charge and expenditure, of the proceeds of the public lands, was to be applied towards her quota of such charge and expenditure, and diminished to that extent her necessity for self-taxation. The words "use and benefit" exclude the idea of an actual surrender to the States; but simply an application by a trustee to the particular use declared. And as if to exclude any possibility of mistake, the deed goes on to declare that it shall be faithfully and bona fide, (appropriate words as applicable to a servant or trustee,) disposed of for that purpose, and no other use or purpose whatsoever. Nothing can be more specific and exclusive of every other use and purpose than contribution to the general charge and expenditure.

Thus matters stood anterior to the adoption of the Federal Constitution. But I understood the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. Clay,] to say that, after that, the execution of the trust became impossible, and the trust fund consequently resulted to the original grantors. That the States no longer contributed, by self-taxation, their proportions to the general charge and expenditure; but the levy of taxes was made by the General Government through impositions upon the country at large, and the measure of application, and the subjects of application were thereby annihilated. It is true that in practice, after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, the States were no more called on to contribute their proportions of the public charge and expenditure, but this was a mere practical operation. Potentially, both the objects and measure of the application of the proceeds of the public lands, were preserved in the Constitution. In the first article, second section, and third clause of the Federal Constitution, it is declared:

"Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, etc."

The whole revenue, then, if thought expedient, might be raised by direct taxation, (and would probably be the most equitable mode,) and if so raised, clearly the proceeds of the public lands ought, according to the terms of cession, to be applied in aid of the States in their respec-

tive proportions, to lighten the burden of direct taxation upon each. Then both the object of application and the measure of proportion would stand out in bold relief. Reasons of policy and convenience have induced the States to prefer taxation by imposts to direct taxation, but in neither form do they desire to be taxed beyond the public necessities; and to no farther extent, in either form, has power been conferred on Congress to impose taxes, and in neither form has Congress the right to impose farther taxes, while a fund remains on hand applicable to the public expenditures. The public lands, then, must be used to lighten the burden of taxation, in whatever form taxation is levied. Whether the fact be strictly so or not, taxation by imposts is submitted to, because it is supposed to approximate the same proportion in contribution by the respective States, with direct taxation. The trust, therefore, upon which the public lands were held, stands in its full force, and unchanged in its nature and objects. This is conclusively shown by the striking facts, that although the Federal Constitution went into operation in March, 1789, and North Carolina made her cession in December of that year, nine months after, and Georgia made hers in 1802, about thirteen years after the Federal Constitution went into operation, both these States preserved substantially the language used in the Virginia deed of cession, which, it is now contended, could then have no operative meaning, and thereby declared trusts which it was obvious, at the time they were declared, could never be executed. This is altogether too absurd to be supposed; and it must necessarily follow that it was well understood that the adoption of the Federal Constitution produced no change in the operation of these grants. This is further confirmed by the second clause of the third section of the fourth article of the Constitution, which declares that:

"The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory, or other property belonging to the United States."

Now what territory was there belonging to the United States, other than the lands ceded by the States? And there is no evidence that any other territory, which could be called property of the United States, was in contemplation. So far from it, purchases of territory, since made, have been seriously questioned as breaches of the Constitution. It follows, then, that these public lands were deemed the property of the United States by the framers of the Constitution, and not that the trust had resulted for the want of power to execute it. It appears, then, that Congress holds this fund under the same trusts that it does other property of the United States; and the question recurs whether, if Congress cannot constitutionally raise money for distribution among the States, she can do so indirectly, by applying the money which she holds for the purposes of the Government, to distribution among the States, and thereby create a necessity for raising other money for those purposes to which the fund distributed ought to have been applied? Every fair mind furnishes a ready answer to this question.

And is it not equally obvious, that while the Government continues in operation, such must be the effect of every distribution, unless we can suppose the improbable (and certainly not now existing) case of the General Government holding funded debts or stocks yielding an annual interest sufficient to defray its current expenses. The enlightened and able Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. CALHOUN,] in his argument on the expediency of this measure, has put the case of the present state of the Treasury and the prospective revenue, showing that an abstraction of the proceeds of the public lands must render an increase of the tariff inevitable. But is it not equally apparent that if, as he and I both think, we have no right to lay a tariff for any other purpose than revenue, a distribution of money in the Treasury, which would have the effect of rendering a reduction of the tariff impracticable, would have the effect of causing taxation to supply money which had been distributed. I thus arrive at the conclusion, that a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands as far transcends the constitutional trust powers of Congress as the assumption of the State debts, a measure from the advocacy of which, as before stated, every body shrinks.

2. Nor is the injustice of such distribution less apparent. The truth is, the only thing which recommends it to the favor of any one is its justice. What possible inducement could twenty-six gentlemen have to contribute a sum, to be immediately divided among them in the same proportions in which they had contributed?—None. Still less would they be in favor of such a measure, if they were required to pay some one for collecting and distributing the money.—But if the distribution were to be in some different ratio from that in which the contribution had been made, then would it be inevitable that some of the parties must withdraw more than they contributed, and, consequently, others less.—This might commend the arrangement to the favor of those who were to be gainers by the operation; and if it were uncertain which of the parties were to be the gainers, the gambling spirit to which every man is more or less subject, would probably commend it to the favor of all. But, yet the injustice of the scheme is apparent to every one; and if the distributor were authorized to obtain imperceptibly from the pockets of the twenty-six gentlemen sums of money, according to the cost of what each might eat, drink and wear, and then to divide the money per capita, would not the inequality of the plan shock a very blunt sense of justice?

3. As to the inexpediency of the distribution objected to by the resolution, what can any man say, after the luminous and forcible portraiture made of its effects, a few days ago, by the Senator from South Carolina? It is a vast subject, and I will not overtask myself and the patience of the Senate by going into it. I leave it as left by the Senator from South Carolina. I will not attempt to gild a sunbeam.

And here, sir, the subject would seem naturally to close; but the memory of man runneth not to the contrary of the practice on this floor of making every question of any magnitude to bear upon the strife of party raging in this land. Be it so; and if gentlemen will force them upon us, I, for one, am not for shrinking from such contests. I, for one, have such confidence in my political principles, as to be willing to see

them sifted and examined at all times and in all places—ay, and to believe, too, that they can bear some misrepresentation, without endangering greatly their perpetuity.

"Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again—
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshippers."

So may error ever perish, and, among other errors, those of Harrisonian Federalism.

The great difficulty of the cause to which I belong, in our party strife, is the preservation of our own banner. Our adversaries are ever striving to throw matters into confusion, and, taking advantage of the tumult, to rob us of our banner, and to thrust theirs into our unwilling grasp. Our names are seized upon, and appropriated to themselves, and others fixed upon us, by which our forefathers never baptized us. Thus occasioned are our own brethren and kindred, men of the same family, and sharing with us in the common inheritance of sound faith, made for a time to fight against us; and mischief is perpetrated, difficult to repair, for it is not every man "who knows the true price by instinct," like the fat knight, of facetious memory.

I do not know a better service that a man can do to his country, than to hold forth, with a strong arm, to the public view, the glorious Democratic banner, in its unadorned simplicity, with its plain, pithy, intelligible mottoes. The theory of Government, which should be the plainest thing on earth, has been by artifice converted into a puzzle-fool, and its simple purposes mystified and defeated. The happiness of man, through its tendencies to render him virtuous, is its sole office, if it has any worth the trouble and expense that it costs. Its systems are various, but they may be reduced to two classes: that which addresses the reason of man, and withholds from him temptations to be vicious, and that which seeks to control him by his selfish passions, his hopes, his fears, his desire of gain. Very few Governments have been based upon the former principles—the mass have adopted the latter. Perhaps the earliest and rudest form of Government in which reason was overlooked, was that in which priestcraft usurped the control of every thing, and a god or gods supposed to be speaking through the mouths of men, dictated alike to individuals and nations.—The most rigid exactions were made of the masses of mankind, and the most grinding oppressions imposed upon them, that the favored few might enjoy wealth and ease, and honor and renown. The treasures of the earth and of the heart were alike wrung from their possessors, that the dominion of their oppressors might be absolute and unquestioned. Exactions were sometimes carried so far as to demand the fruit of the body to appease imaginary deities for imaginary sins, and the products of the toil of millions were surrendered, that a few might luxuriate in exhaustless abundance, and uninterrupted ease. This has been happily styled by the celebrated John Taylor, whom I so much delight to admire and quote, the age of Jupiter; he among the heathen gods who was most impetuous and extensive in his sway. But his tyranny became so oppressive, that mankind could no longer endure it, and bold spirits penetrated his temples, and discovered and exposed the frauds of his priests.

Next came the age of Mars, and heroes, clad in steel, controlled mankind. He is among the most noble of the heathen gods, and has about him a generosity of character which disdains to trample on the weak and defenceless, and scatters with liberality what he gathers by his power.—Still he appeared not to the reason of mankind, but controlled them, through their fears, with the rustling banner and the bristling steel. After him came Mercury, establishing dominion by addressing himself, through fraud and artifice, to the cupidity of mankind, or humbling them into submission by reducing them to poverty. Finally, combinations were formed among all these powers, and the science of Government became complex and mysterious. It was supposed that there was no other way of correcting the evils, or rather to render them tolerable, incident to these principles of Government, than to resort to checks and balances, and to make the vices and passions of one man restrain the vices and passions of another. When Government became a mystery, it was supposed that it admitted out of three simple forms, viz: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, and that all Governments consisted of one or more of these elements, controlled by one another, or a combination of two or three, of the heathen deities, before mentioned.

Such was the state of things in the old world, but our sagacious forefathers saw the error of principles on which those Governments were based, and the battles of our Revolution were fought, that the whole heathen Pantheon might be dethroned with its cumbersome and expensive machinery, and that Governments might be established in the new world, formed upon moral principles. That man might be restored to his natural dignity—a self-governing being, disenthrallled from the dominion of passions, and yielding to the sway of reason and conscience—a reason and conscience on whose tablets are written, by the finger of God himself, precious and noble truths, which can never be erased, but are refreshed by revelation from day to day. They believed that man retains much of the original image of his Maker; that something of His purity is enshrined in the breast of woman; that mercy, that most interesting of His attributes, beams forth from her eye in rays of tenderness, or gently distils in drops of sympathy. That in the bosom of man His sterner attribute of justice has a deep abiding place. Such were the principles upon which our beautiful system of governments were based. Corruption was excluded by avoiding accumulations of power; justice secured by establishing a perfect equality of rights among men; and happiness placed within the reach of all, by opening a fair field for virtue, and talent, and industry, to reap their harvest, while vice, and ignorance, and stupidity, and indolence, were left to that curse to which a righteous Providence has seen fit to expose them.

But the devil came, as he has ever done to each earthly paradise, disguised as an angel of light, or in some unobtrusive form, little calculated to excite the alarm of those whose destruction he meditates. Connote with our Constitution were those who held to the old belief that honest disinterested reason was an unsafe gov-

ernor, and that Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury— one, or all three, must be restored—hence an established religion, standing armies, vast navies, exclusive privileges and monopolies, and whole hosts of eodemany dependants upon the labor of others, had all their advocates. In all this we perceive what constitute the warring elements of party in our land. But constant association, even in strife, will assimilate men to each other, and one may gather moral contagion from another whom he hates—and thus have these parties been constantly varying in the intensity of their principles, so as even sometimes to render it doubtful which was which. The result has been that Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury, have all been imperceptibly regaining in part their lost empire; and, although disavowed in our constitutions, have exerted substantial control in our public affairs. Of these, as might have been expected from his nature, Mercury has been by far the most successful. He has not only given tone to our Government, but has enshrined himself in the hearts of our people, until, instead of increasing in virtue, and disinterestedness, and patriotism, an eager haste to be rich has become our distinguishing national characteristic. Hence every individual is pursuing riches as the chief good, and money, money, money, currency, currency, is the continual cry in the country, in the city, in private conversation, and in the debates of this chamber. To all this the Governments have been contributing by example, and the stimulus of their measures, tariff, internal improvements by the General Government, lending revenues for banking purposes, and other kindred operations.

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Crittenden] has represented the friends of the Administration as differing among themselves as to which of these causes have produced these effects. He will pardon me for saying there is no such difference among them—they all concur in believing every one of them the offspring of the same parent, and to have acted harmoniously in the accomplishment of his designs. Some may suppose one of these causes more efficient than the rest; others may have supposed another; but all agree that the whole responsibility is to be shared among them; and in what exact proportions it is not thought very material to inquire.

But what, after all, is the great evil they have produced? Is it any actual diminution of the resources of the country? This, perhaps, they have effected to a great extent; but that is little or nothing compared to the real evils. These are transferring by stratagem and fraud, from A to B, the hard earnings of the latter, not by a regular and slow process, but by the quick and unseen movements of a mountebank; defeating that tendency to equilibrium at which our institutions aim; leaving the one party overwhelmed in amazement and distress at a poverty which has rushed upon him like an armed man; the other panting with that feverish thirst for wealth which sudden success begets—the deepest curse of him who feels it—resembling in kind and intensity that of the fabled Tantalus; or wallowing in an ostentatious luxury, at war with our Republican institutions—provoking impatient envy in some; in others, less wealthy, ruinous efforts to vie in splendor. Individual and aggregate misery is the inevitable consequence. A man is fitted, by a gradual increase or reduction of his means, to bear the maximum or minimum with calmness, while sudden reverses either way bring in their train the loss of content, and, with it, happiness. In either case, the passion of avarice is stirred to madness. This is the real curse under which we are at present laboring. This is the agony through which we are passing, of which I spoke yesterday. A picture, drawn by the hand of an ancient master, is not inapplicable to our times. Sallust, in one of his epistles to Cæsar, thus expresses himself:

"In process of time, the ascendancy of wealth became complete. Its excellence was universally acknowledged, and power and honors followed in its train. From the same era, the decline of virtue may be dated. Poverty was now held as ignominious. Innocence of heart and simplicity of manners were interpreted into a satire on the times. Thus the youth, taught to look up to riches as the sovereign good, became apt pupils in the school of luxury. Avarice and pride supplanted their precepts. Rapacity and profusion went hand in hand. Careless of their own fortunes, and eager to possess those of others, shame and remorse, modesty and moderation, every principle, gave way. All rushed into a profligacy that heeded no restraint, either divine or human."

And why, we are tauntingly asked on the other side, did we not prevent these evils? In turn, I will ask another question: Has not the Democratic party been striving against them— inefficiently, it is true, but still striving—from time immemorial? We read a parable in Scripture of a certain husbandman, who sowed good seed in his field; but, while he slept, an enemy came and sowed tares among his wheat. Would it not have been an aggravation of the wrong, had that enemy taunted him to his face, by asking him why he suffered tares to grow among his wheat? We are the descendants of those (politically, I mean) who sowed the good seed of Democratic principles in our constitutions, and yonder are the descendants of those who sowed the tares of Federalism among it; and now they ask us why we have not prevented their growth. They point exultingly to this and that bad measure, which they have themselves cajoled or forced us into, and laugh at us for not having avoided them, although, like struggling men, in attempting that which we would, we have been forced to do that which we would not. The State bank deposit system, they know well, were pressed into by them in our efforts to escape from the more dangerous system of the United States Bank. It was to us a half-way house, as they have endeavored since to make it for themselves, between a United States Bank and a total disconnection of the Government from banking affairs.

But they ask us farther why we do not correct these evils, now that we are fully aware of their existence. Mark again the insulting cruelty of this inquiry. They bind a man's hands behind his back, and cast him into the water, and ask him to swim. Have we not been endeavoring to remedy these evils, and have we not encountered from them continual resistance? Yet the evils admit of no immediate remedy. The poison of avarice has seized on the heart of the nation, and that is a malady which admits of no radical cure during the present generation. Of him in whose bosom the serpent avarice has