

to speak favorably of it, gentlemen did not speak of it, but of something else—something as yet inchoate—some undetermined creation, whose form was as yet a mystery.

After all the long consideration which had been given to the general subject, and their familiarity with all the leading points involved, here, at this late hour, a project was presented as occupying an intermediate ground, and all men of all parties were called upon to come together and unite in supporting it.

For a long week Mr. M. had pondered the project, and had endeavored to divest his mind of every feeling but a desire to find the truth. He had viewed the proposal, not like the advocate who had written this report, but like an honest man, determined to do his duty.

What a concentration of power did it not attempt to achieve! In the present prostrate and down-trodden condition of our State Banks, he spoke of that spurious and multitudinous herd which had sprung up under the misrule of a late Administration, institutions cotten through-out and tottering to their fall, if the Government should at once furnish to the people a paper currency which should be in sound and general credit, those Banks would pop, one after another, like guns discharging in a burning ship, from one end of the Union to the other.

This capital was in a strange condition. Not a mail reached it from any quarter of the country, which did not bring the evidence of real distress, of the most appalling suffering. On the proudest cities, so far from being exempt from the general lot, were the very theatres where calamity was most severely felt.

the country was covered with them. The policy of the State Governments, meanwhile, had created an immense debt, and the means of payment did not exist; and thus the People were reduced from the condition of the brightest and proudest prosperity to the deepest distress and despondence. The expedient which had been resorted to of borrowing foreign capital had produced for a time a fictitious prosperity. But while the nation was reveling in all that abundance produced by the influx of borrowed wealth—while all was going on gloriously, and a stranger would have supposed that the country had attained to the highest pitch of national strength and public prosperity, a sudden reverse was experienced. The foreign debt was demanded; the means of meeting the demand were not to be found. Individual and public distress soon spread in every direction.

In a state of things like this, or rather upon the approximation of this state of things, the American People had risen as one man, and thrown off, by a burst of indignation, the individual whose mal administration had, as they believed, brought about this unparalleled state of corruption and distress. They thought that they were about to substitute for his reckless misrule their own system of remedial measures. Every one knew how they had been balked in that expectation. The history of this national crisis would be read by our patriotic children with wonder, as a page exhibiting the strongest, most unaccountable, and most useless tergiversation which the whole volume recorded, or it would be closed and passed with loathing and repugnance. The People had been utterly disappointed. The measure proposed by their friends in Congress as the only panacea for the public ills had been offered, adopted, and vetoed at the Extra Session. And here Mr. M. must be suffered to say, that, although voting for that measure, he had always felt great doubt in regard to its immediate efficiency.

But there still appeared to him to remain one great desideratum, which nothing had as yet been able to supply, and that was, a principle within the system itself which should operate to check excessive issues, and prevent those fearful alternations of expansion and contraction which so shook the system of public credit, and spread such frequent ruin throughout the mercantile community. If any such remedy had ever been discovered, Mr. M. was unqualified with it, and it certainly had never been applied. Whatever might be said of the regulating power exerted over the State institutions by a Bank of the United States—and such an institution did exert that power to a certain extent—yet still, in proportion to the degree of confidence which the public might repose in any of these State Banks, they were invariably disposed to push their issues to extremes. Mr. M. was no Bank agent nor Bank machinist, and he admitted that the tendency of a United States Bank, in exerting its regulating power, would be to break such of the State Banks as were essentially unsound—an operation which, however salutary in the end, could not but be attended with vast amount of private distress in their respective vicinities. The mere displacement of capital which was necessarily involved in subscribing to so great a number of Banks was in itself a great evil, and must necessarily produce great affliction in the money market. Then the explosion of rotten Banks which must necessarily accompany a reform in the currency would be productive of great calamity. On the whole, he believed that the community had gone so far in the multiplication of Banks, and in all those habits to which this gave rise, that it would require a long course of years to bring the country back to a sound monetary condition. For these extended and inveterate evils Government possessed no panacea. It might do something by the establishment of a well-regulated National Bank, but even under the effect of such a measure many evils would still continue to exist. Nothing could effectually redeem the nation, nothing could ever restore the palmy days of her past prosperity; but patient labor, general habits of economy, and the retrenchment of individual expenditure.

But now what did we behold? In the distressed and prostrate condition of the whole business of the country—a condition rendered still more distressing from the defeat of every plan of relief—we had now a project started, of which he would again

say that it was the boldest push for absolute power which the people of this country had yet witnessed; and further, which was the most portentous thing to be found in the history of modern times. Yes, a bribe; the most open and barefaced that ever was offered. In many parts of the country the People were sleeping on a volcano, their condition was in the last degree distressing and dangerous; they were, in fact, almost beggared; and when once a man was made a beggar, a very slight effort was sufficient to render him a slave. In their necessity they lifted up their eyes to the Government for aid. And what was it now proposed that the Government should now do? Step forward and offer them a bank, with many facilities far greater and far better calculated for the amelioration of their distress and the relief of their immediate wants than any National Bank which their best friends had ever devised.

Mr. M. said that it might be worth while to go into a brief comparison between a Bank of the United States and the project proposed in the report before the Senate. A Bank of the United States, when first started, naturally displaced a large amount of capital; it produced a great monetary structure, and then it went on to bank on the existing capital in its hands and in the country. But this Exchequer Board added by a stroke of the pen thirty millions to its capital, and by dealing in exchange was enabled to extend it to a hundred and fifty millions more; for such were the wants of the country and so long had they continued and accumulated, that its business would absorb the whole of that amount. Let the demon of speculation once be conjured up and turned loose upon its wild schemes of adventure, and no man could set limits to its demand. To offer to a famishing People a supply like this, was he repeated it, the greatest bribe which the history of modern times could show. An ambitious President, with a term of three short years to run, having at his disposal a drilled corps of office holders, and holding under his control a subsidized press, calling over a People whose spirit was broken by a long pressure of want and calamity, and with the means of presenting them with an immediate relief in their distress, might perpetuate his power in spite of all efforts to resist him.

The plan proposed to add to the business capital of the country a sudden and vast increase, to be effected by a mere stroke of the pen. The immediate effect would be sudden and universal relief, comparative ease and apparent affluence; but as had been ably shown by the Senator from Pennsylvania, the entire history of the world went to show that while this was always the first effect, the certain tendency was to depreciation, and the final issue in every case had been a general explosion.

What a spectacle did the Senate exhibit? When the parties it contained were just upon the eve of a great contest, while the Whigs were in a position in which it was supposed they might dictate terms to the President, and while gentlemen on the other side seemed to exhibit a disposition more yielding to the powers that be, and when many an adverse attitude towards each other who ought to be fast friends, there came in this project: It was presented, among others, to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. Buchanan) and what was his course. Though strongly disposed to regard any thing from the President with a favorable eye, and though speaking of him personally in the kindest language, he still expressed the most decided opposition to the measure. He could not go for it; and why? Because he held the project dangerous to the public liberty. And the honorable Senator appended that, should a second Aaron Burr mount the Presidential Chair, an engine like this might tempt him to perpetrate power in his own hands, and might render him the most absolute of rulers. Certainly the temptation would be great—the bribe was enormous. Thirty millions of capital springing up as exhalation, as sudden and yet as unsubstantial crutches spread all over the Union; a productive tariff; the Bi-rarian power of the Post Office Department, with its eight millions of dollars; a universal system of railroads and canals; and all this in an agrarian and mercenary age; it did certainly present a mass of power difficult to resist, and appalling to contemplate. Then to all this must be added the entire power of patronage, the ability to confer the distinctions of place, the more substantial profits of office, and all the weight of political honors and confidence. Put it all together, and Mr. M. would not trust any mortal man with its possession. If even the Father of his country could return from the grave, and would ask for such a trust, Mr. M. would not put it into his hands, unless he had first received a revelation from heaven that it would live forever.

He considered it as among the worst signs of the times, and a fact well calculated to fill the bosom of the patriot with dispondency, and to turn his eye with doubt upon the future, that this project was looked at in the country simply in its money aspect. It was examined and discussed solely as a measure calculated to give efficient relief and to remove men from that grid-iron of suffering on which they were now broul. Certainly it was a scheme well pitched to suit the present tone of the public mind. It exhibited a shrewd acquaintance with the character and present condition of the American People. The manner in which the project was in some places received, and that too where there was an accumulation both of knowledge and of intellectual strength, seemed, in this respect, to justify the anticipations of its author. Even minds like those could look at it as a money measure alone, and seemed entirely to disregard the deep and dangerous tendency which

lay concealed beneath its surface. But it was said that the project was to be modified. It was to return from the committee in quite a different shape. Now, if his honorable friend from New York, (Mr. Tallmadge) who was at the head of that committee, and for whom no man entertained a more sincere respect, and on whose purity and patriotism, moderation and sagacity, no man could more implicitly rely, should be able to accomplish such a modification of the scheme as should strip it of its more dangerous and alarming features, Mr. M. would not merely receive the proposal with candor, but would leap to its adoption. His heart would rejoice within him at the thought that such a thing were possible, but he greatly feared that it never could be accomplished. That master wind which was supposed to have conceived and elaborated this production, seemed to him, by expressions scattered in various parts of it, to present to the Senate this alternative, "either take this or submit to the sub-Treasury." If that were the alternative, Mr. M. would not hesitate for a moment. He would incomparably rather adopt the sub-Treasury than this monstrous juggernaut, whose murderous eye would make its way over the neck of a prostrate people.

In regard to the sub-Treasury, Mr. M. observed that he had first formed his opinion of it while in private life, and he confessed that it then struck him that, considered per se, in the language of the Court, it was a measure whose benefits were more enhanced by its friends, and whose evils were more exaggerated by its enemies, than truth would justify. As a measure for the restoration of the currency, he considered it wholly inefficient; but his chief objection to it had been on account of that spirit of solitude and isolation which so strongly pervaded it, and which he did not deem respectable, and which went to divorce the Government from the community. As held up in that scheme, the Government resembled the captain of some ship which was overtaken in a storm, who, instead of sticking to his ship and his passengers, took to the life-boat, succeeded in securing himself on some rocky unsubmerged in the sea, and left his vessel to her fate, to be shattered on the reefs or to founder in the waves. In this feature of the scheme, Mr. M. had felt the utmost aversion. The strenuous opposition which that plan received from the Whigs was directed not so much against the plan itself, as it then stood, as against what they apprehended it would grow to be; but even their utmost fears never magnified it into such an overblowing and all grasping institution as was presented in this bill. True, indeed, it was of the same species, but it had not attained any thing like the same size or strength. It hid its face modestly behind a veil, so that its features were but dimly seen; but this looked out impudently with the countenance of a harlot—it stared the public in the face without a blush.

The certain effect of the adoption of this scheme must be to destroy the local banks throughout the United States, with the exception of those in the great commercial centres; and there its effect would be so powerful and so concentrated, that local banks would become extinct, for the plain reason, that they would be profitless. Mr. M. did not know that he would weep many tears over them. Such would be its effect in the great commercial emporium of New York, and such it might have been in Charleston—a city which might have enjoyed a similar distinction, had it not been for the fatal malaria and the yellow fever. He feared, however, that the climate and the God of Heaven had put that forever out of the question.

One of the most striking things attending this project was, that it should have originated in the Virginia school of politics; and that its supporters, if we had any doubt as to that quarter, Mr. M. felt a deep veneration for the ancient Dominion. No man entertained a higher respect for the principles she inscribed upon her banner in '98 and '99—a period in which she had resisted the vices of the age. Her politicians opposed a United States Bank, because there was no warrant for it in the Constitution. Her patriots had ever been foremost in contending not only for public liberty, but private right. And although, in the creation of such a corporation, they might restrain their better feelings, in any manner they pleased, yet still its inherent power appeared in their eyes so formidable and tremendous that public liberty could not live by its side. But here there emanated from that ancient Dominion a system in which all the banking faculties were fully developed; a monster which might not merely act upon and influence the Government, but was fixed upon it as a part and parcel of the Government itself. Yes, it was a Virginian who could advocate a scheme like this! How Virginia, which had felt such dread of a corporation, whose charter it could modify as it pleased, could ever go for a project like this, was a thing he could not understand. But if he witnessed a course like this, he certainly should cease to take lessons in political integrity from the ancient Dominion. Not a single banking power could be mentioned that was not fully developed in this scheme. Here was the power of issue, the power of deposits, and the power of lending the public money, the power of discount, effected by an evasion. It was true that the kites raised under this system would remain less time upon the wing, but their flight would be extended over a wider circuit.

The whole plan was, in fact, nothing else but the Fiscal Corporation of his friend from Georgia, (Mr. Berrien) which was last summer left opposed to the open air, with all the winds and storms of Heaven beating upon it, till at last there came a thunder clap which prostrated it in utter

insensibility. But now behold it picked up, resuscitated, set upon its feet, and removed beneath the friendly shelter of the Treasury building. Mr. M. could perceive no points of diversity between the two. The Fiscal Corporation bill, though it had been approved at headquarters, and drawn almost by Executive dictation, nevertheless encountered the Presidential veto; and should the present bill pass both Houses, he would not risk his life upon it, but he would not mind risking a few yellow boys, that this bill also would share the same fate. If Congress could not get what the President had expressly promised them, what ground had they to expect that of which they had received no promise?

The course of gentlemen on the other side Mr. M. regarded as most unkind, in determining to stand still where they were, and compel the friends of this measure to come to them. Would it not have been more becoming, if a promise must be effected, that each of the parties should yield a little ground? It seemed very manifest that this measure had been framed with the designed object of securing the support of the honorable Senator from Pennsylvania and of the gentleman from South Carolina, since it was an amalgamation of the original conception of President Jackson, once and still so great a favorite with the first gentleman, and a scheme of the honorable Senator from South Carolina himself. The two seemed to have been nicely dovetailed into each other. It was very true that when Jackson threw out the intimation of such a project the United States Bank was in the height of its power. But, although the power of General Jackson was irresistible, not only by the general multitude but by those who stood at the head of society, the project met no favor. It was repudiated on all hands, and in all quarters; yet that very plan was the basis of the present measure. To this had been superadded the scheme of the Senator from South Carolina. This latter plan Mr. M. had never particularly examined. As might be expected, it was built and original in its character, and might be feasible. This was substantially the same scheme; for, whatever gentlemen might say about the difference between the proposed paper issue of this Exchequer bank and a Government paper money to all practical effect there was no difference; for this new money would de facto rest on the faith of Government alone, and would be as completely irredeemable as if it were declared so on its face. When it was issued in the proportion of three to one—when it grasped every, even the minutest concern of private life—when it insinuated itself every where, and intermingled itself with all the relations of society, how could it be expected that the Government should redeem it? Was it ever designed or expected that it should?

Mr. M. said that here there was an Administration professedly Whig, which came forward and planted itself upon a measure which derived its origin in part from the very highest authority ever claimed by General Jackson, and in part from intellectual ingenuity of another scarcely less distinguished. Thus it stood, with one foot on the one side and the other on the other. Under such circumstances he confessed that he had no hope of seeing any thing done for the currency. There remained a barrier yet in the way. When the vengeance of heaven descended on the man of their choice, all their expectations as a party were at once defeated, and they found in the chief seat of power a man who had with them no sympathy. Under circumstances like these what hope could be cherished? If, indeed, the same vengeful stroke had descended on another head, and by one blow the first and the second choice of the People had both fallen, it was possible that some of our illustrious politicians, fellows of two and a half inches high who were now endeavoring to throw their feeble attenuated, gossamer threads round about the many limbs and muscles of one who was to them as an intellectual giant, might have been marching along with high airs of pride and triumph in the Whig track and under the Whig banner. But, alas! he lived—Richard Coeur de Lion yet lived, and the Devil was unchained; and King John, instead of looking to the welfare of the State, was busy only in the effort to surround the common enemy with barriers and palisades. Yes, he lived, and his cold shroud was thrown across these Lilliputian heroes, and they sunk and shivered in the chilling shade. Though we had a Tiber and a Ganges creek, we had no Lærtian tucks; but had he thrown himself, Curtius like, into the gulf, and nobly perished for the salvation of his country, there might have been some hope that these gentry would have conducted the Government on the principles which the People had sanctioned. And who could tell?—perhaps there might be a hope yet. [A laugh.]

When the Government treasure was entrusted to existing corporations, there was something of a mutual liability between them; but here, in this bill, we found an immense machinery flooding the country with million upon million, and no power any where but in the will of the sovereign to control it. In a free Government Mr. M. would never consent to trust such a power anywhere. While private claims of the States and most honorable justice were constantly rejected from year to year, because the Government could not be sued, would they invest with the like prerogative of inviolability an institution with all the powers to be enjoyed by this Exchequer. For one, he never would consent to it. He had said that it was not his intention to go into an analysis of the bill, yet there were really one or two things in it which had so forcibly struck his mind, and which so palpably demonstrated the illogical character of the much vaunted arrangement

in the report, that he could not but refer to them. The first occurred in page 24 of the printed report, where it was asserted that this Exchequer Board was no bank, because it did not collect its capital by subscription—just as if that feature were essential to the existence of a bank. Might not a bank be incorporated and endowed with all banking facilities where this requisite was wholly wanting? What were the Banks of Alabama? If this reason was a sound one, they were no banks at all (a state of things which the people of that State might well desire to be the case.) [A laugh.] This was a specimen of the incontrovertible logic for which this paper had been so highly praised, and praised too by the Senator from South Carolina, whose searching eye any one would have supposed no insensible conclusion could have escaped. But he supposed that the Senator had been so much gratified and so entirely engrossed by the concessions in the report, that he was not disposed to look with a very microscopic gaze upon its other features.

Again, in page 8, it was contended that this was no bank, because it did not discount. Now here was a double and twisted fallacy; the reason given was untrue in principle and untrue in fact. Untrue in fact, for confessedly the Board would discount bills of exchange; and untrue in principle because a bank may exist without this power. Here was another instance of the impregnable logic of the report, another evidence of that gigantic intellect whose impress was said to distinguish every word and line.

The third fallacy might be found in pages 5 and 6, where the Secretary insisted that the bill proposed no union of the purse and the sword, because neither the President nor his Secretary could touch a dollar in the Treasury without an appropriation. Why, had not this always been the case? Yet what had been the ground taken by the Whig party at the time of the removal of the deposits? What had been the outcry on that occasion of this Secretary himself—both master and man? Although every petty Locofoco paper in the country had deigned the act on this very ground, that Gen. Jackson could not himself touch a dollar of the public money unless by the appropriation of Congress, did the Whigs admit that reasoning as valid? Did they not still contend that one act effected a union of the purse and the sword? And was not the case the same now? In this fallacy there were two errors involved; nay, three. In the first place, the principle was unconstitutional. It was said that neither the President nor the Secretary could touch a dollar of the public money. But this Government had fallen into decay, and though commerce had become quite too mercenary a concern for this aristocracy of the present day, as a substitute they turned their attention to banking, and as the revenue was collected at different points, and had to pass through the hands of subordinate functionaries, every whiff of a custom-house might appropriate the whole amount to the purchase of exchange. The argument entirely overlooked the fact that the entire revenue might be seized upon without a dollar being appropriated. If this was an example of the severe, consecutive, impregnable logic of the report; he, for one, must have more capacity before he could be able to appreciate it.

Mr. M. said in conclusion, that the Bank in this bill was ultra, beyond any United States Bank that had ever been thought of. When Cæsar, at the head of his victorious legions, broke into the Temple of Vesta, and seized the public treasure, he had not in his hands a power so gigantic as that which was conferred by this bill. It was the long-sought philosopher's stone; the lamp of Aladdin was no touch to it. It converted reams of paper into gold, merely by putting it under the press of the Government.

With all this gigantic scheme, concocted & elaborated by the master-mind of the age, backed by all this force of argument; and defended by all these illogical conclusions, he would not say that there was a man in this Senate who would not take it, but this he would say, there was none here who had nerve enough to say "I will take it." *Es pede Hercules!* Here might be seen on a narrow strip of land, which separated on one side the calm, deep blue sea of Whig principles and doctrines, on whose bosom were upborne the vestiges of freedom and the hopes of a golden and radiant world from the raging sea of Democracy, whose wild surges were roaring and dashing on the other, the foot-print of Hercules—but not the whole impress of the foot; for so narrow was the frail and sandy verge, and so nearly did the waters on the one side encroach upon its limits and threaten to mingle with those upon the other, that there was not room for the giant to tread without having a portion of his foot-print obliterated by the waves. And finally, next to the daring and presumptuous attempt at the subjugation of the People by the seducing influence of the money power, that which most offended Mr. M. in this document was the spirit of late and late subservience and flattery towards the President which every where marked its pages, and which presented the revolting spectacle of a gross and mercenary adulation, in the face and at the sacrifice of principle nobly avowed and defended for twenty years.

But, said Mr. M., I have too long occupied the attention of the Senate with this desecratory and disintegrated and disconnected rhapsody. I had intended to say more, but as it is always my desire to speak with great tenderness and respect of the functionaries of Government, [loud laughter,] I shall forbear, and will now resume my seat.

Completed.—The great railroad chain, from Boston to Rochester, is now open. It is a vast undertaking, and has cost