



THE "FREE PRESS,"

By Geo. Howard,

Is published weekly, (every Friday,) at TWO DOLLARS per year, (or 52 numbers,) if paid within one month after Subscribers commence receiving their papers—Two Dollars and Fifty Cents, if paid within six months—and Three Dollars at the expiration of the year. Subscribers at liberty to discontinue at any time on paying arrears. New Subscribers residing at a distance must invariably pay in advance, or give a responsible reference in this vicinity. No subscription discontinued unless a notification to that effect is given.

Advertisements not exceeding 16 lines will be inserted at 50 cents the first insertion, and 25 cents each continuance. Longer ones at that rate for every 16 lines.

Letters addressed to the Editor must be post paid.

Communications.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

Celebration of the 4th July at Halifax.—The following are the complimentary Toasts, and the remarks elicited by them from Messrs. Branch and Alston, at the recent Anniversary Dinner in Halifax.

By J. A. Bynum, Esq. Our esteemed guest and distinguished fellow citizen, the Hon. JOHN BRANCH: we most highly appreciate the devotion of his time and talents in the service of his country.

Nine Cheers.

[Mr. Branch arose and addressed the company as follows:]

GENTLEMEN: The generous sentiment which you have just expressed, the day, the place, and the manner, all combine to overwhelm me with a deep conviction of my inability to make you an adequate return; and I can assure you, that nothing but a thorough conviction of having served you with fidelity, connected with a well founded belief that you do me the justice to think so, could for a moment sustain me. The approbation of the virtuous and the enlightened, has ever been considered the richest reward that a public servant can receive; and coming as yours does, from those who have known me in all the relations of life; who, with more than parental or filial indulgence, have thrown the mantle of oblivion over my many errors, it fills me with indescribable sensations. Under such circumstances, however, it is very natural, and may not be without its use to take a retrospect, to see what errors may, and should be corrected; and what remains that is worthy of approval. With your permission, then, I will briefly pass in review before you, some of the leading measures, in which it has been my lot to act a very humble part. In doing this, I cannot forget, nor can I fail to recur to some of the early incidents of my first political connexion with the citizens of Halifax county, the land of my ancestors, the place of my nativity. When first called into the public service by their suffrages, in 1811, I felt deeply the responsibility of my station, and I never have for a moment lost sight of the weighty obligations imposed on me by their liberal confidence, in advance of

any public services on my part. In the momentous crisis of '98, my political principles were first legibly inscribed on the tablet of my mind, as some of you may doubtless recollect. By those landmarks I have moved on since, "in the even tenor of my way," sustaining thro' good, and thro' evil report, the principles which we have this day convened to celebrate.

The war of 1812, and the difficulties preceding it, involved us, as individuals, and as a nation, in heavy debts. The constant drain on the South, and the liberal, not to say prodigal expenditure of the public monies, in other parts more exposed, produced a pecuniary distress, without a parallel in this country. The Legislature was called upon to arrest the course of justice, and to suspend the execution of the law; and although my heart bled for my countrymen, I felt bound to obey the paramount obligations of the Constitution. I thought then as I think now—*Fiat justitia, ruat calum.* Having thus firmly, and at some risk maintained this fundamental principle, when severely operating on my friends, my neighbors, and my fellow-citizens literally bleeding at every pore, could I do less, than to insist on an impartial application of the same stern principles of justice, in a different form, when operating on an association of individuals clothed with corporate powers, who, to all intents and purposes, had set your laws at defiance, and who were laying the ground work of incalculable woe! No, gentlemen, with the best feelings personally for those who ruled and directed the operations of the Banks, I proclaimed, when your chief magistrate, ten years ago, the maddening truths to the world, and exerted every nerve to stay them in their wild and destructive career; but all to no purpose. They contemned your authority, and rode rough-shod over your laws and their charters. To this cause, in connexion with the iniquitous policy pursued by the General Government, may be justly attributed the misery, ruin and desolation that pervade our once happy land. In these our difficulties, we have asked for bread, and they have given us a stone.

The manufacturers have again, as you know, and must soon feel, laid their leaden yoke on a community gasping for existence. What will be the result Heaven only knows. That the liberties of this people may be perpetual: that the Union of these States, on which those liberties depend, may be as lasting as time, is my most ardent desire. But that the present condition of our people may be ameliorated, is my fervent prayer. It is idle however to expect that these things will be accomplished by folding our arms, and calling upon Hercules to aid

and extricate us from our difficulties. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel, and resolve this day, "to do or die:" not my neighbors, by assuming a hostile attitude; not with arms in our hands; but by a vigorous use of such means, as the Constitution and laws will permit. As to the Banks, the evil must soon correct itself, or else a *felo de se* will be the inevitable consequence. Let us pledge to each other "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honors," not to buy the manufactures which it is the object of the manufacturers to compel us to buy of them at enhanced prices. Let us manufacture for ourselves. We have water power sufficient, and to spare; we have a population—a property which is rendered unprofitable by the burdens imposed on agriculture; we have the raw material in the greatest abundance. We have the corrective in our own hands, let us, then, "smile at the drawn dagger, and defy its point." As my votes on this subject, (in connexion with the votes of my venerable colleague,) in the Senate of the U. States, have recently been arraigned by a Senator from Massachusetts, I hope, gentlemen, you will pardon me for trespassing on your patience while I make a brief explanation. Mr. Webster says that but for the vote of North Carolina, or in other words, but for the votes of Mr. Macon and myself, the five cents additional duty on the gallon of molasses might have been avoided: and that consequently we are justly answerable to our constituents, for having imposed on them an annual tax of 50 or \$60,000.

I know, gentlemen, that most of those to whom I am responsible, understand the reason that influenced my votes, and not only my votes, but that of almost every Southern Senator, and properly appreciate them. Lest, however, there should be a single individual who may be misled by the sophistry, by the Yankee trick of this distinguished Yankee, I will briefly say what I frankly said in the Senate of the U. States—that I was as much averse, on principle, to the duty on molasses, as I was to any other item in the Tariff bill; and while I voted against striking it out, my reasons were avowed; which were to distribute the burdens equally, to make the gentleman feel for his constituents what he seemed to be incapable of feeling for mine: and thus to induce him to go with us in rejecting the whole bill; every item of which I considered onerous and ruinous to the Southern country. The result proved that I was right; for by retaining the five cents on the gallon of molasses, many of those who would otherwise have voted for the bill, were constrained to vote against it; and even Mr. Webster himself declared after-

wards (as I was informed by a Senator) that he should have voted against the bill at last, if we had not made him mad! How dreadful! how horrid to incur his displeasure!!

What think you now, my fellow-citizens, of a man exalted as Mr. Webster is, yet capable of acting so disingenuously? Does it appear, while acting in the character of an informer, that he was disposed to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? There surely can be but one opinion. *This he has done, too, after having assured me with apparent sincerity that he did not intend to publish any part of his speech bearing on my votes.* By this assurance I was induced to withhold from the press, the remarks I made in answer to him, and to suppress some others which I intended to make. Has it however come to this, that public men are to be censured for refusing to aid their oppressors in polishing the chains to be riveted on them? Are they to be upbraided for refusing to kiss the rod uplifted to chastise them? and are they to be answerable for any incidental evil incurred in making what they believed to be the most efficient resistance? I cannot, I will not believe that this miserable staff will be for a moment heeded, by an enlightened community. Thus far I have acted on the defensive. I might justifiably carry the war into the enemy's country; but I forbear. It is not my purpose to become the assailant. My only object is, to vindicate myself from unmerited aspersion; to show to you, and to the world, that I have been vigilant of your rights and interests, and faithful to the trust you have reposed in me.

Permit me further to avail myself of this opportunity to call your attention to another subject of deep national concern. I mean, gentlemen, the commercial, the navigating improvement of our State. My conduct on this subject has been misapprehended by some. It has been said that while I was ostensibly the patron of the act passed by the Legislature of North-Carolina, incorporating the Occacock Navigation Company, that I was in fact opposed to the assent of Congress being given. This is not so. When I presented the act to the Senate of the U. States, I moved its reference to the appropriate committee—the committee of Finance, of which I was a member, and before that committee supported it with zeal and success; and was myself instructed to report a bill yielding the assent of Congress. When called up in the Senate, I again advocated its passage, although opposed by the gentleman above mentioned, (Mr. Webster.) Subsequently, however, in a conference with the representative from the district deemed to be most interested in the contemplated im-