# EASTON GAZETTE.

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## SOUTH CAROLINA.

*Governor McDuffie's Inaugural Address.*

Gentlemen of the Senate
and House of Representatives.

If anything could increase the intensity of that vivid sense of gratitude, which has been excited in my bosom by the generous support and sustaining confidence I have uniformly received from the people of South Carolina, ever since I first entered into their service, as a representative in this Hall, it would be the distinguished honor they have now conferred upon me, by your kind and partial agency, in summoning me to the helm of their affairs, in a manner so highly flattering to me, and under auspices so exceedingly gratifying to us all. But while we sincerely rejoice, as every patriot must, in the restoration of harmony to the too long distracted councils of the state, let us not be tempted to withdraw our most vigilant attention from the dangers which surround us, or to neglect the corresponding duties of precaution and preparation, they so imperiously enjoin upon us. It cannot be disguised that we have reached an eventful era in the history, not only of South Carolina, but of the whole American Confederacy; and whether our descendants, of the very next generation, shall recur to it with exultation and pride, as an era of constitutional liberty, or with humiliation and sorrow, as an era of consolidated despotism, will very much depend upon the manner in which we now discharge the duties of our respective stations. In entering upon the high and eminently responsible trust you have committed to my hands, *I* bring with me gentlemen, if nothing else, an absolute and unqualified devotion to the state of S. Carolina. After an absence of thirteen years in the councils of the Federal Government, I return to the councils of the State, with a heart unalienated by absence, unseduced from its true allegiance by the blandishments of federal power, and undefiled by the worship of false gods and foreign idols. Having anxiously and attentively marked the progress, and studied the tendency of the federal government, during the whole period of my service in Congress, I am firmly and solemnly impressed with the conviction that the Sovereignty of the several States, practically asserted and maintained, is the only barrier which can arrest the federal government in its fatal proclivity towards absolute despotism, and the only means under Heaven, by which the rights, the liberties, or the property of the planting States, can be rescued from impending destruction. And I have the more confidence in this opinion, because it has been gradually and deliberately formed, as the result of actual observation and experience, in opposition to the preconceived theories of youth and inexperience with which I entered upon the theatre of public life.

However they may be amalgamated in the crucible of an executive proclamation, or of speculative theory, history bears testimony, that the states are, in point of fact, distinct and separate communities, mutually independent of each other, and each possessing the inherent and underived attribute of sovereignty. Not only are they separated geographically, and by a distinct and independent political organization, but they are still more practically separated by the diversity of their staple productions, creating a direct and irreconcileable conflict of interest between the exporting and manufacturing states, as decided, as ever existed between any two independent nations, ancient or modern. It is, for example, the undoubted interest, as it is the sacred right of the planting states, to exchange their staples for the manufactures of Europe, free from every obstruction or incumbrance. It is the interest of the manufacturing States, to abstract, incumber, and even prohibit this commerce of exchange, between the planting States and the manufacturing nations of Europe; and because it is their interest, they have availed themselves of the ascendancy of superior numbers, in the federal Legislature, to impose high and prohibitive of duties on imported manufactures, in violation of every principle of natural justice, and the most sacred of our constitutional rights. A more vital opposition of interest cannot well be conceived. But the full extent and depth of the danger which impends over the planting States, has not yet been disclosed, and, delicate as the subject is, I feel it to be my painful duty to present it distinctly to your view. The great agricultural staples of the planting states, are produced by a species of labor, peculiar to those states, and cannot be successfully produced by any other. It is demonstrable, that cotton could not be produced by the labor of hired freemen, for double the average price it has commanded for ten years past. As it is the cheapness only of our staples of exportation, that enables us to import foreign manufactures cheaper than they can be made by the American manufacturers, it is obvious that the abolition of that kind of labor which is the basis of our wealth and prosperity, would annihilate at a single blow, that entire branch of foreign commerce, which brings the industry of the exporting states into competition with that of the manufacturing states. Here, then, is the deep foundation of our past oppression and our future danger. The labor of hired freemen cannot successfully contend with the labor of slaves, and it has been openly avowed in Congress, by a distinguished representative, that the labor of Northern freemen, should never be put in equal competition with the labor of a Southern slave. With these facts before his eyes, can any Southern Statesman, who is not blinded by some strange infatuation, contemplate the relative position of the Southern States, without being deeply impressed with a sense of their insecurity.

Here is a conflict of pecuniary interest between separate and distinct communities of men, aggravated by the prejudices of a blind fanatacism against our domestic institutions, on the part of a large portion of the people of the Northern and Middle states. And shall we, under these circumstances, fold our arms in fatal apathy, and permit the Federal Government to establish its supremacy and omnipotence upon the subverted sovereignty of South Carolina? When we see that it is the interest of those states which control the operations of the Federal Government, to shackle our commerce and destroy our property, shall South Carolina prostrate the ensigns of her sovereignty before them, and submit her rights and liberties to their magnanimity and justice? Let us not deceive ourselves nor vainly hope to avoid danger by closing the eyes of our understanding against the evidence of its approaches.

However melancholy the fact may be, all history is but a bloody testimonial to establish it, that no community of men upon the face of the earth, in any age, or under any dispensation, political or religious, ever has been governed by justice in its negotiations or its conflicts with other states. No, gentlemen, it is not justice and magnanimity, but interest and ambition—dignified and disguised under the name of State Policy—that ever has governed, and ever will govern masses of men, acting as political communities. Individuals may be actuated by a sense of justice, but what citizen in any country, would venture to contend for justice to a foreign and rival community, in opposition to the prevailing policy of his state, without forfeiting the character of a patriot? We habitually speak of Roman virtue, and Roman patriotism, as proverbial, and they are held up, throughout christendom, to the rising generation as models for imitation. And yet, in every period of the Republic, with scarcely an interval, these virtuous and patriotic citizens were engaged in vexing the ocean and desolating the earth, by wars of plunder and conquest. These are not mere abstracted truths and barren speculations, but they practically illustrate the peculiar and perilous condition of the exporting and slave holding states, as members of the great North American confederacy, and demonstrate the imperious necessity of rallying all parties around the Standard of State sovereignty, resolved in the spirit of our glorious motto—"*Animis opibusque parati*"—to maintain and preserve it untarnished, in every emergency and at every hazard, as the last hope of transmitting to our posterity, the blessings of constitutional liberty.

The entire legislation of Congress, on the conflicting interests of the planting and manufacturing states, has been a war of communities against communities, carried on by making unjust and unconstitutional laws, instead of fighting hazardous and bloody battles. In this legislative warfare, I have seen the truth of all that I have said as to the injustice of communities, acting as such, most strikingly illustrated. I have seen men of high honor and unblemished integrity in all the relations of private life, who would shrink with abhorrence from the perpetration of an act of individual injustice, voting with an undisturbed conscience for measures of legislative plunder; and though fully convinced of their unequal and oppressive operation, it would have been just as vain to think of restraining them by shewing their injustice, as it would have been to arrest the march of a Roman army, by demonstrating the injustice of the war.

The rights and liberties of the minority states—so to speak—are in much greater jeopardy from the majority states acting through the Federal Government, under an assumed and practical omnipotence, than they possibly could be, if there existed no compact of Union and each were separate and independent. *I* do conscientiously believe that the smallest state on the continent of Europe, amidst the gigantic struggles of warring monarchies, holds its rights and liberties by much surer guarantees, under the law of nations, than South Carolina now holds her rights and liberties under the Federal Constitution, subject to a construction which absolutely inverts its operation, rendering it a chain to the oppressed, and a cobweb to the oppressor. It is not doubted for example, that if a league of the mightiest Potentates of Europe, were to assume and exercise the power of prohibiting the trade of the most insignificant kingdom with the other nations of the earth, or of imposing restrictive duties upon that trade with the avowed purpose of promoting the interest of the confederated powers, the whole commercial and civilized world would be animated by one common sentiment of indignation at the outrage, not less vehement than that which was excited, some half century ago, by the infamous partition of Poland. And yet, strange and extraordinary as it may appear, this is precisely the outrage, with no circumstance of mitigation, but many of aggravation which New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and their associates have committed against the planting states of this Union, through the perverted agency of a government created to prevent such outrages, and which that government had deliberately prepared to enforce against the sovereign state of South Carolina, by the bayonets of mercenary soldiers, under all the pretended sanctions of human authority.

The federal government has already passed through the first stage of its progress to military despotism—Congress has assumed and practically maintained the right of deciding in the last resort, the extent of its own powers—which is but another form of affirming that the acts of Congress are paramount to the constitution. And in the natural course of things, the chief magistrate of the confederacy, following the example of the legislative department, has assumed and practically maintained the right of deciding, in the last resort, the extent, not only of his own powers, but of the powers of all the other departments, thus making his own arbitrary will paramount to the acts of Congress, the adjudications of the courts and the constitution itself.

Such, gentlemen, is the true practical character of a government, the chief magistrate of which has so solemnly and officially denied that the states are sovereign, and attempted to dissipate their sovereignty as he would disperse an unlawful assembly, by the potent energy of a proclamation. Under these circumstances, you would have betrayed the great cause of state sovereignty, in which South Carolina has so nobly struggled, if you had faltered or hesitated in moving forward in the course so clearly and deliberately indicated by the people, in their sovereign capacity. I therefore congratulate you, most sincerely, on the final ratification of the amendment of the constitution, and *I* am the more devoutly rejoiced at this happy consummation, as we have the gratifying assurance that the portion of our fellow citizens who have been most strenuously opposed to the oath of allegiance, heretofore required by an act of the Legislature, will peaceably submit to it, in the aspect under which the question is now presented to them. Indeed it is difficult to perceive any possible ground upon which even the most conscientious believer in the constitutional supremacy of the federal government, could now scruple to pledge his allegiance to the State, by an oath which the constitution requires, unless indeed, he altogether denies to the State the attribute of sovereignty, and regards it as a mere corporation, standing upon a footing of equality with the municipalities of Charleston and Columbia. I never have doubted that the power to exact from every officer of the state an oath of allegiance and fidelity, is one of the clearest of all the ordinary powers of the legislature. Between the oath to 'protect and defend the constitution of this State and the United States,' and the oath to 'bear allegiance to the state of South Carolina,' there is not the slightest incompatibility:—They stand together in perfect harmony. The one, so far from forbidding the other by a natural repugnance, seems rather to invite it by a natural coherence, as parts of one consistent whole. But no one can doubt the Legislature to exact an oath of allegiance from citizens generally, who are not officers. As the constitution does not require *any* oath to be administered to them, no implication can be raised against the power of the Legislature to exact an oath of allegiance from them. The principle, therefore, upon which the oath of allegiance has been held to be inconsistent with the state constitution, involves the strange constitutional anomaly, that the Legislature may exact an oath of allegiance from every citizen before he becomes an officer, but not afterwards. So that the investiture of an office, so far from imposing an obligation to be faithful to the state, would operate as an exemption from it. But since the amendment of the constitution of the state, the only ground upon which any citizen can hesitate to take the oath it now enjoins, is the supposed incompatibility of that oath with his obligations to the constitution of the United States.—Now the requirements of the oath are briefly to 'be faithful and bear true allegiance to the state of South Carolina," and to "support the constitution of this State and of *the United States*." There is no known rule of construction, which can be made to give the slightest color of plausibility to the [illegible] that a pledge of allegiance, in the [illegible] prescribed by the constitutions [illegible] of the states from the commence[illegible] of the federal government, in po[illegible] obligation inconsistent with the [illegible]stitution of the United States, when [illegible] every oath which contains this pledge [illegible] allegiance, contains also an *ex*[illegible]dge to support that constitution [illegible]rary to every established canon of [illegible]erpretation, this would be creating a [illegible]pancy between the several pledges [illegible] same oath, by a strained implication which would annul by inference, the [illegible] express promise to support the [illegible]stitution of the United States.

*I* am aware that a very great diversity of opinion prevails not only as to defination of the term [illegible]giance, but as to the extent and character of that peculiar allegiance which the citizen owes to the respective States of the confederacy. In understanding allegiance to mean the tie which binds a citizen to be faithful to the Sovereign power, wherever that power may reside, and I understand Sovereignty to mean that ultimate power in the State, which no other power can rightfully control within its territorial limits. Thus understood, *I* cannot doubt that Allegiance, wherever due, is essentially paramount and exclusive, a conclusion which unavoidably results from the very definition of the terms Allegiance and Sovereignty. The idea of a divided Allegiance is a solecism in language, not less than it is a heresy in politics. We have more than human authority for saying "that no man, can serve two masters," and the condition of our citizens would be deplorable indeed, if they were liable to such a servitude.—I have so little doubt that under the federal system, the undivided and uncontrollable power to which [illegible] have referred resides in the respective States, as an original, and inherent attribute. In other words, I believe the States have not surrendered their sovereignty and I have no doubt that the people of South Carolina hold the same opinion on all these points. But it surely was not the intention of the people to lay a snare for the conscience of the citizen, by requiring him to swear to a matter of opinion—The state has an undoubted right to control the actions of citizens, but it would be a most [illegible] exercise of power to attempt to regulate men's opinions by law, and still more by an oath of office.—When I took an oath as member of Congress to support the Constitution of the United States, I certainly incurred no obligation to support that instrument in any other sense than that in which I understood it, much less did incur an obligation to support it according to the construction which three-fourths, or any other proportion of the States might chose to give it. In like manner, an officer who takes an oath to bear true Allegiance to the State, must of necessity, interpret for himself the words which he uses, and no human power can make him mean what he does not mean. But if South Carolina were to nullify an unconstitutional act of Congress, or secede from the Union, and the Federal Government were to wage War against the State, to subjugate her, or enforce its usurpation, I should hold that every officer, and indeed every citizen who might be found in arms against the State, would be guilty of treason, whatever might be his opinion of the obligation incurred by an oath of Allegiance. In a word, as a question of conscience and opinion, *I* would have every citizen to interpret the Oath, upon his responsibility to God; but as a question of practical duty the State which imposes the Oath has a clear and undoubted right to determine the extent and character of the obligation it imposes, and to enforce that obligation by such sanctions as she may think proper to provide. I have thought it to be due to all parties, & to the character of the State, to present this brief exposition of this agitating question, which has been the subject of great misapprehension both at home and abroad, not only for the purpose of exhibiting the true character of the controversy, but for the purpose of showing that proscription and exclusion are utterly abhorrent to the principles of those with whom I have been politically associated, and that the door of conciliation is as wide open as ever it has been to those who will peaceably submit to the authority of the State, whose character and welfare and liberty, must, after all, be objects very near to the hearts of every one of us, as they will constitute the common inheritance of our children, when we shall have passed from the busy stage of human action, and left the troubled scene of them. And may we not be permitted to indulge the gratifying and consoling hope, that the intellectual and moral energy which our political struggles have contributed to produce, may receive such a direction under the auspicies of that peaceful star which now beams upon the subsiding elements, as will give a new impulse to the prosperity, resources and power of the State, and go far to indemnify her for all the sacrifices she has made in vindicating her rights and liberties against the usurpation and oppressions of the Federal Government?—Let us then, fellow-citizens, offering up all our political animosities upon the altar of a disinterested patriotism, unite in a common effort to develope the resources, perfect the institutions, increase the power, and elevate the character of the State, and let us, disdaining a miserable and mercenary and degrading scramble for the public offices, which has disgraced the policy and corrupted the morals of too many other States, direct our ambition to the more glorious rivalry of trying who can do most to render South Carolina an enlightened, prosperous and happy community, thoroughly comprehending the value of her rights and liberties and thoroughly prepared to defend them. Here we have opened to us an ample and glorious field of exertions worthy of the ambition of the most devoted patriot, and the talents of the most gifted statesmen. Our attention has, for many years past, been so exclusively directed to the Federal Government, from the necessity of resisting its alarming encroachments, that we have too much neglected this appropriate field of State legislation and State policy, and permitted our domestic institutions to fall into the most deplorable state of decay and dilapidation.

The present condition of the College—an institution established by an enlightened patriotism, and munificently endowed by the State, calls for our most prompt and anxious attention. In that state of intellectual excitement and activity by which the whole civilized world is so remarkably characterized, in which the ascendancy of mind over matter is illustrated by the daily triumphs of science, in all the departments of industry and art, an educated and enlightened population is the great and primary element of the wealth and power of States and Empires; and what is much more important, the only substantial basis of free political institutions. As our College, therefore, is at the same time a pillar and an ornament of the social fabric, we should carefully explore the causes of its declining and almost ruinious condition and devoted our zealous and united exertions to the work of its revival. Among the most sacred of the obligations which we owe to posterity, is that of preparing the rising generation to act well their part on the grand theatre of human affairs, according to the emergencies in which Providence may place them; and I am impressed with a solemn and painful conviction, that however rude have been the storms which we had to buffet, they are but refreshing zephyrs in comparison with those which some of our children, that are now in all the security of unconscious infancy, will yet live to encounter.

Under this impression, I shall devote my most zealous & indefatigable efforts, to infuse into the militia, that high military spirit, which recently animated that patriot band of citizen soldiers, "the volunteers of South Carolina" and to introduce the most efficient organization and the highest possible state of military improvement, in strategy, tactics, and general discipline. In this great labor, *I* earnestly solicit and confidently anticipate your hearty co-operation. Some of the profoundest maxims of political wisdom have been so long the hackneyed themes of declamation, that they have come to be regarded rather as mere idle topics for the hustings and the rostrum, than as the basis of a wise and practical statesmanship. Among these maxims, none seems to have been more eminently destined to be preached and not practised, than that which affirms that a well regulated and well trained militia is the palladium of our liberties. To what portion of the whole world is this maxim more strickingly applicable than it is to the slave-holding States of this confederacy, and in which of these States should it be more solemnly and impressively realized than in South Carolina.

A very small endowment of that political sagacity 'which looks before and after,' will enable any statesman to perceive, without looking very far back or very far forward, that among those probable contingencies against which it is the high office of wisdom and patriotism to provide, is the occurrence of a crisis in our political relations, at no distant period, in which South Carolina, in common perhaps with all or a portion of the other States, will have to maintain her sovereignty, and defend the rights and liberties of her citizens before the great tribunal of ultimate resort, by arraiments of title and guarantees of quiet enjoyment, much more potent and efficacious than that miserable mockery of blurred and obliterated and tattered parchment, the Constitution of the United States.—If communities will ever learn wisdom from experience, can it be more than necessary to appeal to the impressive lessons we have received from the occurrences of the last two years as an admonition for the regulation of our future policy? When my distinguished friend and predecessor entered upon the duties of that station, which he so signally illustrated by that rare combination of prudence, patriotism, wisdom and energy, that has so largely contibuted to carry us triumphantly through the difficulties and perils of an unequal contest, what was the condition and what the attitude of South Carolina? It is true that almost her entire population, of all ages—and I might almost add sexes, were prepared to march forward as a forlorn hope of constitutional liberty, animated by a spirit not less self devoting and heroic than that which prompted Leonides and his three hundred Spartan followers to offer up their lives at Thermopylæ, for the common liberties of Greece.

And here, fellow citizens, permit me to say, that it was a proud and glorious day for South Carolina, when her public functionaries, in all the departments of her government, fired by a spirit of patriotic indignation which pervaded the whole State with an electical rapidity, hurled back with scorn & contempt that bloody edict of federal despotism, which its infatuated advisers confidently anticipated would instantly induce a terror stricken people to furl the banner of their pretended sovereignty, and prostrate it at the feet of their oppressors!—But no, thank God, on that eventful occasion South Carolina exhibited a spectacle of the moral sublime, unsurpassed by any thing recorded in history—standing alone amidst all the combined fury of the surrounding elements,

"Firm as the rock of the ocean, that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore."

It was that imposing spectacle, and preparations which followed it, that enlisted in our cause the advocates of constitutional liberty every where, and commanded the respect and admiration even of our oppressors; and it is not to be doubted, that it was the unequivocal evidence thus given that the state could not be dragooned and frightened into submission, which, operating upon the patriotism of some and the calculation of others, led to the adoption of that adjustment of the tariff, which restored harmony to the country.

But I never look back to that trying & perilous crisis without instinctively shuddering at the reflection that if the madness of the federal authorities had driven the country to the dreadful extremity of a civil war, thousands of the chivalry of the state would have been slaughtered by federal mercenaries, solely for the want of that strategic and tactical skill in the officers, and the exact discipline in the soldiers, which could only be acquired by assiduous study and laborious training. Let us not, then, permit ourselves to be lulled into a fatal security by the peace and unexampled prosperity which have crowned our exertions or seduced by the spirit of acquisition or the allurements of indolence, to relax our efforts to put the state in "armour and attitude" adapted to the worst emergency that can arise.

It is a melancholy reflection, forced upon us by history, that skilful generals and well trained armies, have been generally found fighting for emperors and kings, or in wars of ambition and conquest, while the cause of liberty has been almost exclusively defended by armies badly trained, commanded, to be sure, by brave patriots, but hardly ever by great captains. Let us blot out from the page of history this deep reproach upon free institutions. Liberality is surely as well worth the labor, and toil, and expense of Military preparation, as any object of ambition possibly can be; and we have read history to very little purpose if we have yet to learn that, in this world of injustice and violence, liberty can be preserved only by being prepared to defend it. But for a state having the peculiar institutions, and occupying the peculiar position of South Carolina, to think of preserving her liberties without a vigorous state of Military preparation, is that sort of madness with which the heathen gods of antiquity were supposed to afflict a state which they had predestinated to destruction. I am aware that the wealth and intelligence of the Northern and Middle States, are opposed to any direct and unconstitutional interference with our domestic institutions and our rights of property; but I am also aware that there exists a fanatical spirit of blind and heartless philanthropy, embodied in the form of abolition societies, which looks with cold indifference upon the starving white pauper in the next street, and at the same time shed tears of commiseration over the hard fate and imaginary sufferings of the distant black man of separate and independent communities. This fatal and ferocious spirit—the same that covered St. Domingo with blood, and more recently coerced the British ministry to depopulate their West India Islands, combined with the kindred spirit of agrarianism which is now making the most alarming progress in those states, will soon obtain an influence over public opinion, which neither wealth, nor intelligence, nor authority, can control. When these two combined elements of anarchy and mischief shall be embodied by needy and desperate politicians into an organized political party, no human institution will be regarded as a guaranty of any human right, and the property holders of the North, so far from being able to do any thing to secure our property from those fanatics and plunderers, will tremble for the security of their own. It is my deliberate opinion that the unbalanced democracy of the middle and some of the Northern States will pass, by a rapid transition, through anarchy to despotism, and I am thoroughly convinced

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