

## House of Representatives.

On the motion to postpone the Tariff Bill, Mr. CLAYTON rose and addressed the House as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I have not troubled the House often, during the present session, but I now consider we have arrived at a point of time, when silence on the part of southern members can no longer be excused, and tame acquiescence in the course indicated becomes criminal. I must, therefore, precious as time is, raise my voice against the monstrous step about to be taken. I know the nature of my feelings, and doubt not they have often given annoyance, but on the present occasion, it shall be my earnest endeavor to restrain them, though the subject is extremely exciting. Between me and my constituents, I am ready to incur the responsibility suggested by a gentleman, of consuming the "precious time" of the House. What is the proposition? Have gentlemen suffered their minds to run through the whole aspect of the question? Mark the character of the case. It is to postpone the tariff bill until Saturday, but virtually altogether, for the purpose of taking up the enforcing bill, sent to this body from the Senate. It is said, that this last bill is *very important!* In the name of every thing, can it be more important than the tariff bill? Was there ever before, and can there ever be, so much depending upon the issue of any measure as that which now hangs upon the fate of the tariff bill? Mr. Speaker, this bill was introduced on the 27th day of December last, and from that day down have we been anxiously engaged, to the exclusion of almost all other business, in the effort, honest and sincere on our part, to bring this troubled question to such a termination, as would give repose to the alarming agitations of the country; and now, when we have but six days left, behold! an insidious attempt is made to give it the go by, and to take up and pass a bill designed to rivet upon us the very system it was intended to modify. Sir, I know we are not believed, when we speak of the high excitement of our people. I know we are despised when we tell of the sufferings of our country. I know we are laughed at, when we mention the determination of the south no longer to bear the unequal legislation of Congress. I have just witnessed the contempt and ridicule manifested in the actions of some gentlemen, at the eloquent and just description of the southern discontents by my colleague. It is all treated with perfect indifference, and marked by the most ineffable scorn. This I would not regard; but our own people, animated by a generous love of country, and actuated by a charity worthy of a better cause, will not believe they are thus illiberally treated. They yet confide in men who detest them. They yet trust in statesmen who have no other rule of action but a sense of interest. They yet believe in the honesty of those who have never yet shown the first evidence of that virtue; and all we can say and do, there are many of our own people who close their eyes to these glaring instances of insult, injustice, and oppression.— It is upon this incredulity that great reliance is placed by those who turn an unlistening ear and an unbelieving heart to our complaints, our remonstrances, and our resolves to be free. How often, in and out of this house, have we been twitted with the remark, that a divided people were unable to effect anything. No community ever yet carried a purpose, who quarrelled among themselves about the best method of accomplishing it. Yes, Sir, these are the calculations that are hurrying gentlemen into the fatal & inconsiderate determination to put by the tariff, and so put us to the sword. They may yet be mistaken.

It has been the great care of southern members to keep their cause in the right, and their enemies in the wrong—thus far, before heaven, we have succeeded. When we came here, knowing how short the session, and consequently how precious the time, we have sealed, with but a few exceptions, our lips, in the purposely protracted discussions which have taken place on this all engrossing subject. We saw a fixed resolution to evade the bill by *talking* out the session, & every species of indignity has been offered to southern members and the country they represent, with a view to draw them out in aid of this unworthy object. We have suffered all things for the sake of peace. We have been charged with a wish not to settle this question. Our leading men at the south have been accused with the traitorous design of making this contest contribute to the dismemberment of the Union, in subserviency to the purposes of an unholy ambition. (The Speaker reminded Mr. Clayton that subject was not in debate.) Mr. C. replied he knew it was not in debate, but hoped the Speaker would discriminate between the premises of an argument & the argument itself: he was about to lay the foundation of an argument which a few moments patience would convince him was perfectly relevant. Of all this we have been accused, and now, Sir, who is it that wishes to postpone the tariff? who are the friends of the Union? Who is it that wishes to dismember the Union? He who sits here, day by day, voting against adjournment, his mouth closed, as if in death, for fear of losing the golden opportunity of restoring peace to his country by unnecessary delay; who submits to insult rather than jeopard the conciliation, and harmony, and good feeling necessary to the adjustment of a most disturbing question; who interposes no obstacle to the bill reported by the Committee of Ways and Means; who is willing to take that or any thing near it as a peace offering; or, he who cavils at every thing; flings in difficulty upon difficulty; talks day in and day out upon nothing, merely to waste away the opportunity for reconciliation; now abusing the south, and then insulting its members; now threatening us with the indignation of the tariff men, and then holding up the menaces of the Government; and lastly, to fill the measures of outrage, and to cap the climax of intolerable injustice, the tariff question, the absorbing solicitude of years, and now the last hope of a distracted and long abused people, is to be thrust aside, and for what? To pass a law that is to let loose the fiercest passions of revenge, avarice, and ambition, upon a people whose only crime is one unbroken cry for justice, and whose only object is the preservation of their rights, in the still higher preservation of their liberty.

Sir, all eyes are turned to this spot with an eagerness and anxiety which beggars all description. I hold in my hand, letters from the south, which I will not read, because I know they will be despised.

ed, in which the hopes and the feelings of that portion of the country in relation to the crisis, are treated in a language that in any other assembly, not lost to the ties of affection, not indifferent to the touching influence of sympathy, and not deaf to the still stronger demands of justice, would exert an agency greatly conducive to the restoration of harmony. But there is a recklessness of thought, an inconsiderateness of action, and a defiance of consequences, which are urging a once happy and united people into calamities, too painful for reflection, and which humanity, in all future time, must deeply deplore. Under considerations like these, I could not consent to remain silent; indeed, no southern man should longer restrain the voice of rebuke, of resolute and determined hostility to movements so full of meaning, and so fraught with mischief. We could not justify ourselves to our constituents. Well may they say, we were satisfied with your silence so long as it sought the repose of your country, and the safety of your Government; but when you saw the long cherished hope of peace and quiet attempted to be dashed from your presence by a rude and unsparing insolence, why did you not cry aloud, and present for the last time, the consequences which would result from such an act of wanton injustice and superadded injury? Sir, I will do it at the hazard of every thing dear to violated rights, and at the risk of every thing dangerous to freedom. Let the majority go on in their mad career; the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; there is a day coming, in which a just reckoning may, perhaps, discover, when too late, the woful mistake of a bloated avarice and a blind ambition. Is not the object fully perceived? Does not every one discover that this motion is the death knell of the tariff? That it is to sink to rise no more? Who is it for taking up the "War bill? Comes it from the fast friends of peace? Comes it from the former friends of the administration? No Sir; it is from the manufacturers! From northern men, whose hopes of an abiding protection for their favorite system, is founded in a lasting destruction of our rights. It is useless to disguise this matter; the tariff bill has been fought inch by inch, and now, within a few days of the only prospect of accommodation, behold, it is to give way to a law, strung with whips, gibbets, and fetters, the black ensignia of tyranny, and the messengers that speed the edicts of passive obedience. This law is to take its place, and we are to be put off until the experiment of subjection shall hereafter test the necessity of ever troubling the country again upon this subject. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has said, "this is an important law!" Is it more so than that which it is designed to supplant? Can any law possess higher interest than one which has not only occupied the whole of this session of Congress, but six months of the last; nay, more, which seeks to control a power that has riven the very pillars of the government, and left it tottering to its fall—torn up the best affections of the people, and filled the land with discord, strife, danger, and dismay? The gentleman has said, his only object is to fix a day for its consideration: that may be the case with him; but what security has he, for a moment, of attaining his single purpose, when it shall have been delivered into the hands of an eager majority, bent not only upon its certain passage unaltered in form, and unmitigated in force, but equally determined that it shall serve as the revengeful instrument of defeat to the tariff bill, the only law calculated to save the country? Sir, he cannot control the majority; as well might he attempt to extinguish a building totally enveloped in flames, or arrest the progress of one half down the falls of Niagara.

I could not sit still under a feeling so desperate and ferocious, without raising a warning voice; and whatever may be the result of a course so brutal, I could not go home without the consolation of having made one effort to stay its fury.