

INTRODUCTORY

THE year 1791 should be a memorable year in the history of the State of South Carolina: first, because, at the very beginning of that year, viz., the 19th of February, was enacted the law for the abolition of the rights of primogeniture,¹ a statute marking the profound change which had taken place in the State, with the adoption of the new State Constitution of the previous year; second, because of the fact that in that year, in the month of May, the first and greatest of the Presidents of the Union visited the State, and the story of his reception,² bringing before us, as it does, the condition and the sentiments of the people of her metropolis, indicates, in some manner, what contribution she had made to the Federal Union by her ratification of the Federal Constitution, which she had had such an important part in framing; third, on account of the fact that in the fall of that year, November 10,³ was born that South Carolinian who most clearly saw the impending conflict between the State and Federal sovereignties, and most intelligently strove to avert it.

It is an interesting coincidence that the act for the abolition of the rights of primogeniture was, by its terms, to go into effect only the day before the great President reached the city of Charleston. It had been passed in obedience to the tenth article of the State Constitution, ordained the third day of June, 1790, the sug-

¹ Statutes at Large, So. Ca., Vol. 5, p. 162.

² Charleston Year Book, 1883, p. 503.

³ So. Ca. Hist. & Gen. Mag., Vol. 5, p. 171.