

severe, energetic ; a grave restraint on his words indicates the prudence of his sound principles, and the still more absolute confidence he places in them. The judgment, the tact, the skill, the wisdom with which he elucidates each and every clause, forces the mind to acquiesce to his superior genius. Aloof from technicalities and unfettered by artificial rule, such a question gave opportunity for that deep and clear analysis, that mighty grasp of principle which so distinguishes Webster's higher efforts. The earnestness of his own convictions wrought conviction in others. One was convinced and believed and assented, because it was gratifying, delightful to think, and feel, and believe in unison with an intellect of such evident superiority.

But to proceed with the argument. Mr. Hayne maintained that any State Legislature deeming an Act of the General Government plainly and palpably unconstitutional, could in virtue of a right, existing under the constitution, lawfully decide whether an Act of the General Government transcended its powers, and, if so decided, veto or nullify the action, as for instance, in the case of the "Tariff" or the "Embargo and non-Intercourse Acts," which were both considered as plain downright violations of the Constitution. Mr. Hayne's principles, evidently, could lead to nothing but the subversion of the government, and the destruction of the whole Union.

Webster's quick perception sees this at a glance. And here is where he brings that depth of thought, that sharp logical ability and skillful arrangement of argument, that large inductive method of refutation, so characteristic of his greatness, to bear upon the mind of his audience. He reduces the whole doctrine to two main propositions. Whose prerogative is it to decide on the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of the laws ? Whence does South Carolina derive the right of vetoing or arresting the proceedings of the government ? Is the government the creature of the people or the agent of the states ? His answers to these interrogations expound the argument and show the liberality and clearness of Webster's views respecting the just powers of government and the rights of the governed.

"It is observable enough," says Webster, "that the doctrine for which the honorable member contends leads him to the necessity of maintaining, not