

House, and the lobbies and galleries filled to their utmost capacity by visitors and spectators, the scene became grand and impressive. A few spoke on the side of the resolution—chiefly Rives, Buchanan, Niles—and with an air of ease and satisfaction that bespoke a quiet determination, and a consciousness of victory. The committee room had been resorted to in parties of four and six at a time, always leaving enough on watch: and not resorted to by one side alone. The opposition were invited to a full participation—an invitation of which those who were able to maintain their good temper readily availed themselves; but the greater part were not in a humor to eat any thing—especially at such a feast. The night was wearing away: the expungers were in full force—masters of the chamber—happy—and visibly determined to remain. It became evident to the great opposition leaders that the inevitable hour had come: that the damnable deed was to be done that night: and that the dignity of silence was no longer to them a tenable position. The battle was going against them, and they must go into it, without being able to re-establish it. In the beginning, they had not considered the expunging movement a serious proceeding: as it advanced they still expected it to miscarry on some point: now the reality of the thing stood before them, confronting their presence, and refusing to “down” at any command. They broke silence, and gave vent to language which bespoke the agony of their feelings, and betrayed the revulsion of stomach with which they approached the odious subject. Mr. Calhoun said:

“No one, not blinded by party zeal, can possibly be insensible that the measure proposed is a violation of the constitution. The constitution requires the Senate to keep a journal; this resolution goes to expunge the journal. If you may expunge a part, you may expunge the whole; and if it is expunged, how is it kept? The constitution says the journal shall be kept; this resolution says it shall be destroyed. It does the very thing which the constitution declares shall not be done. That is the argument, the whole argument. There is none other. Talk of precedents? and precedents drawn from a foreign country? They don't apply. No, sir. This is to be done, not in consequence of argument, but in spite of argument. I understand the case. I know perfectly well the gentlemen have no liberty to vote otherwise. They are coerced by an exterior power. They try, indeed, to comfort their conscience by saying that it is the will of the people, and the voice of

the people. It is no such thing. We all know how these legislative returns have been obtained. It is by dictation from the White House. The President himself, with that vast mass of patronage which he wields, and the thousand expectations he is able to hold up, has obtained these votes of the State Legislatures; and this, forsooth, is said to be the voice of the people. The voice of the people! Sir, can we forget the scene which was exhibited in this chamber when that expunging resolution was first introduced here? Have we forgotten the universal giving way of conscience, so that the senator from Missouri was left alone? I see before me senators who could not swallow that resolution; and has its nature changed since then? Is it any more constitutional now than it was then? Not at all. But executive power has interposed. Talk to me of the voice of the people! No, sir. It is the combination of patronage and power to coerce this body into a gross and palpable violation of the constitution. Some individuals, I perceive, think to escape through the particular form in which this act is to be perpetrated. They tell us that the resolution on your records is not to be expunged, but is only to be endorsed ‘Expunged.’ Really, sir, I do not know how to argue against such contemptible sophistry. The occasion is too solemn for an argument of this sort. You are going to violate the constitution, and you get rid of the infamy by a falsehood. You yourselves say that the resolution is expunged by your order. Yet you say it is not expunged. You put your act in express words. You record it, and then turn round and deny it.

“But why do I waste my breath? I know it is all utterly vain. The day is gone; night approaches, and night is suitable to the dark deed we meditate. There is a sort of destiny in this thing. The act must be performed; and it is an act which will tell on the political history of this country for ever. Other preceding violations of the constitution (and they have been many and great) filled my bosom with indignation, but this fills it only with grief. Others were done in the heat of party. Power was, as it were, compelled to support itself by seizing upon new instruments of influence and patronage; and there were ambitious and able men to direct the process. Such was the removal of the deposits, which the President seized upon by a new and unprecedented act of arbitrary power; an act which gave him ample means of rewarding friends and punishing enemies. Something may, perhaps, be pardoned to him in this matter, on the old apology of tyrants—the plea of necessity. But here there can be no such apology. Here no necessity can so much as be pretended. This act originates in pure, unmixed, personal idolatry. It is the melancholy evidence of a broken spirit, ready to bow at the feet of power. The former act was such a one as might have been perpetrated in the days of Pompey or Cæsar; but an act like

this could never be done in the Roman Senate under Nero.”

Mr. Calhoun was universal giving v first introduced— mover was then le would have been le for his courage in r and appealing to th Mr. Clay comme had never believed ing until now; that lution as a thing and laid down whe and that the last la session, was the end

“Considering the resolution of March relation in which he the Senate by whom had felt it to be l on this expunging always intended to persuaded that the of pressing it to a been so taken up an sion—taken up one prepared for delivery pronounced—that he ther there existed an putting it to the vote last session, it will be lution came up, and i Senate a disposition a definitive decision. offered to waive his ri and silently to vote u was again laid upon t ever, as the country lieved. It is, howeve dry changes having ta of this body, it woul design is to bring the conclusion.”

Then, after an argum tion, which, of necess recapitulation of the original condemnation on to give vent to his f less bitter and denun and his friends than the saying:

“But if the matter of to the truth of the case, subserviency, derogator