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*Dr. M. H. ...*

## ADDRESS

*Of the State Rights and Free Trade Association of Sumter District, to the People of the said District.*

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—

We have thought proper to advert to the suggestions of our brethren of the City of Charleston, to form, for this District, a State Rights and Free Trade Association, similar to that which they have instituted in that place. In explanation of our purposes, we approach you in the spirit of candour and patriotism. Our sole object is to promote the public good, by honorable and justifiable means. As a judicious expedient for the attainment of this object, we have substituted the united efforts of an Association for the exertions of disconnected individuals. History, as well as daily observation, teaches us, that much good may be attained, as well in the political, as in the moral, the religious, and scientific world, by concert in council and co-operation in practice, which is utterly beyond the reach of individual energy. Let it ever be remembered, that combination and concert have effected those very breaches in the constitution of our country, which it is now our sole purpose to endeavor to repair. The wishes, the interests, the purposes, the public sentiment of the manufacturing portion of the Union, have found a common channel of communication to the ear of Congress and of the people, through organized and vigilant associations. Through these have the combined powers of the press, ingenuity, intellect and wealth, been concentrated upon the councils of the nation and the people of the East, the West and the middle States, with an intensity which the strong bulwark of the charter of our liberties has been unable to withstand; and the deplorable consequences of which, upon the interests, and the rights of the South, are now the causes of our deep and solemn concern. Whilst the manufacturers have advanced with the constancy, the skill, and irresistible force of a regular army, or trained band, we the planters, who have been the destined victims of their prey, have presented ourselves a ready

sacrifice, by reason of our utter disorganization; and which is still more disastrous, a state of existing internal distraction in South Carolina, whereby our energies are inevitably destined to be dissipated through the deplorable folly of domestic quarrels. We abjure for ourselves the heavy weight of responsibility of having inflicted this disaster upon our country. It will be among our earnest endeavors to prove our exemption from this charge of high political crime—to prove that we have clung with filial devotion to the rights and liberties of Carolina and her sisters, “through evil as well as good report”—that we ever have been prompt to assist and re-assert these cardinal rights, as well as vindicate these essential principles of our liberties—that we have not thrown the apple of discord among our brethren—that we have said nothing, done nothing, sanctioned and approved nothing, inconsistent with every obligation we owe to the State and to the Union. If then, a member of this oppressed community, who can look with complacency upon the example of political suicide, which we ingloriously exhibit to the pity and scorn of the enlightened world, we hereby admonish our fellow-citizens and posterity, that we abandon to such a patriot, the consolations of such a spectacle. Ours shall be the part of sustaining the standard of our constitutional liberties, so long as memory may inspire us with its hallowed treasures of the past, or a ray of hope may point us to its beacon in the future. We have told you, fellow-citizens, that our Association shall labor to promote the public good, by honorable and justifiable means. We beg leave to explain to you, what we regard as the public good—1st, we believe it consists in a practical security of the liberty of the people of each State. It was for this our forefathers bled, and for this the blood and treasure of their posterity are pledged. It was the liberty of enjoying the fruits of individual labor, free from the despotic control of irresponsible taxation, that the declaration of Independence was promulgated by the Congress, of 1776, and achieved and sustained by the chivalrous heroism of the revolution. It was the principle of unjust and arbitrary taxation, pertinaciously asserted, and insultingly, though nominally exemplified in the celebrated three penny duty per pound upon tea, which drove our ancestors through the struggles of the revolution, and abrogated the power of the British Crown, over these “free, sovereign and independent States.” It was this principle of tyranny which was crushed in its very dawn, which derived its fundamental lesson of political freedom, which conduct us to the articles of confederation, and consequently to the present con-

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sitution of the United States. Hence, we believe with the profound statesmen and devoted patriots of '76, that freedom from unjust taxation, is the first and great principle of the public good.

Second, We believe that the firm and unwavering support of the Constitution of the United States, is essentially necessary to the public good. We believe it embodies, in form and substance, the brilliant lessons of the Revolution: works out with wisdom and profound sagacity, the proper sphere for the government which it instituted, and that honestly construed and justly administered, dispenses the brightest blessings of political existence among the American people.

Third, We believe that the Union of these States is necessary and essential to the public good; that when confederated upon the terms, and governed upon the principles of the constitution, the States must ever find in Union their permanent and greatest prosperity at home, and their utmost strength and security abroad.

Fourth, We believe in the inviolable support of the State authorities, and the rights and liberties appertaining to them, as altogether indispensable to the public good, as its very basis, as identified with it; that in this consists Liberty, the Constitution, Union—all that can be dear to the American patriot—all that cherishes the last bright hope of the advocate of liberty every where. We believe that in the maintainance and inviolability of the rights of the States, the people of the Union have the only panoply of protection, against unjust taxation, and all the evils which flow from unbridled tyranny, from uncontrollable combinations of the majority to oppress and reduce to absolute slavery, the minority.

Fifth, We believe that the Resolutions of the Legislature of South Carolina, passed in the years of 1825, 1827, and 1830—the Resolutions of Kentucky, passed in 1798, and the preamble and Resolutions of Virginia, passed 1799, express correctly these authorities of the States, and those rights and liberties appertaining to them; which we pronounce to be so indispensable to the public good. With the Resolutions of our own State, we believe that the Tariff of protection to manufactures is in utter defiance of the great lesson of the declaration of independence—the great principle of the revolution which followed it, and owes its existence to a sectional combination. That whilst this act of Congress has perpetrated a most barefaced fraud upon the most important provision (the money power) of the Constitution, it has inflicted a blow, so deadly.

upon the vital interests of the South as connected, identified with, and inseparable from, the cause of Free Trade, that it is fast effecting the total prostration of the planting interests, and, if unremedied, is to result speedily in the overthrow of our liberties. For a people cannot be free when the fruits of their industry are transferred, by the tyranny of government, to the coffers of others. Involuntary tribute and political liberty, are utterly incompatible. It was but recently that we saw this condition tendered by the haughty Russian Autocrat, and accepted by the conquered, humble Turk, as the purchase of a servile peace. It was little more than fifty years ago, that the same badge of slavery was assumed by the British Parliament, as the evidence of total supremacy over the Colonies of America.—Such have been our estimation of the Tariff, and such our estimation of Free Trade. The latter is the right, the constitutional right, the vital sustenance of the the south; the former the fraudulent, tyrannical contrivance of the north and west, to enrich themselves out of the tribute so unjustly wrung from us. If we are the victims and they the gainers, if the tariff is the parent of innumerable blessings to the north, at the ruinous expense of the South, is there hope of relief in openly avowing our determination to *submit to it*? Is the cause of the south advanced by the doctrine of submission? Is submission a remedy of the evils which its very advocates admit?—Would submission to the tea tax, the stamp act, or the Boston port bill, have secured their repeal, or a renunciation of the principle on which they were based? Then who are your friends, fellow citizens? Those who tell you, that you are oppressed, that your constitution is violated, and may be repeatedly violated to any extent, in time to come, who tell you, in the same breath, that your oppressors will fight you into submission to their tyranny, and yet, that they will abandon that tyranny; or those who would advise you to support the standard of your rights, till waving triumphant, at least in the breezes of Carolina, instead of ingloriously hauling it down upon your own soil, before your own forces? Who are the friends of your constitution—those who would silently and tamely acquiesce in its repeated and gross violations, or those who would promptly rally to the point of danger, and vigorously repair the breach? Who are the wisest, the sincerest, the most zealous advocates of the Union—those who would strike at the cause of disease, while yet it is subject to the control of expedience, and while yet there is enough of sound vigor in the body politic to withstand them, or those who sluggish-

ly wait till the poison shall have pervaded every artery and vein and its existence ready to yield to the last convulsive shriek? Fellow citizens, these are unfortunately no figures of imagination, but the sad realities of sober truth. The alternative is before you; choose ye your position.

We trust you are now in possession of the principles upon which our Association is founded. That they must command the approbation of you all, we would fain believe. If so, they desire your cordial support, and we, who make their propagation, our exclusive object, your confidence and co-operation.—Beware of those, who, in the midst of such momentous dangers as you must plainly perceive beset you, seek to alarm your fears, to substitute timidity for the deliberate judgment of men, and hesitation for the firm resolution of patriots. Beware of those who seek to drill you against a particular political faith, that they may mount your shoulders, when they shall have cunningly knit you together, as a party, to ride into the agreeable offices you may have to bestow. When they tell you that we are a club of Jacobins, taking example after revolutionary France, ask them who we are; demand the proof; shew them our principles; ask if there be any civil war or bloody revolution in efforts to place before the people the approved doctrines of the patriots of good old republicanism, the doctrines of your own Legislature, sanctioned by yourselves? whether there is any revolution in seeking to enlighten public opinion, by argument in correcting the wild and calumnious misrepresentations of those alarmists who would make you believe, that blood shed and revolution is our object, instead of the legitimate reform we propose.

These fellow citizens, are our honest purposes—these the simple, harmless, and respectful means which our Association proposes to employ.

*Resolved*, That an Association be, and is hereby formed, to be called the State Rights and Free Trade Association of Sumter District.

## CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1st.—It shall be the exclusive objects of this Association, to diffuse correct information as to the limitations imposed by the Constitution on the powers of the General Government, to point out the dangers of consolidation, to vindicate the rights of the States, to expose all usurpations of unauthorised powers, to maintain the Constitution in its original purity and simplicity, to promote the blessings of Free Trade, and thereby to perpetuate the Union, and for these

purposes the efforts of this Association shall be constantly and faithfully employed in corresponding with the supporters of these principles in this State, in publishing and distributing Tracts, speeches, and public documents, calculated to enlighten the public mind on these important subjects.

ART. 2d. Every friend of State Rights and Free Trade, who may choose to avail himself of the privilege shall be considered a member of this Association upon his subscribing these rules.

ART. 3d. The officers of this Association shall consist of a President, six Vice Presidents, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall be annually appointed, at the Anniversary Meeting of the Association.

ART. 4th. There shall be a Central Committee at Sumterville, two assistant committees to be appointed in Clarendon, one in Middle Salem, one in Upper Salem, one at Bradford Springs, and one at Stateburgh, each to consist of nine members to be appointed in like manner and time as the other officers of the Association. It shall be the duty of the Central Committee to carry on, through the Secretary, such correspondence as they may deem expedient; to communicate with the assistant committees; to collect through the treasurer the contributions; to cause tracts, and other documents to be published and distributed through the assistant committees; to call meetings of the Association, whenever they may deem such a measure necessary, and to present and lay before the Association from time to time, such reports for their information, as they may deem interesting or important, and they shall have power to appropriate the funds of the association for these purposes. The President and Vice Presidents, shall be *ex-officio* members of this Committee.

ART. 5th. The regular Anniversary Meeting of this Association, shall be held on the first Monday in September in each and every year.

ART. 6th. The expense of this Association shall be paid by the Treasurer out of its funds upon the written order of the presiding officer, countersigned by the Secretary.

ART. 7th. Every donation to this association shall be exclusively applied as denoted by the donor, whenever it shall be accompanied by a special direction.

ART. 8th. This Association shall continue to exist and will persevere in its efforts, untill our wrongs shall be redressed and the constitution of the Union restored to its original purity; and when these ends shall have been attained, it shall be dissolved.

## ADDRESS

AND

## CONSTITUTION

OF THE

STATE RIGHTS AND FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

OF

SUMTER DISTRICT.

1831.

SUMTERVILLE,  
PRINTED AT THE GAZETTE OFFICE,  
1831.

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