

*Grigsby E. Thomas, Esq.* of Columbus, being called on for a sentiment, made the following remarks:

Mr. President, and gentlemen of this festive Board, the occasion is one, which seems to justify the indulgence of party feelings and the vindication of party measures. The station I am about to assume for a moment, of being the adviser and mouth-piece of this enlightened and respectable assemblage, does not belong to one of my years, surrounded as I am by honor and gray hairs. I yield in this effort to the repeated solicitations of others, and shall offer a few hints to your consideration.

The emotion which agitated my bosom, when the honored gentleman who has presided for the two last political years over the government of Georgia, finished his address, cannot be uttered. I will say that for him, which his own modesty forbade him to say for himself, *that the hour of his defeat, connected as it has been, with this occasion, so far from being the darkest, is the brightest moment of his life.* He has not fallen but risen in moral and political worth; and our highest compliment to him, is, that by sticking to his political integrity, he lost the distinguished office he had so faithfully filled.

Mr. President, it will not, I hope, be thought inappropriate on the present occasion, for us to measure ourselves, not by ourselves, but by others, opposed to us on political principles, as a party in the state. I shall neither spare my own on the one hand nor "set down aught against them in malice;" high minded and honorable competition is the life of pure political prosperity. That there are two parties in the State, as well as in the union, cannot be denied, any longer, by any one who will examine into the subject. We belong to one of them; our political opponents to the other. We are to be known by our fruits—the people are the judges. We are willing now, and shall at all times be ready to join issue.

My knowledge of public men and measures was acquired in early life, during my service among you as one of the public men of your body. I have shared a common fate with you, and still feel espoused to your doctrines; for I verily believe them to be identified, and intimately connected with the true interests of the state, the prosperity and perpetuity of our happy country.

The first great political measure upon which our adversaries and ourselves split, while I was a co-worker among you, was a project to divide the state into Congressional districts. This federal scheme had made inroads upon the republican ranks in every state where it had been palmed upon the people; our party met it fearlessly and openly; it was nevertheless carried by the force of numbers; the people tried and saw and felt its operations, and found out, that what we stated in argument, was true in practice—They saw at once it deprived them of the privilege of voting for six members out of seven to Congress, and that prevented them from bringing into their public councils, the first talents of the state, no matter where it might be located as to residence. At the very next session, this restrictive law was repealed, and we stood justified before the people.

The next great leading measure upon which we divided, was that of the old and new treaty. We held on to our vested rights, and to our state sovereignty, and neither the array of arms quartered on our frontiers, nor the fulminations of the then President, seconded by the political countenance of our adversaries at home, could awe us into submission, or an ignominious recantation of principle. Yes, with our *Moses*, our *Troop* at our head, we were ready to be offered up,—if the victim of glorious truth must be sacrificed,—to appease party vengeance and proscription. We knew in whom we had put our trust, and the firm basis upon which we stood. We maintained our rights, and got the possession of our lands, murdered no body; raised no civil war with whitemen or Indians. The opprobrious epithets of traitor and treason, were sounded in our ears; we cared not, so long as we went for principle.—The doctrines of that day are becoming the doctrines of the South—of the Union—*That the States are as sovereign in the exercise of the powers not delegated in their respective constitutional spheres as the General Government is, or can be.* We were acquitted in the end, and have been found in a growing majority upon the result of that contest.

The next political measure upon which we seemed to take distinct ground from our political opponents, was the *Tariff*. We have held, and still hold, that it is both unconstitutional and oppressively partial in its operations. We have been warm and united against it; they have either made a doubtful and heartless resistance, or given a sort of *sidewind* countenance; have attempted to brand us with the name of "Nullifiers," because some indiscreet politicians in South Carolina have appropriated to themselves this appellation, by going further upon this subject than we go as a party. We have been firm and united in the opposition to this favorite "American System," got up and fostered for sectional interests and political ambition; and will resist, until the South is rid of this oppression. The people will, in the end, be with us, without hardly a single exception; the great majority are so already; for they are beginning to feel, and will feel very sensibly, in coming time, the impoverishing and withering curse of this *unfair* policy! Our motto is, *Free Trade, general suffrage, and equality of condition.*

The next contest you had soon after I left your councils, was in your opposition to the Federal Judicial mandate, attempting to lay its hands upon the criminal jurisdiction of your laws, in the case of the *Indian Tassels*.