

and if those reasons work conviction on my mind, then I subscribe to such opinions, not otherwise.

Mr. President: One would suppose, from the course which the argument has taken upon this subject of State rights, from the manner and tone of language indulged in by our Southern friends, that the majority of this house have been taken up by the roots, been perfectly vanquished, have been left no base whatever upon which to stand; that in the discussion of this question we have been dwarfed almost out of sight, utterly overwhelmed by the force and power of the arguments adduced here. Is it so? I confess that a plain practical review of the question discussed and the authorities, assure me that at least we have a show of a case.

As I said when I first got up, I have no prepared or connected argument to present to the house; I have just skirmished about here and there where the weak and exposed position of the enemy invited. I will now go back to the real question before the house, which has been really lost sight of in this debate, and will promise to be very brief upon the subject.

First, this fourth article, as proposed by the committee, is objected to because of its novelty. It commends itself to me for the very opposite reason. It commends itself to me by reason of its antiquity; because it is contemporaneous with the formation of the Constitution of the United States. So far from being novel, it goes back to the formation of the Constitution of the United States; and is almost literally a transcript of the 2d section of the 6th article of the Constitution of the United States. And where it has been enlarged, the enlargement is simply a deduction from the premises which the Constitution itself supplies. The Constitution of the United States says so and so; therefore, says this article, thus and so naturally follow. What does the Constitution of the United States say? Here is the language:

"This Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land."

That is literally the article reported by the committee, except the matter relating to treaties—

—"and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding."

I hold that this article reported by the committee is coextensive in its being with the article of the Constitution of the United States; because it does nothing more than recite the fact that the Constitution, and laws of the United States made in pursuance of that Constitution, is the supreme law of the land. That far it is old, at all events; and

therefore not obnoxious to the objection of novelty.

Now what part of this article is new? Those words are alleged to be new, which declare paramount allegiance to be due to the Constitution of the United States—but I say they are as old as the other, because they are inseparably connected with the other, and form absolutely part and parcel of them. This deduction of the committee is alleged to be new;—for it is but the deduction, which the committee make, from the premises, which the Constitution supplies. What is that deduction? that

"Every citizen of this State owes paramount allegiance to the Constitution and Government of the United States."

Now what is the meaning of that article?

It speaks of two classes of laws. And in my judgment it contains within itself the means of its own interpretation. It is not necessary to go outside of the article itself to deduce the true interpretation of it. It is speaking of laws. First, it begins with the organic law, the Constitution of the United States, and the laws made in pursuance thereof—that is, within the purview of the Constitution, made in pursuance of the authority conferred by it—those laws are proclaimed to be the supreme law of the land. Supreme to what? Supreme to the laws which Congress may pass? Supreme to the laws which confine themselves and address themselves entirely to the National Government? No; it goes on to tell us what they are supreme to. It goes on to tell us that their supremacy invades this so-called sovereignty of the State; that their supremacy is of such a character that State lines do not keep their officers, who are called upon to administer them, outside of their lines, upon the plea of sovereignty. This supremacy passes over State lines, down through the Constitution, the organic law of the State; down to the judiciary, one of the co-ordinate branches of the State Government; down to the lowest officer clothed with judicial functions, and there commands him to obey the higher, the supreme law. It says to your State judges—notwithstanding your State Constitutions; notwithstanding your State enactments; notwithstanding you are sitting there under State authority, clothed exclusively by the State with judicial authority, deriving your appointment from the organic law of the State; nevertheless do you so expound your law that the Constitution of the United States, and the laws made in pursuance thereof, shall be supreme; and if any law of your State, organic or otherwise, conflicts with the supreme law of the land, then strike it down as null and void.

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman's time is out.

On motion of Mr. CHAMBERS, fifteen minutes additional time was given.

Mr. RIDGELY. I shall conclude all I have to say in less time than that.