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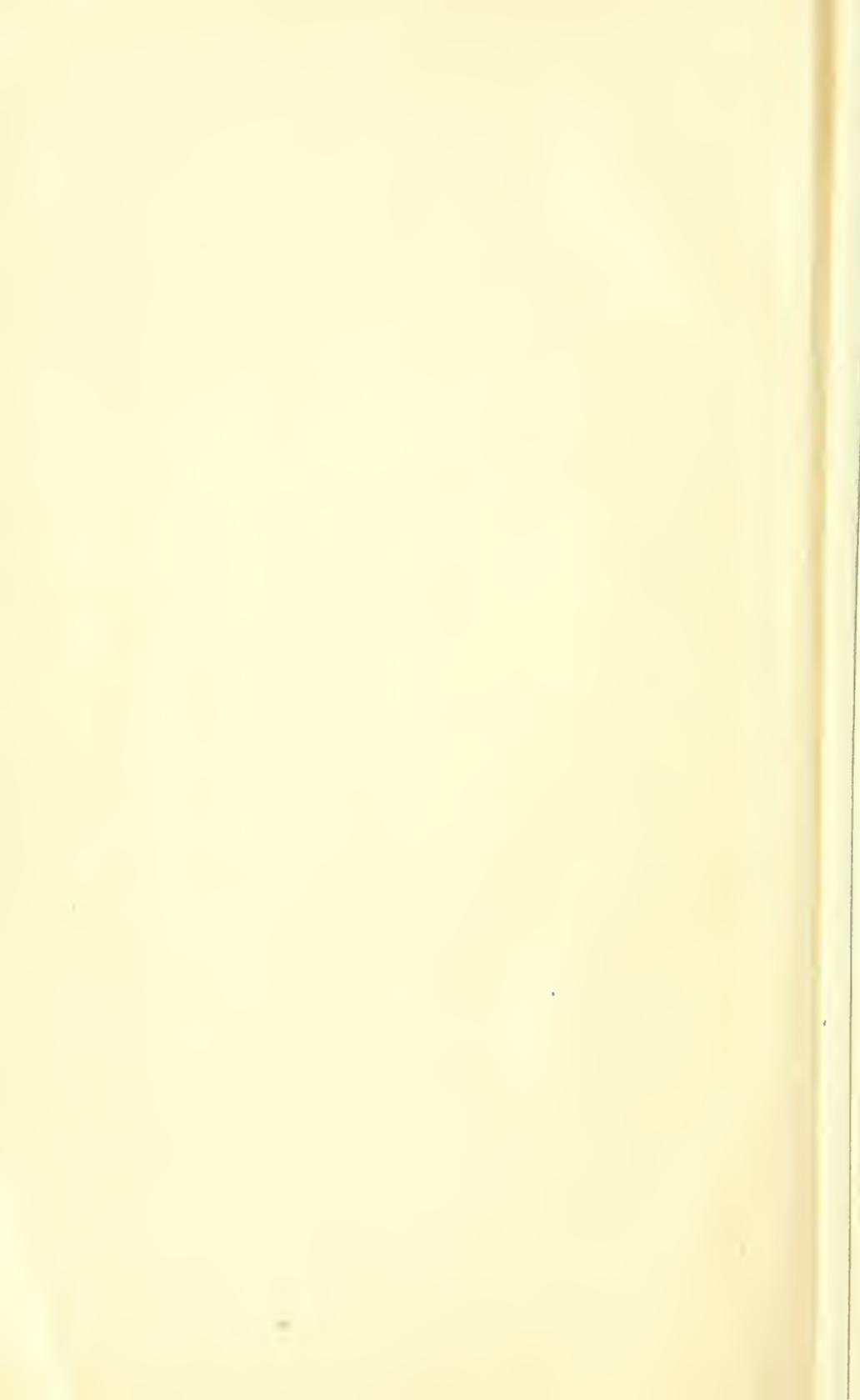
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Robert Hord.

TO THE

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**VOTERS OF CAROLINE COUNTY.**

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FELLOW-CITIZENS,

It is doubtless known to all of you, that the great question which has agitated our country for twelve months past, was settled on the 29th of January; that Benjamin Watkins Leigh was, on that day, chosen by the legislature of Virginia to represent this commonwealth in the senate of the United States.

Justice to myself, as well as a proper respect for your opinions, require, that I should freely and candidly lay before your view, the course which I pursued in this important matter as your representative.

In doing this, I might, with much propriety, call your attention to the delicate, the difficult, and the highly painful situation in which I was placed. I might place before your view the angry temperament of two political parties, standing, as Scylla and Charybdis, upon my right and upon my left, both of which it was impossible to please, and each watching, with an eagle's eye, every step of my progress, and prepared, with bitter denunciations, for anticipated trespasses upon their sacred rights. This I say, fellow-citizens, I might with propriety do, and I might then appeal with confidence to the tender feelings of your hearts, to the noble sympathies which animate your bosoms. But this, permit me to say, and I say it with the utmost respect for you, I disdain to do. I can never invoke your sympathies, whilst I have, as I conceive, the strongest claim upon your justice. All that I ask of you is, a fair and dispassionate consideration of the facts which I shall lay before you. This I have the indubitable right to claim at your hands; and if after that you shall condemn me, I trust I shall bow with resignation to your decision.

It is well known to all of you, that previous to the election last spring, I openly and freely proclaimed that I had insuperable objections to Mr. Rives as our next senator. My decided preference for Mr. Leigh was equally notorious. Each voter, when he exercised the right of suffrage, was well acquainted with my opinions and my wishes upon this subject. I put this question home to the conscience of each of you, and ask a candid answer: Suppose that the legislature had convened the day after the election in Caroline closed, and had proceeded at once to the choice of a senator—Is there a single individual in the county who would have expected me to support the pretensions of Mr. Rives? Would not every one have said, without hesitation, our delegate will vote for Mr. Leigh? I only ask a candid, a conscientious reply to these questions, and I know it must be an acknow-

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 ledgment that, in such a case, I would have been bound to support Mr. Leigh. And why? Because I was elected for this very purpose. The election of senator was made the leading question on which our county election turned. The political opinions and principles of Leigh and Rives were brought fully into discussion before the people. In fact, the characters of these men were, as it were, personated by the county candidates; and in giving his suffrage for the latter, the voter was only indicating his choice between the former.

How then, I ask you, could I regard my election, under such circumstances, otherwise than as an indication of the public will, given in the most solemn manner, and imposing upon me the highest obligation to support Mr. Leigh?

But this case you will say is entirely hypothetical. It will be said, that the legislature did not convene till many months after the election, and that the people had the right to give another indication of their wishes. With all this I entirely concur. I maintain that the people possess the right to change their opinions as often as they please, and that they have an equal right to control their agent, and to make him reflect their will in all the mutations through which they may pass.

Not long after the spring elections closed, it was proclaimed by the subsidized presses of the land, that a reaction had taken place—that the people had been deceived at the polls, and that instructions must be gotten up to reverse the decisions so recently and solemnly made. Our county did not escape the mania—I was called upon to say whether I would obey instructions. I unhesitatingly admitted the right of the people to instruct, and acknowledged my obligation to conform to the will of my constituents upon all and every subject whatever. I did not, as I have been unjustly charged, pretend to dictate to the people the manner in which they should proceed to exercise this right. I admitted openly the right, as well as the manner of its exercise, to reside exclusively in the people, and expressed my determination to reflect their fairly ascertained will, no matter in what way obtained. It is true, that in my address, published in the *Arena* in November last, I suggested the safest and most satisfactory manner to be, by a public meeting; and I requested the adoption of this mode—but in the same address, I disclaimed any intention of dictating a course to them. The request, to settle the question by a public meeting, was not complied with—a different method was pursued. So sacred do I consider the right of instruction, that I promised to be controlled by the public will obtained in this way, provided it was fairly shewn thereby that a majority of the lawful voters were opposed to Mr. Leigh.

On the 28th November, I left my residence for Richmond, and on the 1st of December, took my seat in the legislature. Before I left Caroline, I suggested to one of the gentlemen who had taken an active part in the business of instruction, the propriety of furnishing me with the instructions before my departure, in order that I might examine them. The request was refused, though he had them in his possession, and I was only permitted to look at them for a few minutes.

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A few days after the session commenced, a resolution was offered, the object of which was to fix upon the 12th of December for the election of senator. My vote stands recorded against that resolution, whilst nearly every other member of the party with which I have acted, voted for it. I had not at this time received the expected instructions from my constituents—but I had reason to believe they would be forwarded to me. I was therefore in favour of postponing the election, until my constituents had full time to develop their wishes. The resolution, however, passed the house, and was sent to the senate: the senate amended it, by striking out “the 12th of December,” and inserting in lieu thereof, “the 12th of February.” Thus amended by the senate, it was returned to the house; and on being read, a motion was made to amend the amendment, by striking out “the 12th of February,” and inserting in lieu thereof, “the 12th of January.” On this motion, I voted again in the negative. The motion, however, prevailed, and the resolution was again sent to the senate. The senate again amended it, by striking out “the 12th of January,” and inserting “the 27th of January.” For the resolution thus amended, I voted, and it was concurred in by the house.

I have been thus particular, fellow-citizens, in giving you a detailed account of this whole proceeding, in order that you may perceive the course which I pursued in relation to it. You will observe, that throughout the whole of this preliminary step to the election of a senator, I was found in the ranks of my political opponents, and opposed to the party which desired the election of Mr. Leigh. I went throughout for the remotest day, and my object was to give those of my constituents, who wished to instruct me, full time to speak their wishes. If I had been regardless of your wishes, I should have voted for hurrying into the election before your letter of instructions reached me. The letter of instructions, together with a letter from the committee acting on behalf of the instructionists, was put in my possession on the 12th of December.

In my reply to the letter of the committee, which bears date the 13th of December, after acknowledging the receipt of the instructions, I say, “maintaining as I ever have, and as I trust I ever shall, that the people are the only source of political power, and that they have the right to control their agents in the exercise of any part of it which they may confer upon them, I receive these papers with a determination to give them that respectful consideration to which every communication from such a source is entitled. I beg leave to assure those of my constituents who have undertaken to instruct me, that if after the most impartial investigation of the documents sent me by the committee, of which I am capable, I shall be satisfied that they contain the will of a majority of the lawful voters of the county, fairly obtained, I shall either yield obedience to them, or adopt a course equally, if not more agreeable to them.”

I shall now proceed, fellow-citizens, to give you the result of the investigation, and if that result shall not be so agreeable to many of you as you had been led to anticipate, I trust you will not hesitate to acknowledge that I have fully redeemed the pledge given in the foregoing extract from my letter.

The letter of instructions was signed by 507 persons, to which two may be added, afterwards received by me, making the total number of instructionists 509.

The committee appointed by the instructionists to scrutinize the list, and to communicate with me upon the subject, certified to me that only 475 of the signers were lawful voters. They also certified the whole number of votes polled at the last spring election to be 695, which they add is the largest number polled for the last 15 years; and they further say that 475 constitute a large majority of the lawful voters of the county. What the intention of the committee was in making these statements, I do not know; the only reasonable inference to my mind seems to be this: 1st. That 695 being the largest number of votes polled in Caroline for 15 years, it is, therefore, the whole vote of the county; and 475 being a large majority of 695, our delegate is therefore validly instructed, by a majority of the lawful voters of the county.

From these facts the mind involuntarily forms a syllogism which is perfectly conclusive in favor of the instructionists, and which no sophistry, however refined, can resist, provided the facts which support it be founded in truth. But in them the committee was deceived. The facts are erroneous, and the conclusions drawn from them consequently false. It is true that 695 votes were polled at the spring election, but of those voters only about 240 instructed me, some others who had signed the letter of instructions having recanted. 240 deducted from 695, will leave 455, a large and clear majority against the instructions, on this view of the subject.

Again—The Jackson committee state that 695 persons voted last spring. They also state that 475 signers to the letter of instructions are lawful voters. Only 263 of these signers voted last spring, which taken from 475, will leave 212 who did not vote. These added to 695, will make, according to the committee's shewing, 907 lawful voters in Caroline county. The majority of 907 is 454. From 475 deduct 37 recantations, and there will remain 438, which is 16 less than the majority of 907. Under this other view of the subject, it is equally manifest that if I had obeyed, I should have represented the wishes of a minority in opposition to a majority.

I beg you, fellow-citizens, to bear in mind that the foregoing views are based solely upon the facts and evidences furnished me by the instructionists themselves. Supposing all their statements to be strictly true, they prove clearly, and without doubt, that a majority of the lawful voters of Caroline had not united in the effort to instruct me, and consequently, that I was left unfettered and free to exercise my own discretion in the choice of senator. I appeal to your candour to say, is it not so? Would every one of you, as impartial jurors, acting upon oath, deliberately consider the facts, I would be content to rest the matter upon the foregoing statement. I should not hesitate to claim a triumphant verdict at your hands. But, fellow-citizens, in times of high party excitement like the present, abounding as they are, with factions demagogues, and self-constituted guardians of the people's rights, moved alone by the unholy desire of self-promotion, and ready, with the weapons of detraction and mis-

representation, to demolish every object which may stand in the way of their own advancement, I am admonished by experience to omit no view of this subject which is calculated to prevent a forfeiture of the confidence with which you have honoured me. I shall therefore ask your attention to another view of this subject. I have repeatedly acknowledged the right of instruction, and I have as often promised to obey the fairly ascertained will of my constituents. By my constituents, I mean all the lawful voters of the county. In an enquiry, then, into the validity of the instructions sent me, the most proper and reasonable course appeared to me to be, to ascertain first, the number of lawful voters in the county; and secondly, the number of lawful voters on the letter of instructions. It must be evident to you, that neither myself, nor any one man in the county, was competent to give the desired information. To whom, then, could I apply with as much propriety as to the clerk, and sheriffs, and commissioners of the revenue? To them I did apply; and after a diligent examination of the land and tax books, and the records of the clerk's office, they furnished me with a list of 1038 lawful voters of our county. They also examined the list of instructionists, and struck therefrom the names of 110, who are not entitled to the right of suffrage. These, deducted from 509, the whole number of instructionists, will leave 399 lawful voters, 37 of whom have recanted. On this view, then, the matter will stand thus:

Whole number of lawful voters in Caroline,		1,038
Whole number of lawful instructionists,	399	
Deduct recantations,	37	
	---	362
		676

I trust that no republican will say, that under this, the only proper view of the subject, I was instructed. To say I was, would be to deny the truth of the great republican principle, that the majority must govern.

It is well known to you all, fellow-citizens, that throughout the whole of the last spring canvass, I only sought your support upon what little merit I possessed, and upon the orthodoxy of my political faith. If my adversaries had faults, no one can charge me with having exposed them to public view. I hope I shall ever scorn to obtain political advancement at the expense of the private feelings or reputation of my opponents. I am a public man, and am acting for the public good, and if in the defence of my conduct, and the great interests, entrusted in part to my keeping, I shall be forced to disclose facts, which I would gladly have concealed, I hope it will be attributed to a proper desire to discharge a public duty, and not to a personal disrespect to any man in existence.

It is known to you all, as before stated, that throughout the whole canvass of the last election, I declared my uncompromising political hostility to William C. Rives, and my determination to support Benjamin W. Leigh as our next United States senator. Elected with these views, and after these declarations, I hoped that my way was clear before me, and little dreamed of the difficulties which have since

arisen in my path. As a representative, my end was your interest, and the guide I determined to seek in your wishes, when clearly indicated, or in the absence of such indication, in the suggestions of my own humble reason. It was here that difficulties awaited me, in presenting for my investigation, a complicated question of fact, as to your wishes, in relation to the senatorial election. Instructions were gotten up for the purpose of ascertaining the wishes of the people of Caroline in relation to this election. These instructions, with the names of many persons signed to them, were forwarded to me sometime after I had left the county, by four gentlemen, acting as a committee on behalf of the instructionists. Upon examining them, I found them unaccompanied by any evidence to satisfy me of their genuineness or authenticity. The committee do not even say, that they believe them to be genuine: on the contrary, they informed me, that they made out one consolidated list from many other lists obtained from other persons—and they do not inform me who those other persons were. From which it is to be inferred, that the committee itself did not know whether the signatures to the various letters of instruction were genuine or not. I have no doubt but the committee thought they were genuine; but they did not think proper to assume the responsibility, which the expression of their belief on this subject would impose upon them. The undivided responsibility of the whole subject was thrown upon me, then engaged in my official duties, and distant from the only persons from whom I might obtain satisfactory information. A short time after the reception of the instructions, directing me to vote for Mr. Rives, other letters of instructions began to reach me from some of the persons whose names were signed on the first, cancelling the instructions to vote for Rives, and directing me to vote as I pleased. Some of these writers state, that they were induced to sign the instructions by improper representations; and others say that they never signed them at all, and that they did not authorize any person to sign for them. Here, fellow-citizens, arose a fresh and perplexing difficulty. The instructionists were attacking the validity of their own act and deed, which attack, was no less than a direct impeachment of its correctness, and I was forced to act the part of an unwilling umpire in their disputes. Now, fellow-citizens, I beg of you to consider this whole subject under this view.

Bear in mind that the state of parties in our county, as indicated by the election, was nearly equal. Recollect that I received nearly one-half of the largest number of votes polled for 15 years, against two candidates. Remember also, that this vote was given me on my express declaration, that I would not vote for Mr. Rives. Think of these things I say, and then answer me this question: Was the letter of instructions sent to me by the committee, unofficial and unattested as it was as to its authenticity, and followed, as was the case, by charges of serious import, from some of the very men whose names appeared upon it; was such a document I say, sufficient to justify me in going directly counter to the high obligations imposed by the foregoing considerations upon me? From the considerate, the temperate, and all such as respect that golden precept, "do as you would be done by," I can readily anticipate an answer. From the thoughtless and

impetuous, I look for no quarter. I never entertained the hope of pleasing such by any conceivable vote I could give.

Before I leave this subject, permit me to remind you that I have made no charge against the instructions sent to me, nor against any of the persons who had an agency in getting them up. I have only informed you, as it was my duty to do, of the charges made by others; and these charges, bear in mind, come not from my political friends, but from some of the instructionists themselves.

I have now, fellow-citizens, done with this subject. I have laid it fully before you. It now rests with you to censure or approve, to condemn or to sustain. Be your decision what it may, it can never deprive me of the high satisfaction which I shall derive from the consideration, that I have done what I believed to be right. The current of party spirit is running high, and all of us are, more or less, subjected to its potent influence. I cannot expect, under such circumstances, that my acts or my motives will be duly appreciated. But this state of things cannot last always. The questions which now distract us, will soon cease to exist, and our present commotions will ere long be supplanted by a state of placid tranquillity. When that happy state shall arrive, then will my conduct be viewed through the medium of reason and judgment, and then shall I expect to meet in your approbation, an ample remuneration for all the punishment which passion and prejudice can now inflict upon me.

Before I conclude this address, permit me, fellow-citizens, to ask your attention, whilst I endeavour to expose the misrepresentations which have been practised upon you concerning the political opinions of Benjamin W. Leigh. Every effort which ingenuity could devise has been made to excite your prejudices against this worthy son of Virginia. Up to the last session of congress, no man, save Washington, ever occupied a higher place in the confidence and affections of the people of Virginia, than Benjamin Watkins Leigh. As a gentleman, a lawyer, or a statesman of the true republican faith, he stood unrivalled. His meritorious and faithful public services in various stations, and more particularly in the convention which framed our present constitution, had secured to him the gratitude of his countrymen of every class and condition. In February 1833, the legislature was about to go into the election of a senator, to represent this commonwealth in the senate of the United States. Mr. Leigh was requested to permit himself to be put in nomination. He refused, on the ground that his engagements required his whole attention at home, and stated that he could not accept the office on any terms. Contrary, however, to his wishes, some of his friends determined to put him in nomination. Colonel Joseph Watkins, the present leader of the Jackson party in the legislature, brought his name before the house, and accompanied the nomination with the following merited eulogy:

Mr. Watkins of Goochland said, that as he could not vote for Mr. Tyler, he rose with the deepest sensibility, to bring forward a master spirit of the age, Benjamin Watkins Leigh. He would not insult a name with which every attribute of honour and devotion to country was associated, by attempting a detail of meritorious services so well known to every member of the house. He knew that letters would

be quoted to shew, that in case of Mr. Leigh's election, he would not consent to serve. Perhaps it would be asking too much, to insist upon his serving the full term of six years—but he thought Mr. Leigh would not refuse his services in the present emergency, even should he resign after the next session of congress. He was a true patriot, and Mr. Watkins believed would not refuse his exertions at the call of his country in times like these—and he trusted, that before that period arrived, Mr. Leigh's exertions would have made "glorious summer of the winter of our discontent." He should vote for Mr. Leigh, whether he was sustained by the house or not. Mr. Watkins was followed by Mr. Jefferson Randolph, another leading Jackson man of the present legislature, who supported the claims of Mr. Leigh in a strain almost as complimentary as Mr. Watkins.

You will bear in mind, fellow-citizens, that these two witnesses, who testified so highly to the merits of Mr. Leigh, spoke truly the universal voice and feelings of Virginia at that time. They claimed that themselves, as well as Mr. Leigh, were genuine republicans of the old school. I now ask, and I ask it with boldness, what has Mr. Leigh since done to forfeit the high claim which he then had to the confidence and esteem of his countrymen? What has he done to incur the charge of having deserted the republican ranks? His enemies will answer, that he has opposed the administration of general Jackson. He advocates the re-charter of the United States bank. Examine with me, for one moment, into the truth of these charges—1st. He has opposed the present administration. I have always thought that the best evidence of a genuine republican was found in his opposition to the growth of federal or executive power. Mr. Jefferson and his followers opposed the usurpations of the elder Adams, and they therefore became entitled to the name of republicans. Mr. Leigh, in the same manner, has, by his zealous opposition to executive encroachments, proved himself to be a true disciple of the same school. But I do not intend at this time to enter into an examination of the acts of the present administration. For the sake of argument, I will admit that Mr. Leigh has been wholly wrong in his opposition to the present administration of the federal government; and I will even then demonstrate to every reasonable man, that he is not accountable for his conduct. You will recollect, that on the opening of the last session of congress, a resolution of censure was introduced into the senate, upon the course pursued by the president concerning the deposits. Mr. Rives, then a senator, opposed the resolution, and advocated the conduct of the president. The legislature of Virginia, then in session, took the subject into consideration, and by a majority of more than two to one, passed the following resolutions:

#### VIRGINIA RESOLUTIONS

*On the Deposites and the Bank of the United States, adopted February 8th, 1834.*

"Whereas, the general assembly of Virginia, deem it of the utmost importance, that the power to control the public revenue should be made to abide, in practice, where it has been invested by the constitution, in the immediate representatives of the people, and of the states, in congress assembled; and all experience of the practical operation of governments has proved, that arbitrary assumptions of power

by them, or any officer of them, if silently acquiesced in, become precedents for further and still greater acts of usurpation: therefore,

"1. *Resolved by the general assembly*, That the recent act of the president of the United States, exerting a control over the public deposits, by causing them to be withheld and withdrawn, on his own responsibility, from the United States bank in which they had been ordered to be placed by the act of congress chartering the said bank, is, in the judgment of the general assembly, a dangerous and alarming assumption of power by that officer, which cannot be too strongly condemned.

"2. *Resolved*, That while the general assembly will ever be ready to sustain the president in the exercise of all such powers as the constitution has confided to him, they, nevertheless, cannot but regard with apprehension and distrust, the disposition to extend his official authority beyond its just and proper limits, which he has so clearly manifested in his recent interference with the treasury department of the federal government, in the exercise of a sound discretion which congress has confided to the head of that department alone.

"3. *Resolved*, That our senators in congress be instructed, and our representatives requested, to use their best exertions to procure the adoption, by congress, of proper measures for restoring the public moneys to the bank of the United States, or, at least, for causing them to be deposited therein for the future, according to the direction and stipulation of the act of congress chartering the said bank; if at the time of their action on the subject, the said bank be in their opinion, a safe depository of the public treasure.

"4. *Resolved*, That the general assembly cannot recognize as constitutional the power which has been claimed by congress to establish a United States bank, because, in the opinion of the general assembly, as they have heretofore solemnly declared, that power is not given to congress by the constitution of the United States.

"5. *Resolved*, That the general assembly do not intend by the declaration of their opinion in regard to the unconstitutionality of the bank of the United States, to qualify, or in any manner to impair the force of their disapprobation of the withholding and withdrawing of the public deposits.

"6. *Resolved*, That the governor of the commonwealth be requested to transmit a copy of these resolutions to each of our senators and representatives in the congress of the United States."

These resolutions contain the deliberate sense of the legislature. They charge the president with unlawful assumptions of power, and with a disposition to extend his authority beyond the limits prescribed by the constitution—and they were sent on as instructions to control the action of our senators. Mr. Rives received them, and rather than obey them, he resigned his seat. On the resignation of Mr. Rives, Mr. Leigh was appointed to succeed him. He entered the senate then, completely fettered by his constituents in relation to the deposit question, and all subjects connected therewith. Whatever his private opinions might have been, he had no discretion in their exercise. The course to be pursued was clearly chalked out by his constituents; and as a good republican, he reflected their will.

I ask you now, fellow-citizens, even supposing he was in error, is he responsible for that error? Those who maintain that he is, must cease to profess a regard for the right of instruction. But this is not the only subject upon which Mr. Leigh has opposed the present administration. You all know, that when general Jackson was elevated to the presidency, the honourable John M'Lean presided over the post-office department—and you likewise know the flourishing condition in which that faithful officer left the financial affairs of that department. What is its condition now? Totally bankrupt. Under the administration of William T. Barry, its immense income has been di-

verted from its proper objects, and squandered with a lavish hand upon the idolatrous supporters of the powers that be. An institution that was intended for the convenience of the people, and to scatter useful information throughout the land, has been converted into the most corrupt political machine that was ever seen in any age or country. Its whole resources have been sunk—and by a lawless and unconstitutional act, the post master general has saddled it with a debt to the extent of several hundred thousand dollars beyond its ability to pay. I do not blame the president for the appointment of Mr. Barry; but surely there can be no excuse offered for his continuing a man in office, who has shewn so little capacity for conducting the concerns of his department. Twelve months ago, the senate, by a unanimous vote, declared that the post master general had violated the laws and constitution of the land; and yet, in the face of this unanimous declaration, the president still continues this unworthy officer in power. Which of you, fellow-citizens, can approve such conduct? and who can blame Mr. Leigh for disapproving it?

A few words, now, upon the second charge. You have been told that Mr. Leigh is an advocate of a re-charter of the United States bank; and a paragraph of his speech of the 18th March last, has been referred to as authority for the charge. Fellow-citizens, have any of those who made the charge, ever shown you the speech? No, they dare not do it. They know it would convict them of misrepresentation. I will now lay that part of it before you, which his enemies have perverted to suit their purposes. Bear in mind, that Mr. Webster had introduced a resolution into the senate to re-charter the bank for six years. Upon this resolution, Mr. Leigh rose and said:

“He hoped the senate would indulge him, if he took this early opportunity to indicate, frankly and distinctly, the opinion he entertained on this important subject, and the course he should pursue in regard to it. Indeed, some remarks which had fallen from the gentleman from Massachusetts, if he rightly understood the allusions they imported, seemed to render such an explanation from him necessary.

“It is known to the senate, said he, that among the resolutions adopted by the general assembly of Virginia, during its last session, which have heretofore been laid before both houses of congress, there was one declaring the opinion that the federal government had no constitutional authority to incorporate a national bank: it contains, indeed, no positive instruction to the senators representing the state in this house, but it is a deliberate, solemn expression of the sense of the legislature, and, I have no doubt, of the general sense of the people of Virginia on the subject; and this with reference to the question of the renewal of the charter of the present bank of the United States. It is known to the senate, too, that I must have accepted the trust which a place in this body imposes, with full knowledge of the resolution to which I have adverted. Under these circumstances—knowing what was expected of me when I was elected, representing the sovereignty of the state, and informed, as I am, of her opinion and her will, even if I entertained a different opinion, *I should be incapable of so far misrepresenting her, as to vote for a re-charter of the Bank of the United States, for any length of time, however short, or with any modifications whatever. But, in truth, I concur in the opinion of my constituents on the constitutional question, and that entirely and exactly.* I have examined the arguments for the constitutionality of such a corporation, over and over again, deliberately, and, I hope, impartially—I think I understand them—and I am quite sure that the opinion I have formed is the result of my best judgment.”

“ But though the people of Virginia do entertain the opinion, and have uniformly maintained it, and I think upon just grounds, that this government has no constitutional authority to charter a national bank, the developments of the present year, now in rapid progress, may serve to convince them, that the renewal of the charter of the present bank, with such modifications, and for such a term as experience has shewn or shall dictate to be proper, may be the only means which human wisdom can devise, to avert or to correct measures far more unconstitutional, more abhorrent in principle from their opinions, and more dangerous and baleful in their consequences. The alternatives but too likely to be presented to us, are indeed awful.”

In the foregoing extract, the opposition of Mr. Leigh to a re-charter of the bank, under any circumstances whatever, is so clearly set forth, that I shall forbear to make a single comment upon it. The man who can read it, and then call Mr. Leigh a bank man, either charges him with stating a deliberate falsehood, or he must himself be under the influence of such a hallucination of intellect as to render him incapable of understanding his own vernacular tongue. Rather than incur the imputation of vanity in attempting to convince such an one, I will leave him to the enjoyment of all the pleasure he can derive from a pertinacious adherence to his pre-conceived opinions. Up to the time that Mr. Leigh was first elected to the senate, I have shewn, by the evidence of his present enemies, that he possessed the confidence and esteem of his countrymen, that he was “ a patriot, a master spirit of the age.” I have shewn that he went into the senate with his hands tied by his constituents, as to the course he was to pursue towards the present administration. He has faithfully, and with ability, obeyed the instructions of his constituents. What man, I again ask, can in conscience condemn him? It is a remarkable fact, that some of the very men who voted for the resolutions of instruction to Mr. Leigh, are now most violent in their denunciations against him. The inconsistency of such can only be accounted for upon the supposition, that they claim for the minority the right to control the majority. If this supposition be not correct, I am at a loss to determine how it is, that the same men can censure Mr. Leigh for obeying, and myself for disobeying instructions.

Fellow-citizens, I have already swelled this address to a much larger size than I intended; but long as it is, I cannot conclude without briefly adverting to two subjects upon which I understand attempts have been made to injure me.

The first is the subject of enclosures. On my way to Richmond in December, a petition was put into my hands by a citizen of Caroline, signed by 112 persons, with directions that I should present it to the legislature. I presented it, as it was my duty to do, early in the session, and had it referred to the committee on agriculture. Some time since, I was notified that the committee would consider the subject of the petition on a certain day, and they wished me to be present. I attended, but no member of the committee appeared but the chairman. Another day was appointed, and I again attended, and found the chairman only at his post. I then stated to the chairman my views upon the subject, as follow, and requested him to make them known to the committee when it should meet. I told him that I could not advocate the views of the petitioners, if I consulted my own judg-

ment, and that however much I might respect the opinions of the petitioners, I did not think the number sufficient to control me; that the change desired by the petitioners might be proper at a future day, but that I thought it improper at this time, to make a change in the laws relating to enclosures, which would suddenly uproot a custom as old as the government itself, and which would bear very heavily upon the people generally, and particularly the poor. He replied that his views accorded precisely with mine, and that he would report accordingly. Thus the subject ended. The committee has not yet reported, and probably will not at this session. This is all that I have said or done upon this subject. You will now see that the charge against me, that I was supporting the views of the petitioners, is wholly groundless.

A few words now upon the other subject. I understand that I am charged with telling the people in the canvass of last spring, that the measures of the president in relation to the United States bank, if persisted in, would ruin the country, destroy the currency, paralyze the industry and enterprise of our citizens, and in fact bring about a ruinous depreciation of property, and a stagnation of business; and that this prediction was not verified. I at once plead guilty to the charge. I acknowledge I told the people all this, and I assure you I honestly and conscientiously believed it too; and if there had been no good grounds on which to base such unhappy anticipations, with what other imputation do I stand chargeable than that of having yielded too much to the suggestions of a timid imagination, of having been in fact a false prophet; and if such were the case, I might here adopt the system of recrimination pursued by my adversaries, and balance the account at once. I might triumphantly ask where is the realization of the golden dreams, the metallic visions which rung so sweetly in your ears in March last. Where is the Jackson money, the Benton yellow jackets, the specie currency, which in eight or nine months from that time, were to inundate the land? When was that golden age revived, in which, before this time, "every substantial citizen will have a long silken purse of fine open net work, through the interstices of which the yellow gold will shine and glitter; every substantial man's wife and daughter will travel upon gold." Which of you I ask, fellow-citizens, has seen a realization of these golden auguries? In eight or nine months all these beautiful prophecies were to be fulfilled, and bank rags were no more to be seen in our land. I fear that none of you can say these prophecies have been verified in a single instance; and if so, it will appear there are other false prophets in the land besides myself. But, fellow-citizens, I am not content to adopt this improper mode of argument, used so much by my adversaries. I have never relied upon the demerits of my opponents to sustain me in any thing I have said. I have told you nothing for which I cannot give a good and substantial reason. If I cannot stand upon the strength of my own cause let me sink, rather than take advantage of the weakness of that of my enemies. I did tell you in the canvass, as before stated, that awful and gloomy times were overhanging our before happy and prosperous countrymen. The same things were told to the people every where, to awaken them to a sense of the

impending ruin, and to these predictions alone, are they indebted for their escape.

Let us now take a short retrospect of our situation at the period a little preceding this gloomy era in our history. At no time in our existence as a nation, have the enterprise and industry of our countrymen been so richly rewarded as in the year 1833. Blessed with an unusual degree of tranquillity at home, we were at peace with all the nations of the earth. Agriculture, the mechanic arts and commerce were all flourishing to an extent before unprecedented. With that confidence and enterprise which such a state of prosperity never fails to excite, every citizen in our country had stretched his credit to its fullest extent. To supply the capital necessary to meet the demands of such a spirit of enterprise, numberless banking institutions sprung into existence, which, in many instances, flooded the country with forty times as much of their paper as they had specie to redeem. Yet numberless as they were, and as little specie as they had, their paper was unusually current. At this time there was comparatively but little specie in the United States; bank paper was almost the only money we had. At this critical moment, the president suddenly and unnecessarily, as his best friends have admitted, determined to strike a blow at the bank of the United States, to which nearly all the rest were largely indebted. With a vindictiveness, never surpassed by the most rancorous personal hatred, he swore an exterminating warfare against it; he proclaimed to the world, that the institution was rotten and insolvent, and an unsafe keeper of the public money; that he had his foot upon the neck of the monster, and was determined to crush it. Did you believe him my countrymen? Yes; every man in the country who held any of its paper believed, that if not already insolvent, the president would soon make it so, and he pressed upon it with its paper in order to exchange it for specie. In this way a heavy run was made against the bank, without its having received any notice to prepare for it. To meet this unexpected demand for specie, the United States bank was necessarily compelled to call upon its debtors, amongst which the state banks were the largest. The public now became alarmed for their safety; the rush was now turned upon them. Every man who held much of their paper, hastened with it to the bank, to exchange it for specie. Many of them were unable to withstand the shock, and exploded—and every man in the nation, of every party, expected a universal explosion. There is no trait in the nature of man, more strongly characteristic, than to forget dangers and perils, through which he has passed unhurt. You, fellow-citizens, are an agricultural people. Your property consisted of land and slaves, and, therefore, you escaped the ruin which overwhelmed thousands of your worthy countrymen of other avocations. Go to your commercial cities, and enquire of your merchants, mechanics and manufacturers, and see how many useful and enterprising men, with their families, were reduced from a state of prosperity and plenty, to one of indigence. And though your pursuits in life, warded off the blow which prostrated thousands, were you free from danger? Imagine to yourself the state of our finances as before described; imagine to yourselves, a nation of enterprising people carrying on their business, with a cur-

rency of near 500,000,000 of paper dollars, and but little specie; imagine the whole of this money on the eve of utter annihilation; and then if you admit that money is necessary to carry on the ordinary transactions between man and man, you cannot fail to be sensible of the dangers you have escaped. I state it as a fact which is susceptible of positive proof, that the United States bank had it in its power, through the whole of the last winter and spring, to blow up every bank in Virginia at any moment it pleased. Why was this power not exercised? Let me tell you. The people, roused to a sense of their impending ruin, went to the polls last spring, and by their votes, rebuked the president for his improper interference with the currency of the country. Too obstinate to retrace his steps, he yet feared to wage further his warfare against the bank. Not long before the elections, he stated, that he had the checks of the bank, to the amount of \$7,000,000, for which he meant to demand the specie. If this demand had been made, I have no doubt but the prostration of every bank in the Union would have ensued. But the threat was not executed—and why? Because you stopped him at the polls. And now, permit me to ask, if the people had not thus interposed, at the elections, and denounced, as freemen, this unnatural warfare, is it not reasonable to suppose, that my predictions would have been fully realized?

I have now, fellow-citizens, answered, I trust satisfactorily, this charge. I now call upon my adversaries to explain the prophetic golden visions, that were sounded so sweetly in your ears last spring. Let them tell you on what ground they then told you that paper money was to be banished from the country, and a hard money currency was to succeed it. They told you, “elect us, and we will give you Jackson money.” Have they made an effort to redeem their promise? Yes, they have. Whilst the Jackson party were preaching up golden times in Virginia, the same party was establishing new banks in the state of New York and elsewhere. Has any attempt to banish paper money been made in Virginia? Oh yes; a bold effort was made in the legislature a few days ago, to banish paper rags, and to introduce the long looked for golden age, by establishing a new bank in the county of Botetourt. This bank was concocted and introduced into the house, and carried through by Jackson men, aided principally by the same party. Read the speech of colonel Watkins on the occasion. He was the only one of the golden number who raised his voice against the infant monster. He boldly charged his party with having electioneered with the people upon the hard money currency, and now they were the first to violate the promise. His party continued to believe, that the best way to rid the country of bank paper, was to establish another bank, and therefore passed the bill. Now, this New York plan of diminishing paper money by increasing it, may be a good one, but I think the advocates of a hard money currency ought to have explained it to the people last spring. I could not, however, see into it, and therefore voted against it.

Fellow-citizens, I have now given you a faithful account of my conduct upon such subjects as you have felt much interest in. Such difficulties and embarrassments have been thrown in the path of my official duties, as to render it utterly impossible to give satisfaction to all.

Any conceivable course which I could have pursued, would have offended many. Under such painful and perplexing circumstances, I might in ordinary times expect my conduct to be viewed with feelings of moderation and forbearance, if not of approbation. But the events of a short time past, have taught me to expect no quarter, to look for no forbearance. I already foresee, with much regret, the approach of an angry and animated canvass, in which all the combustible elements of our nature are to be roused into active operation; the principles of decorum trampled under foot, and the sacred obligations of private friendship sacrificed at the shrine of partizan warfare.

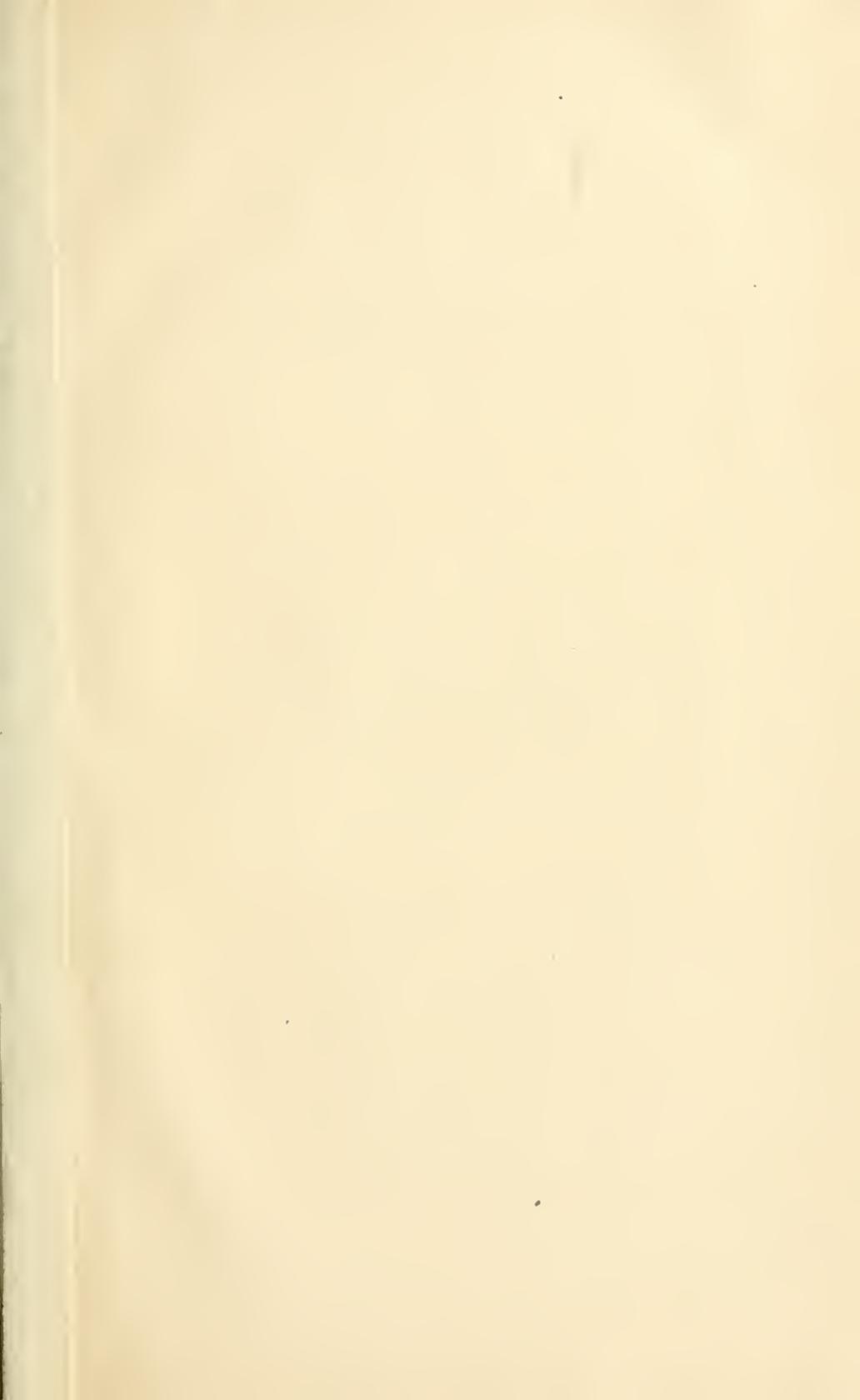
If my political aspirations had their origin in an unworthy feeling of ambition—if self advancement was the object of my pursuit, I should look with satisfaction at the violent proceedings of my enemies against me, and regard them as most efficient auxiliaries in advancing such unworthy desires; for all experience proves, that unmerited and violent denunciation has ever benefitted the object against which it was hurled. But, fellow-citizens, if I am acquainted with the feelings of my own heart, I can say with truth, that no such unworthy desires have ever had a residence there. My sole object has been, to preserve and perpetuate those great principles of constitutional government for which our fathers fought, and on which our liberties, our lives, and our happiness as a nation depend. In the part which I may be destined to act in the approaching scene, I trust that no act of mine will tend to increase the present unhappy excitement. If I shall again be selected by my county to represent her in the next legislature, I wish that selection to be made by her reason, and not her passions. I have therefore no desire to excite the latter. If it be the wish of my countymen to renounce the republican doctrines of '98; to support the federal principles contained in the proclamation of 1833; to hasten on the rapid march of the federal government to consolidation; to advocate the alarming abuses of executive patronage, and to hasten the concentration of all power in the hands of a single man; and whether right or wrong, to give a blind support to the acts of that man; then let me tell you, my fellow-citizens, that I am an unfit organ through which to make your wishes known. I hope in that case your choice may fall upon some other. Constitutional principles no less important than those just stated, are involved in the approaching contest, and I hope, fellow-citizens, that, laying aside all feeling and passion, you may enter upon their investigation with that deliberation and calmness which should ever characterize the acts of a people whose government is based upon the great principle, that prudent and virtuous men can govern themselves.

I am, respectfully,

Your faithful, obedient servant,

ROBERT HORD.

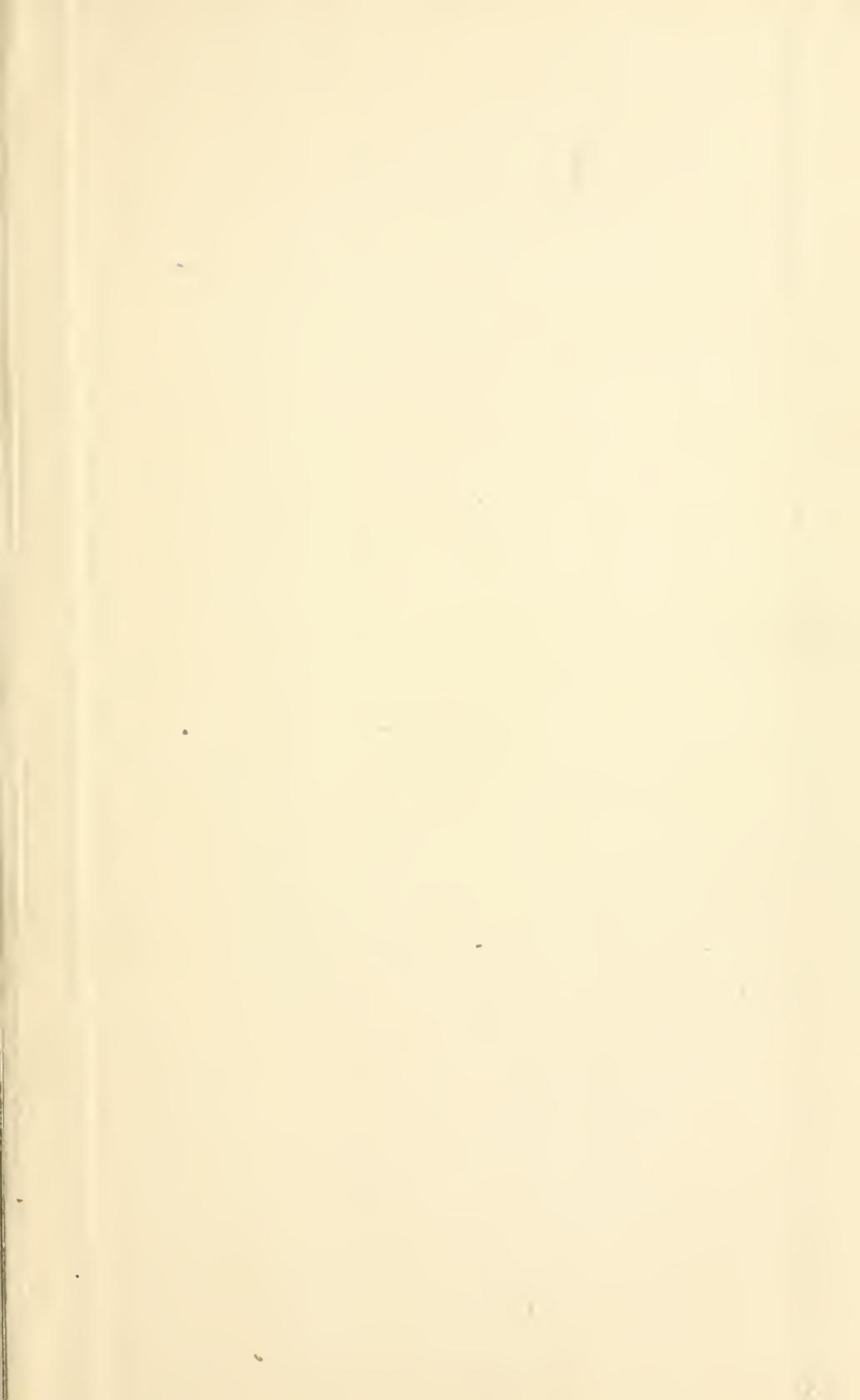












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