

the people to meet its exigencies, the supremacy of the law has been generally preserved in our State. This is the surest evidence of a people possessing the genius, the intelligence and the spirit necessary to sustain free institutions.

Very respectfully,
J. B. GALBRAITH.

Correspondence between the Governors of Florida, Georgia and Alabama.

(COPY.)

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
TALLAHASSEE, April 18th, 1863. }

His Excellency JOSEPH E. BROWN,

Governor of Georgia.

SIR:—Sometime ago, while at my plantation, I received a communication by telegraph, informing me that your Excellency had issued a proclamation to convene the General Assembly of Georgia, and suggesting the necessity of like action on the part of the Governor of each of the other States. I should have replied promptly, but the wires became deranged, and prevented the reply by telegraph. I did not follow your example, although urged to do so by public meetings held in several counties, and composed of patriotic and intelligent citizens of Florida. The General Assembly of this State had, at its last session, discussed the policy of regulating labor by legislation, and, sustained by the Senate, it was repudiated by a very large majority in the House of Representatives. Even if I could have presumed a change of opinion on the subject, our seasons here being much more favorable for early planting than in Georgia, many of our planters had commenced to plant, and the crops generally would have been planted before it was possible to secure legislation to prohibit or limit the right to plant cotton. Moreover, the intelligence and patriotism of the planters of Florida induced them last year to plant cereals to the exclusion of cotton. An immense amount of corn was made, and, for the want of transportation, hundreds of thousands of bushels of corn will be held by our planters when the crop of the present year will be gathered. By correspondence with intelligent citizens in different parts of the State, I was informed of the immense quantity of corn on hand, and that, nevertheless, there would not be scarcely as much cotton planted this as there was the last year, except in two or three

counties in the State, from which corn, &c., could not be conveniently transported, and where the traffic—carried on by speculators who have “run the blockade”—had excited, by high prices for cotton, and the introduction of rum and gin, (but no arms or munitions of war,) a disposition to make cotton, &c., regardless, perhaps, of “the general welfare.”

The means of transportation to and from this State are too limited to justify legislation on the subject. The Confederate Government has been appealed to in vain to make Railroad connections necessary to the defence of the State, as well as to secure supplies from Florida for the armies of the Confederate States.

Under existing circumstances, no law could be made to regulate planting, which would be uniform in its operation, just to the constitutional rights of citizens, or beneficial to the Confederate Government; hence, if the legislation proposed were constitutional, I have deemed it wisest and best to rely upon the intelligence and patriotism the exigencies of the war demand rather than legislation.

But, candor requires me to say, that I am not convinced that, in a Government like ours, the legislative power rightly exists to prescribe what shall or shall not be planted. If it does exist, it should be most discreetly exercised. If the General Assembly of a State has the power to enact a law prohibiting or restricting the planting of cotton, in order to support the army of the Confederate States of America by raising cereals, why may not the same General Assembly enact a law to prohibit the ploughing by horses, because useful for cavalry; or mules, because necessary for transportation; or oxen, because necessary for beef? In a word, why may they not confiscate all rights of property in individuals for the benefit of the Confederate Government. I am opposed to all legislation, on the part of either the Confederate or State Government which is not clearly constitutional. Infractions of the Constitution during war are more dangerous than in peace. In war or peace, the Constitution should be considered the anchor of our hopes for freedom and manly independence. Statesmen should studiously guard against the insidious influences of the occasional panics which excite the public mind, and engender what is termed public sentiment. The vicissitudes of the war in which we are engaged, in view of its important and world-wide results, incline the best informed and most patriotic men to lend a favorable ear to any pretence, however specious, to sustain the noble cause in which we are engaged, and therefore it is the imperative duty of Statesmen—especially those who occupy high official position—not to permit their zeal to exceed their wisdom, *not to yield even to public sentiment*, unless it shall be compatible with *Constitutional Liberty* as secured by a fundamental law. The

avidity with which patriots embark in any enterprise to promote the public welfare during the afflictions of war afford to speculators, traitors and demagogues excellent opportunities to create panics for their individual benefit or aggrandizement—hence what is termed “the outside pressure” upon legislative bodies.

While it is contended that foreign nations cannot exist without the cotton produced by slave labor in the Southern States, I would most respectfully present to your serious consideration, whether or not, if the legislative power of these States shall prohibit the cultivation of cotton by slave labor, (of which foreign nations will be informed,) their antipathies to slavery and their necessities for cotton may not be successfully appealed to by the United States Government for co-operation to abolish slavery and to raise cotton without slave labor?

The effort is now being made to form aid and emigration societies in Europe, as well as in the United States, to colonize Florida, and thus abolish slavery in the State. If successful, what will be the condition of the other “cotton States?” More than a year ago, I expressed the opinion that, as soon as it had been clearly ascertained that foreign governments recognized the blockade of southern ports—knowing its inefficiency—wisdom required of our Government to make the blockade complete. I know of no reason why—if England and France were willing to engage in war with China to secure commerce in opium with the Chinese people against their will and the decrees of their Government—England and France and other nations, would not raise a blockade for commerce in cotton, &c., with the Southern States, while their people desired and their Government proposed the commercial intercourse, provided cotton could not be obtained by running the blockade.

I believe now the wisest and best course which existing circumstances suggest to prevent the planting of excessive cotton crops, insure the culture of cereals, sustain the public credit, prevent speculation, extortion and riots for bread—a measure entirely consistent with constitutional liberty, conducive to the general welfare and to the independence of the Confederate States—would be an act of Congress, prohibiting, under severe penalties, all commercial intercourse with foreign nations, except such as should be authorized by the Government, through special agents, and exclusively for the purposes of the Government. If trade between our citizens and the speculators, who succeed in “running the blockade,” was prevented, all inducements to make cotton, except for the benefit of the Government in its negotiations and for domestic uses would be cut off; individual energy, enterprise and enlightened public sentiment would insure the necessities, and even the comforts of life, to the

people and to the armies; the Confederate currency would be independent in itself for all the purposes of commerce between the States, individuals and the Confederate Government, as there would be no demand for specie or foreign exchange to sustain our domestic commerce. Thus, inducements to speculation and extortion would be destroyed, our people would depend upon themselves, and the Confederate Government would reflect the intelligence and probity of an independent and self-sustaining association of States. Moreover, a powerful influence for the continuance of war would be overcome. There are millions of dollars invested, and thousands of persons engaged, in violations of the blockade. They are accumulating, by the traffic, immense fortunes, and are, therefore, anxious for the continuance of hostilities. They are, generally, enterprising and energetic, and if the blockade should be made complete, their love of trade would, perhaps, direct their efforts to legitimate commerce, dependent upon the raising of the blockade, the recognition of the Confederate States of America by foreign nations and suitable commercial treaties.

Experience may suggest the propriety, justice and necessity of an additional act of Congress, to remove from the Confederate States all persons who claim to be aliens, and therefore exempt from, and refuse to volunteer into, the military service of the Confederate States, and claim the protection of foreign governments which do not recognize the Government of the Confederate States of America.

The number of persons who consume and speculate upon our labor would be greatly diminished, and the States would be relieved of the most dangerous element which threatens public safety – a class of men, who contribute nothing to our agricultural prosperity, but who live and speculate upon our agricultural products, and basely refuse to aid the defence of that labor by which they not only subsist but accumulate wealth.

The opinions herein expressed are most respectfully submitted to your consideration, and permit me to add, that it will afford me pleasure to correspond with you upon any subject connected with the welfare of our respective States and the Confederate States.

I have the honor to be,

Respectfully,

JOHN MILTON
Governor of Florida.

(COPY.)

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
MILLEDGEVILLE, GA., April 22, 1863. }

His Excellency JOHN MILTON,
Governor of Florida:

SIR:—I have the honor and pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 13th inst., and avail myself of the earliest opportunity to respond to the enlightened and patriotic sentiments it contains. Your kind offer to correspond upon any subject connected with the interests of our respective States, or the Confederate States, is gladly accepted, and I will, at any time, be happy to avail myself of the advantages of your enlightened opinions upon any subject of interest to the people of our respective States, or of the Confederacy. I do so the more cordially, for the reason that the interests of the people of Florida and of Georgia are strongly allied, and, in many instances, identical. I know that I but express the feelings of all the people of this State, when I assure you that the warmest feelings of friendship exists toward the people of Florida, and I trust it may always be so.

You argue with great force the points presented in your letter, that the prohibition of the growth of cotton by slave labor in the cotton States might have a deleterious effect against the institution of slavery with foreign powers, and, further, that such prohibition, by legislative enactment, is in violation of the Constitution. Acknowledging the great strength of your views upon these points, I have not been able to bring my mind to concur fully. They, however, have ceased to be practicable questions here, as the Legislature, lately in session, by its action, declined to pass an act to further restrict the planting and culture of cotton in this State. I have felt that the bread question was one more vital, perhaps, than any other at this time, and have been impelled, by a strong sense of duty, to do all in my power to restrict the planting of cotton and tobacco and to increase the production of such articles as are useful to sustain life, and I confess that my hopes that all may yet be well are not without fears that we may have great trouble in feeding the army and people next year, if the war continues.

It affords me pleasure to concur fully with your views of the wisdom and propriety of a law by Congress putting a stop to the pernicious practice of running the blockade. Its ruinous effects upon our currency are every day being made forcibly felt, and, if not arrested, it is not difficult to foresee the evils to which it must lead. It affords me pleasure to be able to state that our

Legislature took the same view of the subject, and I have the honor herewith to communicate a copy of their resolution memorializing our members of Congress. Trusting that honorable body may see the importance of timely action to arrest the flagrant evils the pracyice in entailing upon the country, and with my best wishes for your health and the happiness of your people,

I have the honor to be,

Your most obd't serv't,

JOSEPH E. BROWN.

(copy.)

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,}

Montgomery, ALA., May 4th, 1863}

His Excellency JOHN MILTON,

Governor of Florida, Tallahassee:

Sir: -- My absence from the seat of Government has alone prevented an earlier reply to your communication of the 15th ult.

For reasons, similar in the main to those which governed you, I did not convene the General Assembly of Alabama, but addressed a circular letter to the planters of the State, which, I believe, has had a good effect, and, if the seasons are propitious, our supply of cereals will be ample.

I cordially agree with you in your views relative to the necessity and propriety of Congressional action, to prevent "running the blockade," except with articles necessary for the army, and also in relation to aliens claiming foreign protection, and who refuse to do military service.

They very heavy demands upon my time, caused by the accumulation of business during my absence, prevent my responding as fully as I desire to the several points made by you.

I join you, Governor, in the assurance that it will give me pleasure to correspond with you upon any subject connected with the welfare of our States or of the Confederate States.

With great respect,

Your obd't sev't,

JNO. GILL SHORTER,

Gov. of ALA.