

Report of the
Committee.

pose that the States, now awakened to a true sense of their rights and the danger of consolidation, will ever submit to such a bill as this? I tell you nay.

Who is to be the judge in the last resort, of the violation of the Constitution of the United States by the enactment of a law? Who is the final arbiter, the General Government, or the States, in their sovereignty? Why, sir, to yield that point is to yield up all the rights of the States to protect their own citizens, and to consolidate this Government into a miserable despotism. I tell you, sir, whatever you may think of it, if this bill pass, collisions will arise between the Federal and State jurisdictions—conflicts more dangerous than all the wordy wars which are got up in Congress—conflicts in which the States will never yield; for the more you undertake to load them with acts like this, the greater will be their resistance.

At the session of the next Congress the same Senator spoke as follows:

“But Southern gentlemen stand here and in almost all their speeches speak of the dissolution of the Union as an element of every argument, as though it were a peculiar condescension on their part that they permitted the Union to stand at all. If they do not feel interested in upholding this Union, if it really trenches on their rights, if it endangers their institutions to such an extent that they do not feel secure under it, if their interests are violently assailed by means of this Union, I am not one of those who expect that they will continue longer under it. I am not one of those who would ask them to continue in such a Union. It would be doing violence to the platform of the party to which I belong. We have adopted the old Declaration of Independence as the basis of our political movement, which declares that any people, when the government ceases to protect their rights, when it is so subverted from the true purposes of government as to oppress them, have a right to recur to fundamental principles, and if need be to destroy the government under which they live, and to erect on its ruins another more conducive to their welfare. I hold that they have this right. I will not blame any people for exer-