

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson.

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## TERMS:

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## POLITICAL.

### NON-COMMITTAL.

One of the most curious methods of handling a candidate that we have yet heard of, is narrated in the following article from the N. Y. Evening Post, relative to General Harrison. It seems that a Committee hold watch and ward over him:—Penn'n.

An extraordinary course has lately been taken with General Harrison by his friends in Ohio. They have raised a committee, to whom they have given him in charge as an idiot is committed to the care of trustees. The committee receive and read his political letters, and determine upon the answer to be given, leaving the poor old gentleman without any discretion or agency in the matter. George the Third, of England, in the days of his old age and insanity, deprived of all power in his own government, was a king after much the same fashion that Harrison is now a candidate.

The Oswego Palladium, of Wednesday, contains a correspondence between the Oswego Union Association and the committee who have taken possession of Harrison.—We copy the letters, which we have the positive assurance of the Oswego, print are genuine:

Oswego, Jan. 31, 1840.

To the Hon. William H. Harrison.

Dear Sir—In accordance with a resolution of the Union Association of Oswego, I am instructed to propose three questions to you, in relation to subjects that a large portion of this section of the country feel a deep interest in. The first is,

Are you in favor of receiving and referring petitions for the immediate abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia?

Second—Are you in favor of a United States Bank, or some institution similar to that, for the safe keeping and disbursing of the public moneys, and for giving a uniform currency throughout the United States?

And lastly—Would you favor the passage of a General Bankrupt Law, by Congress—so that its operations might be equal in all the States of the Union?

I have only to say, sir, that the above inquiries are made in accordance with the unanimous wishes of this association, the members of which, I am instructed to say, entertain the highest regard for your past services, and hope, should you be elected to the high office for which you are nominated, that nothing may occur to lessen you in the estimation of a great and free people.

I am, sir,

Respectfully, your obt. serv't,  
MILES HOTCHKISS,  
Corresponding Secretary.

CINCINNATI, Feb. 29, 1840.

Oswego Union Association,  
Gentlemen—Your letter of the 31st ult. addressed to General Harrison, has been placed in our possession with a view to early attention. This is unavoidable, in consequence of the very numerous letters received by the General, and to which his reply in person is rendered absolutely impracticable. As from his confidential committee, you will look upon this response; and if the policy observed by the commit-

tee should not meet your approbation, you will attribute the error rather to ourselves and his immediate advisers, than to General Harrison. The policy, is, that the General make no further declaration of his principles, for the public eye, whilst occupying its present position.

Such course has been adopted, not for purposes of concealment, nor to avoid all proper responsibility; but under the impression that the General's views, in regard to all the important and exciting questions of the day, have heretofore been given to the public, concerned with constitutional or other questions of very general interest, have undergone no change.

The committee are strengthened in regard to the propriety of this policy; that no new issue be made to the public, from the consideration, that the national convention deemed it impolitic at the then crisis, to publish any general declaration of the views of the great opposition party, and certainly the policy at the present remains unshaken. In the mean time we cannot help expressing the hope, that our friends, every where, will receive the nomination of General Harrison with something akin to general confidence. When we reflect upon the distinguished intelligence of the nominating convention—how ably all interests were represented in that body, we certainly have a high guaranty, that should General Harrison be the successful candidate for the presidency, that office will be happily and constitutionally administered, under guidance of the same principles which directed our Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. Believing you will concur with us in the propriety of the policy adopted, we have pleasure in subscribing ourselves,

Your friends,

DAVID GWYNNE,  
J. C. WRIGHT,  
O. M. SPENCER,

H. H. Spencer, Cor. Sec'y.

The committee are now publishing in pamphlet form many of the former expressed opinions of the General, and facts and incidents connected with his past life, which will be forwarded to you at an early moment.

"Thus," says the Oswego paper, "General Harrison has passed into the hand of a committee, without the formality of a writ de lunatico quirendo. He is interrogated on three questions of high importance, and by the direction of the committee he stands mute. They acknowledge that numerous letters daily arrive, addressed to the whig candidate for the presidency, and we infer from the language of the committee that these letters contain inquiries in regard to his political opinions. These letters are answered only with a denial of the information which their numerous writers solicit; they are told that the candidate of the whig party, or rather the committee which has him in charge, has adopted the policy of those who nominated him,—that of making no declaration of his opinions, allowing no expression of his views in regard to the great contested measures of the present moment to escape him, but demanding that the people shall put the helm of state into his hands without knowing whether he is to steer the vessel. We have heard much of non-commitment in our time, but this is non-commitment with a vengeance.

After all, the friends of Harrison are perhaps, right to surround him with a cabinet, while he is yet a candidate. He would make as wild work without a Regency as the poor crazy old grandfather of the present Queen of England. If he were to answer at his own discretion the letters he receives, he would, unquestionably, give answers that would embarrass his party, answers sometimes extravagant, sometimes aside from the purpose, sometimes merely foolish, and sometimes perhaps right by accident, which we suppose would prove to his friends the greatest embarrassment of all. They are right, doubtless, in standing guard over the old man, lest the muzzle should slip from his mouth and he should betray himself by uttering nonsense.

"Is Harrison a John Adams Federalist?" asks a distinguished friend in Lincoln county. We answer, by quoting a part of Gen. Harrison's reply to the charge of being such a Federalist, preferred against him by John Randolph. Gen. Harrison's own admissions ought to be reliable evidence.—We copy from the Nashville Banner, of the 8th inst:

"In the course of this debate, Mr. Harrison said that he could not refrain from making his acknowledgements to the gentlemen from Virginia, Mr. Randolph, for the notice he had been pleased to take of him. He has been pleased to say, that, in the administration of Mr. Adams, I was a Federalist, and he comes to this conclusion from the course pursued by me in the session of 1799-1800. At that session, the gentlemen and myself met for the first time—he in the station of Representative for Virginia and I in the more humble one of delegate from the North Western Territory. Having no vote, I did not think it proper to take part in the discussion of any of the great political questions which divided the two parties. My business was to procure the passage of the bills which I had introduced for the benefit of the people I represented. The gentleman had no means of knowing my political principles, unless he obtained them in private conversation. As I was upon terms of intimacy with the gentleman, it is very probable that he might have heard me express sentiments favorable to the administration. I CERTAINLY FELT THEM—so far, at least, as to the course pursued in relation to the Government of France.—Nor, said Mr. H. was I unsupported in that opinion by those who had a right to my actions if not my opinions. In no part of the country were those measures more decidedly approved than by my constituents—the Legislature of the North Western Territory: as the address of that body to the President, during that session, will show. For Mr. Adams (said Mr. H.) I entertained at that time, and have ever since entertained, THE GREATEST RESPECT. I believe him to be an honest man and a pure patriot, and his conduct during that session proved him to be such."—Nashville Union.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MILITIA.

The Globe publishes the details of the plan proposed by the Secretary of War for re-organizing the militia of the United States. It is accompanied by an explanatory statement, which fully refutes the silly slang about Executive recommendations of a standing army of two hundred thousand men to be matched from State to State to influence the elections; increase of patronage by the power to be given to the President to appoint as well as commission the officers; and, above all, the immeasurable expense arising from the unlimited period for which this body of militia is to be kept in service.—We actually shuddered when we saw this array of dangers which threatened the liberties of the Republic; although somewhat at a loss to understand why the alarm was sounded so long after the publication of the Secretary's report; for that at first, complimentary notices of the plan it proposed appeared in the papers of both parties.—The explanation and details here given have dispelled all our fears. The plan itself has little in it that is new except in its practical application.

General WASHINGTON first proposed to discipline a select body of the militia; Mr. JEFFERSON urged the classification of the militia of the United States, and that a select body of three hundred thousand men should be set apart as the active class, to serve for a certain term of years. The board of officers, regulars and militia, that assembled in Washington by order of Mr. BARRON, when Secretary of War, recommended that the militia of the United States should be divided into classes; and all the communications from the most experienced officers, elicited by the interrogatories of that functionary, contained the assertion

that the militia of the United States can only be rendered efficient by stringing, equipping and disciplining a select body. It appears to us that the present Secretary of War has done no more than adopt those suggestions and digest the necessary details to carry the plan into practical effect. So far from the scheme of proposing a levy of regular troops, it is calculated, as it seems, to prevent the necessity of large standing armies even in time of war, and it will be satisfactory to those who have exhibited so much alarm, to be informed that the battalions are to be assembled within the limits of the State where the militia belongs; and to be officered in precisely the same manner as the militia are now officered: as likewise, that the period of their being called out for drill is to be fixed by law. And moreover, that the mass of the militia, more than a million and a half of intelligent freemen, are to be armed and equipped as heretofore. After this development, we hope to hear no more of this unwarranted outcry against a plan so eminently calculated to render efficient the permanent defences of the country.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### TAR AND FEATHERS—REVENGE.

Just before the breaking out of the revolution, a man by the name of Ditson, belonging to Billerica Mass., was tarred and feathered, by the British soldiers, under the orders of Lieutenant Nesbit. The British officers wished to prevent the Americans from purchasing guns, and in order to furnish an opportunity to inflict punishment, and to raise occasion for a serious quarrel, a soldier was ordered to offer the old countryman an old rusty musket. Ditson caught at the bait, and purchased the gun for three dollars. He was thereupon seized and after being confined in the guard-house all night, was stripped entirely naked, and covered with tar and feathers and in that condition paraded through the streets of Boston. The Yankees, however, began to collect in great numbers, and the military fearing for their own safety, dismissed the man and retreated to their own barracks.

Thus far the incident is related by a contemporary historian. What follows we have from the lips of the old continental himself. Many a time and oft have we heard him relate the story, with clenched hands, and eyes flashing fire, and always with this ending—"But I had my revenge!"

When he was dismissed by the British, he called for his gun, which during the operation of tarring and feathering had been taken from him. "Take the gun and be d—d!" said the officer who had commanded the tarring and feathering; "you'll be the last Yankee, I'll be sworn who will come here to purchase a musket."

"But not the last that will use one," said Ditson, as he grasped the weapon, "and mark me, Sir, I'll have my revenge."

"The cock is clear game," said the officer, turning to his companions with a laugh "but he had better ruffle his feathers on his own dunghill!"

Ditson, by the aid of soap and warm water, got rid of his feathery coat; but the idea of the insult clung to his mind burning deeper like the shirt of Nessus. He longed for an opportunity of revenge. It was the theme of his thoughts waking or sleeping. He dreamt of it by night—he pondered on the means of accomplishing it by day. But how was he to accomplish it?

An opportunity was not long wanting for that purpose. His country flew to arms, to redress its public grievances; and he to revenge his private ones. As soon as he heard that the British had marched for Concord, he seized his rusty musket, and ran to the scene of action.

"What are you going to do?" said his neighbors, as they saw him unyoking his team in the middle of the field, and at an unseasonable hour of the day.

"I'm going to pay the red coats for the

tar and feathers," said Ditson, setting his teeth firmly together. "Come on, and you shall see sport."

"But you are not going to take that old rusty piece?" said one.

"But I am though," said Ditson, "I shall take none the worst sight, for its being rusty."

He hastened to the field of fight, and his neighbors went with him. Having selected the boughs of a thick tree, by the way side, whether the British were on their retreat, he climbed into them, and there; securely ensconced and taking belicbrate aim, every shot from the old rusty musket told one.

"I aimed," said Ditson, "particularly at the officers; and the first man I dropped was the commander of the tar kettle. That did me more good than the best dinner I ever ate in my life. "There!"—I could not help exclaiming—"I told you I'd have my revenge!" Half a dozen shots were fired into the tree—but they were fired at random, for I was well secured in the boughs; and only two bullets went through my hat.—My bosom felt lighted as soon as the officer fell. The tar seemed, as it were, to loosen from my skin, and I felt fifty per cent. better. But still I had not completed my revenge. The tar had not yet all dropped off. It was there still, in imagination; and the feathers clung to it. The British would make a fighting cuck of me, and I was determined they should feel the full length of my spurs."

Ditson was again present at the battle of Bunker's Hill, where he had an opportunity of using the old musket to greater advantage than at the battle of Lexington. Reserving his fire—agreeably to the mode enjoined by Putnam—until he could see the enemies' eyes, he brought down his man at every shot; and several more, whose countenances he recollected as having belonged to those engaged in the tarring and feathering escape, fell victims to the strength of his memory, the accuracy of his aim, and the sure fire of his rusty old piece. He was the last to leave the ditch; and when his powder and ball was expended, he fought like a tiger with the butt of his musket; and as he dashed it into the skull of two or three of the "regulars" in quick succession he exclaimed, "That's to pay you for the tar and feathers!" He was at last wounded and was with difficulty brought off by his companions. He suffered much in consequence; "but," as he used to exclaim in after years, "I didn't mind that for I had my revenge!"

He recovered from his wound, and fought through the war; and although naturally brave and attached to his country; his courage and his patriotism were not a little stimulated by the remembrance of tar and feathers. No single aim sent a greater thumber to their final account. He at length saw his country free. Her injuries were redressed and so were his own.

He lived to be an old man: Poverty visited his hut. Every thing that could be spared was sold, except the old musket.—He would shoulder that,

"And show how fields were won."

Then as his eye gleamed at the recollection of the never-to-be-forgotten insult, he would exclaim, "It was all owing to the tar and feather. But I had my revenge!"

Baltimore Clipper.

Equivalents.—When Quin was one day lamenting his growing old, a pert young fellow asked him what he would now give to be as young as he? I could almost consent," replied Quin, "to be as foolish."

Democracy.—Democracy is the child of light; and adopts every enfranchising truth that time and genius and the public mind may develop. The masses of wealth, we admit, are against it. Can the same be said of intelligence? Have the gifted minds of our nation been the adversaries of the Democracy?—Salem Advertiser.

Rewards and punishments are the basis of good governments.