

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.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY H. WEBB.

Volume III.

BLOOMSBURG, COLUMBIA COUNTY, PA. SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1840.

Number 52.

OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRAT,
Opposite St. Paul's Church, Main-st.

TERMS:

The COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT will be published every Saturday morning, at TWO DOLLARS per annum, payable half yearly in advance, or Two Dollars Fifty Cents, if not paid within the year. No subscription will be taken for a shorter period than six months; nor any discontinuance permitted, until all arrearages are discharged.

ADVERTISEMENTS not exceeding a square will be conspicuously inserted at One Dollar for the first three insertions, and Twenty-five cents for every subsequent insertion. A liberal discount made to those who advertise by the year. LETTERS addressed on business, must be post paid.

POLITICAL.

ABOLITION PETITIONS.

THE LETTER OF THE VICE PRESIDENT TO LEWIS TAPPAN, OF NEW YORK, UPON DECLINING TO PRESIDENT TO THE SENATE AN ABOLITION PETITION, SIGNED BY 140 WOMEN.

WASHINGTON, March 23, 1840.

Sir: Your letter of the 7th instant was duly received, enclosing a petition to Congress, signed by 140 women of the city and county of New York, praying for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and in those Territories of the United States where they exist, and to admit no new slave State into the Union, requesting me to lay the same before the Senate. I have also received your letter of the 17th instant, requesting me to inform you when I would present the petition. Having declined to present the petition, it is, perhaps, due to the fair petitioners, and to you, the organ, as well as myself, to state some of the reasons which dictate my course. The constitutional right of petition is contained in the first article of amendments, as follows:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Congress has never made a law abridging this right; but the people assemble at pleasure, and petition at pleasure, for a redress of grievances. Of course, this part of the Constitution has not been violated; and if it did not exist, Congress could not, constitutionally, have passed such a law, because no such power is delegated to Congress. This right, reserved to the people, does not devolve upon the presiding officer of the Senate the obligation of presenting petitions of every conceivable description.

There are considerations of a moral and political, as well as of a constitutional nature, which would not permit me to present petitions, of a character evidently hostile to the Union, and destructive of the principles on which it is founded. The patriots of the Revolution made great sacrifices of blood and treasure to establish and confirm the doctrines set forth in the Declaration of Independence. Each State was then an independent sovereignty; and to form a perpetual Confederacy for the safety and benefit of the whole, embodying the great doctrines of the Declaration, a compromise was made; and the principle which your fair petitioners are now agitating, was settled. The right of regulating and abolishing slavery was reserved to the States; and Congress have no more right to destroy slavery in Virginia and Maryland, than they have to establish slavery in New York or New England. The right of petition for these objects is reciprocal; and the obligation of the presiding officer to present a petition to the Senate, if it exist in either case, is equally strong in both. But I cannot recognize the obligation in either case, though I acknowledge the right of the people in both. Is a difference made between the District of Columbia and the States of Maryland and Virginia, from which it was taken? The question was settled in relation to this District, by those States, by the formation and adoption of the Federal Constitution, when it was a part of those States; and a subsequent cession of jurisdiction could not deprive the citizens to the rights already secured to them by both the Federal Constitution and the Constitutions of their respective States. The right of Congress to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatever, does not mean omnipotent legislation. Congress have no right, in the District of Columbia, to take

away the right of trial by jury; to pass an *ex post facto* law; to abridge the freedom of speech or of the press; to establish religion by law; nor to destroy the rights of property, or the personal liberty of the citizen. These reserved rights are as sacred in the District of Columbia as in the State of New York. They have the same right to consider the abolition of slavery in New York a grievance, and petition to Congress to establish it there, as the citizens of New York have to consider it a grievance in the District, and petition Congress to abolish it. Their right in either case to assemble peaceably and make their petition, I do not call in question; but the obligation on my part to present it to the Senate, I do not admit.

If a number of citizens should consider a Republican Government a grievance, and petition Congress to establish a monarchy; if others should consider religious toleration a grievance, and petition Congress to destroy heresy, by abolishing all religious sects but their own, I should not consider it my duty to present their petitions to the Senate, nor do I consider it my duty to present a petition, the certain tendency of which is to destroy the harmony, and eventually to break assunder the bonds, of our Union.

In regard to new States, the case is, if possible, still stronger. They must be united upon terms of equality. Each State having reserved the right of regulating this subject for itself, no one can be constitutionally deprived of the right. The State of New York has abolished slavery; but this abolition is not the condition on which she holds her place in the Confederacy. It is her own policy; and if it shall be her pleasure to change it, Congress cannot interfere. So, if new States are admitted into the Union, when admitted; they will stand upon an equality with New York.—The may establish or abolish slavery at their pleasure, and neither Congress, nor any other State, will have any more right to interfere with the subject, than with the laws of primogeniture in the British empire. The object of the petition does not affect the abstract question of slavery; that it is a subject which the Abolitionists of the free States can no more affect than they can that of the privileges of the British nobility.—The plain question is this: shall we continue a united confederated Republic, or shall we dissolve the Union? If the prayer of this and similar petitions should be granted by a majority of Congress, the inevitable effect would be an immediate destruction of the Confederacy; and with it, those bonds of affection which have united us as one great, one harmonious family.

It has been my grief to observe a recklessness on the part of some, whom I otherwise highly esteem, showing an utter disregard of all the consequences which must result from the perpetual agitation of this subject. We have an interest at stake too dear to be compromised for a phantom which we can never gain, however enthusiastically we may pursue it. As a free, a powerful, and a happy nation, we stand unrivalled in the annals of the world.

Turning the eye alternately to every region of our country, it is greeted with the smiles of happiness, amid the scenes of liberty, and peace, and plenty; and yet imagination frequently pauses upon the localities which remind us of the price at which these blessings were gained. Do we compare our condition with that of adjoining colonies? We look to Quebec—and there Montgomery fell. We return to view the beautiful town of Boston and take our stand on Bunker Hill—there Warren died. We cross the delightful fields of Connecticut—there Wooster bled. We continue our observation through the Jerseys, till we reach Princeton—there Mercer perished.

Even from the Capitol in which we are assembled, we cast a look to the South, and the heights of Vernon remind us that the mighty Washington slumbers there, who forsook those peaceful shades for the toils, the dangers, and the privations of the sanguine field, where, with thousands of others equally brave and patriotic, the enemies of our rights were defeated. It is at the price of their blood that we, in common with your fair petitioners, now enjoy these blessings. When the rights were again threatened, I regarded it my duty, in humble imitation of these apostles and martyrs of liberty, to offer my own life upon the altar of my country, to confirm to you and to them the permanent enjoyment of those blessings. A merciful providence protected me, and I find a twofold recompense in the preservation of our institutions.

With these views, I cannot reconcile it to my sense of duty to present the petition.—I shall enter into no discussion on the principle of slavery, as that is not involved in the subject. I can view it in no other light than that of an interference with the constitutional rights of others, and in such a way as tends to the destruction of the rich inheritance purchased by the blood and toil of the fathers of the Revolution. Another

circumstance exists, aside from what I have noticed above, which would make me reluctant to present this petition—it comes from ladies, ordained by nature, and by the customs of all civilized nations to occupy a higher place in society than that of petitioners to a legislative body.

If courtesy could induce me, on a subject that could not become a matter of injurious notoriety, to present a petition from females yet I should regard it purely as a matter of courtesy, and not of constitutional right.—The rights of women are secure through the coarser sex—their fathers, their husbands, and their brothers. It is the right of a woman to maintain a modest retirement in the bustle of politics and of war. She does not serve on juries, nor perform the duties of the bailiff or executioner, because it would be a degradation of her dignity.—She does not take up arms and meet her country's foes; because she is a privileged character, and man is her substitute, who represents her in all these drudgeries.—Every man is bound by the perfect law of custom, of nature, and of honor, to protect and serve her. This is the light in which the law of God places the woman. She is veiled and silent even in religious discussions; not because she is unworthy, but because she is exempt from the strife of man; and it is her right to observe that retired modesty which renders her the object of admiration and esteem. In this respect, the Constitution of our country is established upon the principle of the Divine law. If the rights of man are inviolable, they are of course confirmed to women; and the most dignified of the sex are the least inclined to meddle with public matters. I presume females, who sign petitions. I should be very reluctant to be accessory to an act which should, in any degree, cast a shade of reproach upon an individual of that sex, whose modest dignity is the glory of man. Thus, sir, I have frankly stated my views in returning the petition, as I now do.

I trust you will not deem it disrespectful to you, nor to the ladies for whom you act. Be assured that, for yourself individually, I entertain high respect; and could I serve you personally, it would give me great pleasure to do so. Though a stranger to the signers of the petition, I do not doubt the respectability of their character, and I deeply regret being requested, on their behalf, to perform an act with which I cannot consistently comply; but with the views which I entertain, I cannot better testify my regard for them than by returning the petition.

Most respectfully,

RH. M. JOHNSON.

LEWIS TAPPAN, esq. New York City.

GENERAL HARRISON'S MILITARY ACHIEVEMENTS.

Extract from the remarks of Mr. Crary, of Michigan, in the House of Representatives, Friday, Feb. 14, 1840.

The gentleman from Indiana [Mr. Proffit] who occupied the floor yesterday, has brought before the House the hero of North Bend, not as he is in his old age, with mental infirmities fast thickening upon him, but as he was when in command of the Northwestern army in the last war. The gentleman has applauded the Presidential candidate of the opposition for three great exploits: 1st, the battle of Tippecanoe; 2d, being the first to suggest the armament of the lakes; and, lastly, for the battle of the Thames. I have a few words to say on each of these subjects.

Any one who will put himself to the trouble of reading the official accounts of the battle of Tippecanoe, will see that Gen. Harrison performed no great act of generalship on that occasion. From the General's own confessions, the army was encamped in an exposed position, affording "great facility to the approach of savages," and at night was completely surprised by the Indians, and only escaped destruction by the gallantry of the brave Kentuckians, and a party of the old fourth regiment from Massachusetts. But I would confine myself to the official report, that will prove all that has been asserted. It will also prove that General Harrison was the greatest egotist that ever wrote in the English language. Other generals have awarded some merit to the God of battles, but not so with Gen. Harrison. It was "I" that did all from the morning that "I announced that I had no intention of attacking them (the Indians) until I discovered that they would not comply with the demands that I had made—that I would go on and encamp at the Wabash." "I halted," and "I resumed my march." "I advanced," and "I rose at a quarter after four o'clock." "I mounted my horse, I rode to the angle that was attacked. I reinforced every part of the line. I formed the body of dragoons, I meant to pursue the enemy in their flight," but, says but, "being engaged, I

did not observe it until it was too late."—Yes, this would be captain of captains, did not observe the flight of the enemy "until it was too late" to pursue them.

But, Mr. Speaker, I must return to the morning of the 6th November, when this consummate General was within eleven miles of the scene of his subsequent exploits. A march of six miles is made through open prairies, "with the infantry in two columns or files on either side of the road, and the mounted riflemen and cavalry in front, in the rear, and on the flanks," when, coming to the open woods, the whole army is formed in order to battle. A company of mounted riflemen formed the advanced guard; then came the United States infantry, flanked by two companies of militia infantry and one of mounted riflemen; then comes the baggage, covered by three companies of militia infantry; and lastly comes the cavalry. We ought now to expect a fight, for the whole army is "in the order of battle." But we are doomed to disappointment. The order is given to "break off in short columns of companies," and to move slowly and cautiously along, the several corps changing position "three times in the distance of a mile." At last a creek is approached, when the order for battle again passes from column to column.

Mr. Lincoln here raised a question whether it was in order to discuss matters not before the House.

Mr. Cole said no friend of Gen. Harrison feared the discussion.

Several members expressing a wish for the debate to proceed, Mr. Lincoln withdrew his motion.

Mr. Crary resumed, and said he did not expect to be allowed to proceed. It was to him a matter of no consequence. He thought, however, he was indulging in no greater latitude of debate than was yesterday permitted to the gentleman from Indiana, [Mr. Proffit.] When Mr. P. was speaking, Mr. Briggs temporarily occupied the Speaker's chair. That gentleman had conversed not only the merits of General Harrison for the Presidency, but called up the past political history of a member of the House, [Mr. Wick.] and yet no one rose and called to order, or pronounced the remarks irrelevant to the question. He was free to admit that such discussion was unprofitable; but if it was in order to make the attack, it ought also to be in order to make a reply. Were gentlemen prepared to allow of such a course of attack, and then prevent a reply? If so, evil would come out of it of no ordinary magnitude.

Mr. Proffit rose to explain. He appealed to the House, whether he said any thing disrespectful of his colleague. He did not intend to injure his feelings.

Mr. Crary said, he was aware that the feelings of his colleague [Mr. Wick] were not injured. But this did not justify the attack. Did the gentleman know that he would not hurt his feelings?

But, Mr. Speaker, to return to General Harrison, whom we left with his army drawn up in the order of battle. No enemy, however, appears; but from certain indications of a hostile feeling, it is determined to encamp for the night. "Whilst I was engaged in tracing the lines for the encampment," information was received that the Indians "had answered every attempt to bring them to a parley with contempt and insolence. A refusal to answer by the Indians, caused the lines of the camp to be traced; but when they answered "with contempt and insolence," the lines are obliterated, the army moves forward, with "every man eager to decide the contest immediately." It moves about the width of an eight-acre lot, and then halts again, not to encamp, but to enable "I to hold a parley with three Indians, one of them the particular friend of Prophet. "Well, what does this friend of the prophet say?" Why that an answer had been sent to Gen. Harrison's demands, but that the bearers "have unfortunately taken the road on the south side of the Wabash." What was this answer? The official report sheweth it not. It only says, "I answered that I had no intention of attacking them until I discovered that they would not comply with the demands which I had made." On a promise from this friend of the Prophet that no hostilities should be committed till the will of the President of the United States was explained, our hero resumes his march, and resumes his march, and advances within one hundred and fifty yards of the town.—Fifty Indians sally forth, and demand a halt. I immediately advanced to the front, and caused the army to halt. "In a few moments the man (the friend of the Prophet) who had been with me before, made his appearance. I informed him that my object, for the present, was to procure a good place of ground to encamp on, where we could get wood and water. He informed me that there was a creek to the north-west, which he thought would suit or pur-

"I found the ground for the encampment not altogether such as I could wish it." It was suited for regular troops, opposed to regulars, "but it afforded great facility to the approach of savages."

Here follows a description of the ground from the official report:

It was a piece of dry oak land, rising about ten feet above the level of a marshy prairie in front (towards the Indian town), and nearly twice that height above a similar prairie in the rear, through which, and near to this bank, was a small stream, edged with willow and other brushwood, ward the left flank this beach of brushwood widened considerably, but became very narrow in the opposite direction at the distance of one hundred yards from the right flank, terminating abruptly point.

On this ground pointed out by an ensign, and "affording great facility to the approach of savages, were traced the lines of a night encampment with the front and rear lines separated from each other about twenty-seven rods on the left, and fourteen rods on the right flank."

Mr. Underwood here inquired what authority Mr. C. had for saying the ground was pointed out by the enemy.

Mr. Crary referred him to the official report, where he would find it under General Harrison's own sign manual.

But to return to the order of encampment: The front line was occupied by one battalion of United States infantry, flanked on the right by two companies of militia, and on the left by one company.

The rear line was composed of another battalion of United States infantry on the left, and four militia companies on the right.—

The left flank was filled up by two companies of mounted riflemen, and the right flank by one company. Two troops of dragoons were encamped in the rear of the left flank, and one troop in rear of the front line. These troops were all in single rank, and were defended by two captain's guards, consisting of eighty-eight men, and two subaltern's guards, consisting of twenty men. But as the report makes no mention either of a picket guard or a common camp guard, it seems that this indispensable requisite of any army, encamped in an enemy's country, was entirely overlooked and omitted. This is evident from the fact, that in the opening of the battle, some of the men were stricken down in the very doors of their tents.

We have here, Sir, the camp of General Harrison, when in an Indian country, and so apprehensive of an attack that the "order of encampment was the order of battle, and each man slept opposite to his post in the line. General Harrison says his order of march was "similar to that used by General Wayne." But was the order of encampment that of General Wayne, or that of any other General winning warfare?—Did General Wayne ever encamp in an Indian country without first throwing up a breastwork either of wood or of earth?—Was not this course pursued by all the early Indian fighters of New England?—Such breastworks are often spoke of by her early writers, and Hubbard tells us of one case where a stone breastwork was thrown up in the midst of a fight. Did Colonel Johnson ever encamp, when in the midst of hostile Indians, without defending his camp by a breastwork? If he had, Sir, his gallant little band of mounted men would never covered themselves with glory at the battle of the Thames. In the Black Hawk war did General Atkinson ever omit the breastwork for a single night? Never. When it could not be made of wood, one of earth was thrown up. To General Harrison belongs the honor of encamping an army without breastworks, in sight of an Indian town, the inhabitants of which "had manifested nothing but hostility." Let the honor be his, and let his political friends write it on all their banners, but the hand which should be one of blood—the blood of a most gallant and chivalrous army.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have not yet said with this camp upon "dry oak land," surrounded by a "marshy prairie." It appears from the official report, that the fires were built with the camp, and were burning at a quarter after four o'clock in the morning. "Our fires afforded a partial light, which if it gave us some opportunity of taking a surer aim." Under such circumstances, need we wonder at the slaughter that ensued? The fires were indeed extinguished after the battle commenced, but this proved that they should not have been built, if it proved any thing.—Camp fires were necessary, but in Indian warfare they should be "without the camp if allowed to burn all night. They then gave no advantage to the enemy. On the contrary, on coming to their range, the enemy became the object of "surer aim."

Sir, I pass over the movements of the General during the battle. I say nothing of his horseback ride in a camp with a right