

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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POLITICAL.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

Concluded.

A similar success has attended the Administration in all its branches of the public service. From the reports submitted to Congress, it appears that, in the course of last three years, great vigor and activity have been imparted to the War Department. The securities for an efficient and economical administration of the army have been increased. The engineer corps has been rendered much more efficient; the ordnance has made great progress; and a reasonable expectation is entertained, that the results of the very extensive experiments instituted to determine the description of cannon, and the most destructive projectiles, will shortly enable the department to adopt permanent and perfect models for the artillery.

A corps of Topographical Engineers has been organized, composed of experienced and able officers, who have been actively and usefully occupied. Extensive regions of country have, for the first time, been surveyed, our Western and Northern frontiers explored, the country between the Mississippi and Missouri carefully examined and elaborately laid down, more than three hundred points of latitude and longitude settled, and our knowledge of the vast regions of the Western country greatly enlarged.—Measures, in a high degree advantageous to our trade in that quarter, have been pursued without neglecting any of the improvements in charge of the department.

The army has been engaged in laborious and constant service. Not the least of these has been the removal of the Indian tribes, who had parted with their lands in the East, and were bound by treaty stipulations to remove west of the Mississippi river, to the number of thirty-six thousand souls. It is remarkable that, in this grand moral spectacle, no one trace, is to be found of injustice or cruelty; nor, [except in that of the Seminoles, who were waging war with our people when Mr. Van Buren entered upon the Government, is there one act of severity that could have been avoided, or one drop of blood unnecessarily shed.—A proper consideration for their situation, commiseration for their misfortunes, and regard for their character of the country, have guided in the execution of the laws and Indian treaties, by which their title to nearly nineteen million of acres of land has been extinguished. Their removal, as in the case of the Cherokees, while it has opened a vast extent of country to the enterprise and industry of our fellow-citizens, places the red men beyond the reach of those influences which were gradually destroying them; and establishes them in a home where they may become prosperous and happy. At the same time the most liberal encouragement has been given to the benevolent of every religious sect to spread among them the light of the Gospel; and to establish schools in every part of their territory; objects which have been accomplished with the most beneficial effects. Although it is believed that these measures

will tend to civilize the Indians on our borders, no precautions have been neglected to provide for the defence of this important and extensive frontier. Such a system has been projected, and is being rapidly carried into execution, as will effectually protect our fellow-citizens in that quarter from all danger from that source.

From the peculiar circumstances growing out of the insurrection in Canada, the difficult and delicate task was imposed on the War Department, of preserving the peace and maintaining the good faith of the country amidst all the excitement which existed on the Northern frontier. Fortunately for the country, the exertions of government were successful, and our neutral obligations were maintained inviolate; at a time, too, when the exigencies of the service required the presence of the greater portion of our little army in the south, and on the western frontier.

The expenditures of this department during the first year of Mr. Van Buren's administration, were beyond his control.—Measures had been projected, and were partly executed; and the obligations incurred by the department, involving heavy expenditures had to be complied with, or the faith of the government violated. Each succeeding year has however brought with it a considerable reduction of expenditure.—Notwithstanding the increase of the military establishment and the heavy expense attending the execution of the Cherokee and other Indian treaties, the expenses of 1838 were reduced one million of dollars—those of 1839 nearly four millions, and a further reduction in 1840 of at least three millions is confidently anticipated.

Nor have the interests of the navy been neglected or forgotten: Sensible that it is equally indispensable to the protection of commerce, and the honor of the country; that it constitutes the right arm of the nation in all offensive operations; that it is one main instrument for exacting satisfaction for insults and retribution for wrongs, and that under no circumstances is it likely to be perverted to the establishment of despotic power, Mr. Van Buren has equally given it his fostering care, and sedulous attention.

Under his administration, a constant gradual increase of the materials for the construction and armament of ships, and the improvement of navy yards, to the amount of several millions in value, has occurred; some of those on the stocks have been brought nearer to completion; the most persevering efforts are making to revive and invigorate the discipline of the navy, and to remedy, as far as possible, that scarcity of seamen, which has become so apparent, by carrying into effect a system of apprenticeship which, it is expected, will by degrees supply every deficiency. All this has been done without increasing the appropriations for the support of the naval service, notwithstanding the addition of the Exploring expedition, whose officers and crews are paid and subsisted from the funds of the navy. On the contrary, a gradual reduction has taken place since the year 1837, amounting to nearly a million of dollars, while the accumulation of materials has increased, and the number of vessels in commission, either as receiving ships or on foreign service, is not diminished. So effectually is the commerce of the country protected in every quarter where protection is required, that we have lately seen the British admiralty, with its five hundred ships, publicly reproached with the example of the United States in this particular.

Let us now contrast the picture just presented, with the opposition which the administration so conducted has encountered.

The identity of the modern whigs and ancient Federalists is evident and undeniable. It may be distinctly traced through all their changes of name, and seen through all their disguises. The same want of confidence in the honesty and intelligence of the people, and in those institutions which guaranty their equal rights, and the same disregard to their feelings and their interests, are always apparent, except at those

periods were, despairing of success by open hostility, they attempt deception by an affected devotion to the democracy as sudden as it is short lived. The moment the crisis is past, whether it terminate in success or in disappointment, the mask so unwillingly assumed, and so impatiently worn, is thrown off.

If there be any essential difference between the ancient federalists and modern whigs it is to be found in the absence of some of those traits in the latter, which, at the commencement of the division of parties, contributed in some degree to give character to the former. At the time those divisions originated, and during the whole period in which the federalists maintained their ascendancy, their course was marked by a degree of decorum which gave a certain respectability to the principles they avowed. So long as a majority of the people supported the pretensions, they treated them with apparent respect, while undermining their rights by insidious legislation, in conformity to their avowed principles; but the moment the tendency of their measures was discovered and denounced by Mr. Jefferson, and they felt themselves sinking from their power, their deportment changed as to bring out, in strong relief, their doubts of the capacity of the people for self-government.

The federal administration began its war against popular rights by enacting laws calculated and intended to repress and punish the free exercise of the privilege of speech, and the just complaints of the people—measures which were followed up by standing armies to overawe them in the exercise of their suffrages. These, and other manifestations of their designs, roused the people to defence: they rose in their irresistible might, and the edifice of federal power fell prostrate before them.

From this period, systematic political contests have been carried on between the two great parties of the country, the marked characteristics in each and all having been, confidence in the honesty and intelligence of the people, and their capacity for self government on the one side, and distrust on the other; a desire for an extension of the elective franchise to every free citizen of the country, on the one side, and for its abridgement, by property qualifications, and other restrictions, on the other; a struggle for popular equality on the one side, and for peculiar and monopolizing rights, corporate and private on the other. In short a contest for popular sovereignty, on the one side, and for a government controlled by favored interests and privileged classes on the other. These contests have all been brought to the polls of election, and by almost a necessary consequence, have met an entire uniformity of decision there—the prevalence of the popular over the aristocratic principle.

The Presidential election, at the period to which we have referred, proved that the aristocratic principle was not to be concluded by the fair and distinct decision of the people, without a struggle behind the polls of election, to reverse their vote; and to gain, by indirection, or fraud, bribery, or force, what it had failed to secure in the open field of popular discussion. Hence the fearful and trying controversy for the Presidency between Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr, in the House of Representatives in 1801. The intention of the people as expressed by the popular vote, was not a matter of doubt or question, but when it was found that power was dearer than principle to one of the candidates upon the Democratic ticket, the rule, "divide and conquer" became that for the action of the Federal party, in their effort to overthrow the election and make that man President of Republic, whom, from a mistaken confidence, the people had intended to make Vice President.

The limits of an address will not permit and enumeration of the instances, since the memorable one above named, in which the aristocratic party has attempted to defeat the popular will by kindred efforts. Suf-

cient for our present purpose it will be to refer to passages in the history of the election of the people, in the patriotic States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, of recent date, and yet partially developed to the astonished view of our young country.—They sufficiently show that the principle which gave rise to the contest between Jefferson and Burr yet exists, is still in active exercise, and is one of the strong dependencies for success of the modern Whig party.

We are not alarmists. The cause of the Democracy has nothing to gain from representations of imaginary benefits to be derived from the action of Government, or to lose from similar representations of sufferings, equally imaginary, to flow from the same source. The people are, in effect, the Government of our country; they are its sovereign, and their will is its law. When we appeal to them, we do so under a deep conviction of these truths, and an equally deep consciousness that we appeal to rational, intelligent, patriotic men; possessing judgment to discriminate between truth and falsehood; firmness to pursue the course of principle, unswayed by prejudice, or passion, or interest, and integrity to defend and preserve those constitutional rights upon which their lasting prosperity so safely reposes:

To that people we now appeal, and, standing among them, desirous to submit our acts to their calm reflection and judgment, we entreat them to look well to their rights and interests; to guard the elective franchise, as the sheet-anchor of their liberties; to protect themselves from imposition and falsehood, and, as necessary to this great object, from hasty and undue excitement, artificially stimulated, and attempted to be supported by the power of money, not the force of truth. We also entreat them to look to the conduct of their representative servants, and see whether, in the discharge of their high duties, insidious approaches may not be gradually making, if not upon the freedom of popular elections, at least upon their efficiency as the first constitutional step, under our systems, State and National, in carrying into execution the popular will.

The course of the Opposition in Congress calls for the most serious consideration of the people. Charged as that body is with the guardianship of the great interest of the country, the public have a right to expect that those who compose it will devote themselves with undivided attention and unremitting zeal to the execution of that high and responsible trust. In what manner this just expectation has been fulfilled, will be seen in the history of the present and the three preceding sessions. Its proper deliberations have been perpetually disturbed by discussions having no relation to the subject matters of legislation before it, producing interminable delays in the transaction of the public business, and embarrassing and postponing ordinary and indispensable measures, essential to the common defence and general welfare, and clearly demanded by the expressed wishes of the people. Nor are these the worst features in this picture of degenerate legislation. Controversies of a personal character have more than once usurped the place of calm reasoning and fair debate, marked in their progress by angry recrimination, and some times terminating in acts of violence: thus converting a Hall, which should be dedicated to the sacred purposes of legislation; to the protection of the rights of the people and the preservation of the public honor, into a theatre for the exhibition of vindictive passions.

The brief review which we have given of the conduct of the Opposition in Congress, is in perfect accordance with the course of the Federal party during our second war of independence. They propose no measures, though professing an earnest desire to relieve the country from prevailing embarrassments. They have steadily resisted every effort of the Administration to carry into execution the plan which it has proposed for separating the fiscal opera-

tions of the Government from incorporated institutions, and which has a direct tendency to restrain that dangerous banking power which by their agency, and under the influence of their counsels, had grown up almost to an equality with the Government itself. Thus have the constituted authorities of the land been left powerless as to the control of the money of the people, and the punishment of defaulters, who have violated the trusts confided to their hands.—They have charged the Democratic party with wasteful extravagance, because the expenditures under this, and the preceding Administrations, have been necessarily increased by a removal of the Indians from within our settled borders, a measure alike wise, and essential to the safety of our citizens, and distinguished by the most paternal clemency to the unfortunate savage.—They have founded a similar accusation upon the exertions of the Government to arrest the burnings, the tomahawk, and the scalping knife, which have covered Florida with blood and desolation. They have superadded to all this, attempts to obstruct the regular course of legislation, by technical objections and motions, and by every strategy which parliamentary forms would permit, and the most fertile ingenuity could invent. By this course of conduct, they have so impaired the high dignity and bearing of the great representative body of the people as to excite the most serious apprehensions in the bosom of every lover of order, and of every friend of his country, as to its moral consequences, and its tendency to lessen the confidence of the world in our free institutions.

It was to have been expected that, in nominating a candidate for the Presidency, the Whig party would select some individual whose political principles; so far as they have been disclosed in his public acts and declarations, are in accordance with their own. This expectation has been fulfilled; in the nomination of General William Henry Harrison by the Harrisburg Convention. He may be justly regarded as a true exponent of the political doctrines of the party which have put him forward as their leader and representative. Before the contest between Thomas Jefferson and the elder Adams in 1798, he had been already in public life; and upon the separation of parties on the leading political questions of that day, he became a supporter of the latter. From that time to the present, nothing has appeared in his public acts evincing any change of opinion on his part in respect either to the questions referred to, or to others which have grown out of subsequent divisions upon measures involving great principles of government and policy. Indeed, those who now take upon themselves to speak for him authoritatively, and to be the expounders of his principles, have publicly declared that on all the exciting questions which formerly agitated, and still agitate the public mind, his opinions remain "unchanged."

We may, therefore, justly appeal to his former course and opinions as the criterion by which he is now to be judged. He stands confessed as a supporter of the most obnoxious Federalist measures—the alien and sedition laws, and the standing army of the elder Adams; the high toned doctrines of the younger, and the administrations of both: From both he received confidence and favor, and from both public office. If other proof of his Federalism be necessary, it will be found in the position he now occupies as the sole candidate of the modern Whig party for the highest office in the gift of the people.

Relying, as we do, for the success of our cause, upon the great principles of constitutional right and popular liberty, we do not feel called on to make a direct issue with the supporters of Gen. Harrison, on the question of his claims to the title of a Hero.

We cannot, however, but remember the expressed apprehensions of the party that support him, uttered by their great leader a few years since, that the elevation of a Military Chieftain to the Presidency would be of more fatal tendency than "war, pestilence