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THE WHOLE ART OF GOVERNMENT CONSISTS IN THE ART OF BEING HONEST.—Jefferson.

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ADDRESS,

To the People of Pennsylvania.

The undersigned, your Senators and Representatives, being about to separate after the discharge of arduous duties, deem it to be their duty to present a view of the public affairs of the Commonwealth with reference to their past and present administration, and the hopes which every good citizen has a right to entertain of a change for the future. During the session of the Legislature which has just terminated, they have labored with a resolute purpose of meeting the expectations of the people and the responsibilities imposed upon them by a state of things unparalleled in the history of our country. As the expression of the wants of the people reached them, as petitions for relief in a season of unequalled distress were presented to them they sought to meet these wishes, and by one measure of relief after another, such as have passed both Houses, to do for the people what the people had a right to demand.

Unhappily for those who sought relief, and for the Legislature who desired to afford it, the Executive authority has been conferred upon an individual, who exercising it with no view but for the maintenance of his own official influence, has never ventured to indicate his measure of either relief or reform, or been willing to unite with us in ours. There is a course of official duty which the Constitution contemplates on the part of the Executive alike removed from improper interference and mysterious reserve, which, had it been pursued by the present Executive, would have abridged our session, simplified our labors and enabled us to return home with the happy assurance that the Government, by the concurrent action of its various departments, had relieved the distress and perplexity of its constituency. That course is the same which the patriot Harrison intended to pursue, to which his successor is pledged, and the reverse of the dark and sinuous line of action in which the present Governor of Pennsylvania seems to delight. It is not to dictate to the Legislature, who, coming more recently from the people best know their wants, but in the letter of the Constitution it is "from time to time to give to the General Assembly information of the state of the Commonwealth, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall deem expedient; and in its spirit having made these recommendations, to acquiesce in the action of the immediate Representatives of the people unless it violates either the Constitution or some essential principle of good Government."

The middle course between obtrusive interference and stubborn reserve, the present Executive of Pennsylvania seems unable to discern, and the Legislature has been compelled with no other consolation than the honest effort to do duty always affords, to wait for weeks and months unable to obtain a glimpse of Executive opinions except when they were made manifest in *Veto's* frequently couched in disrespectful language, or as they could be gathered from the intimations of accredited partisans in and out of the Legislature.—under such embarrassment has the Legislature acted, and to such embarrassment has the Executive been content to leave us to act. We wish a suffering people to understand this and to listen to the proof.

The session of the Legislature commenced on the first Tuesday of January 1841. The state of things throughout the Commonwealth was then most peculiar. The Banks were then in a general state of suspension. The currency consisted mainly of the notes of the Banks of other States or of the Bank of the U. States, and for the settlement of the small accounts which form so large a proportion of the daily business of the citizens, nothing was accessible but the illegal and discredited small note currency from abroad, a promised resumption of specie payments was at hand and every good citizen looked forward with the hope if not the expectation that it might be permanent and the community might not soon again be called to witness a scene of universal discredit.—There were many who believed that no permanent resumption could be effected without the beneficial interposition of the General Government,

and on that interposition directed by the wisdom and patriotism of a President chosen by Pennsylvania itself, we confidently relied. But the Governor was not one of these. He relied on the efficacy of state legislation directed by mere party impulses; he shared in none of our expectations of action at Washington; he never expressed and probably never felt any share of the confidence which the reason and good feeling of the people reposed in the wisdom and patriotism of the lamented Harrison. Now we ask you to mark the results. On the 15th of January 1841, the Banks resumed specie payments—on the first of February the Governor negotiated a loan of nearly \$800,000 with the Banks and mainly with the Bank of the United States—on the 4th of February the Banks again suspended and in a state of almost hopeless prostration have they remained ever since.

On the 5th day of February the intelligence of the calamity reached the seat of Government through private channels.—The Legislature after pausing to give the Executive an opportunity of presenting his views at this crisis, proceeded without further delay to do its duty and legislate for the crying necessities of the people. To enable the Executive to suggest his remedy for the evils then impending was due alike to him and to ourselves—we waited but we waited in vain. The executive functions were paralytic. No word fell from the lips of the Governor, and so far as we or the public are apprised of his views as voluntarily expressed, content with the present state of things, irredeemable currency, hopelessly irredeemable for the suffering people, he wrapped himself in mysterious silence and made no effort, gave no sign that promised relief.

Not so your Representatives—unaided, uncounselled by the Executive, they assumed the responsibility and measures of relief were originated, matured and enacted. Mixed however with the prayer for relief, there was an emphatic demand for reform—and it was with a steady view to the coincident ministration of relief and reform that our measures were prepared.

It was not long before a measure of Bank reform and popular relief was enacted by both Houses. It was rigid in its enactments to the Banks. It was generous and beneficent for the people. It limited the powers of Bank officers and directors—it checked inordinate banking operations. It was not the extravagant privilege of disregarding law. It was the privilege which necessity exacted and it was nothing more. But with that privilege were connected vital measures of reform which the People had long demanded. So far as the Legislature was concerned their duty was promptly and faithfully performed.

Nor was it till the Legislature had thus acted that any Executive intimation was made. It came as usual in the form of a peremptory refusal to acquiesce in the views of the Representatives of the People, and it left the Legislature to mature its measures again, and guessing at the varying opinions of the Executive to try to enact laws which might conform to them and at the same time be consonant with public policy and Constitutional requisition.

With what an anxious desire to regulate our course by wise and disinterested views—to do what a peculiar exigency required and no more—to conciliate our political adversaries and for once to unite with them or persuade them to unite with us in a common effort to relieve the suffering community, those who were immediate spectators of the scene best can tell. One of the undersigned representing the feelings of us all, on the floor of the Senate expressly tendered to the friends of the Executive the assurance of an earnest desire to bury mere party feeling, and co-operate cordially in measures at which no party evil could be uttered. But it was in vain. The only answer was derision at the offer, and a scornful denial of the existence of all distress among our constituents.

Not discouraged by the failure of all these efforts, the undersigned again matured a measure of relief designed to effect the great object in the attainment of which we believe the hopes of our suffering constituents were involved.—Would our constituents have seen what we have seen, and known what we have known, they would still more highly appreciate our reasonable anxiety to give relief. Not only was the community generally agonized, but on certain classes the pressure of the times fell with peculiar severity. The contractors on the unfinished lines of the public works were made on the faith of the Commonwealth. Solemnly and sacredly pledged by agents who, however faithful to their trusts were still the agents of the State. After the adjournment of the last legislature the Canal Commissioners holding their offices at the will of the Governor, aware that the appropriations were expended or insufficient, prosecuted the public works. Of this action we do not feel disposed to speak further than to say that the executive who would thus willingly incur debts ought to be as willing to pay them and not to deny poor justice to those who suffer by his acts. The contractors who in full confidence trusted the Commonwealth, have come to us and told their piteous tale—their property sacrificed, their

toil wasted, debts incurred, executions impending, ruin staring themselves and families in the face, the disgrace of insolvency tainting their character, and the debtor's prison waiting to receive them. The counties of Erie, of Crawford, of Beaver, of Dauphin, Huntingdon, Centre, Lycoming, of Mercer, of Columbia, Northumberland, Luzerne, of Bradford and Susquehanna, are filled with sufferers like these. We have listened and listed with pity to their story of suffering and though great diversity of opinion exists as to the policy of further expenditure on the unfinished lines, none of us are insensible to the States' obligations to pay her just debts. It is the Executive alone, who without authority of law, persists in his refusal to pay them.

To give relief and do justice to those creditors the Legislature has labored long and anxiously and in the hope of giving this relief, was the measure to which they have referred in a great measure matured.

The debts due for repairs alone, amount to two hundred and sixty eight thousand dollars, due generally to poor men who have contributed their labor to keep the public works in such condition that they may render revenue to the Commonwealth. Cases of individual hardship have been brought to our view, at which any heart would sicken, except the callous hearts of those who elevated above the sympathies of ordinary humanity can use the benefit of labor, and yet deny to it its just reward. It was to pay those debts too that the undersigned have anxiously labored.

To other public creditors, to those by whose pecuniary contributions the Internal Improvement system has been constructed, there was due at least an effort on the part of the State to discharge its obligations. Relying too confidently on the professions of the Executive, that by no act of his should the State credit be impaired or the public faith violated, we assumed the hazardous responsibility of exacting from the people new contributions to the common cause. The ruinous and disgraceful system of borrowing to pay interest, the undersigned thought and still think ought to be arrested. They have endeavored to do so, and if they have failed the responsibility is not theirs. The state credit must and ought at all hazards and at any cost to be sustained. The State is the aggregate of every man's promise, and if dishonor rest on the individual who violates his word, far deeper and fouler is that dishonor which will pursue the community which wantonly and causelessly disregards its obligations and taking contributions from the hand of generous confidence, now entrenches itself within its constitutional immunity and refuses to provide for the payment of its unquestioned debts. There is but one mode of sustaining credit, and to that the Legislature resorted. Its failure is not attributable to us.

The measure matured finally passed the Legislature on the 30th of April and on the first of May it was returned to us with the Executive objections. To that measure and to those objections we ask your best attention. They are in all respects worthy of it. It was a measure which will at once relieve the pressure of immediate liability on the Commonwealth, pay its domestic creditors, afford relief to the people by a moderate and well regulated amount of small note currency, save a large amount of interest on the public debt, and give to the banks such relief as for the sake of the community it was proper to afford to them—but it did more, and to this we invite especial attention. It provided for a reduction of the expenses of the government—it expressly prohibited the entanglement of the Commonwealth in new contracts, the burthen of which would ultimately fall on the people themselves; and above all it specially appropriated the money to be raised to certain objects and made it an offence against the law, for its officers to the appropriations. There was to be no transfer of money from this fund to that fund—no drawing from one pocket to pay another—no concealing deficiencies or defalcations by ingenious transfers—no puzzling the public mind by intricate account, but every cent of revenue raised had its appropriate object indicated, and neither the Executive nor his agents, could without detection misapply it. This constitutional "coercion" we thought we had a right to apply, and yet it is of this restraint which the constitution itself enjoins, and which we were bound to prescribe that the Executive complains as a dangerous encroachment on his prerogative. From this complaint we again appeal to the popular judgment to sanction a measure which would deserve approval, if it contained no other provision than this. We trust that no Legislature will ever be dissuaded or deterred from imposing this wholesome restraint on the power of the Executive on the treasury.

So far as the Relief Bill affected the banking institutions of the State, to the great surprise of the undersigned, they found the views of the Governor on one point had suddenly become consonant with theirs. At the beginning of the last session he denounced small notes as an evil which was on every account to be avoided, and strenuously urged the prohibition of notes under ten dollars. At that time the

people were suffering for the want of this currency but the Executive prejudices were obdurate. At the beginning of this session his views were unchanged. So late as the 8th of April, when he vetoed the Reform Bank Bill he still professed hostility to small notes even to a limited amount, and made this one of his objections to that measure of salutary regulation. By his recent veto it however appears that within a short time the Executive on this subject has changed his ground, and that influenced by considerations which he has not indicated and in relation to which in charity we will not pretend to speculate, he too is in favor of this mode of relief to the community. We apprehend that the people will appreciate the sincerity of his past professions and feel due gratitude for his late acquiescence in their wishes.

Not discouraged yet but anxious to preserve the public credit at all hazards, in order to save the Executive from the stain which must rest on him, and on him alone, if by the course he has thought fit to pursue the Legislature were forced to adjourn without definite action, still perplexed by the obscure intimations of his will, and sympathizing deeply with the suffering people, the undersigned determined to act on their own responsibility, and accordingly passed the measure of relief by a constitutional majority. If public gratitude be due, no share of it is due to the Executive.

It is a measure of compromise to which we ask the cordial and generous consideration of the people. It is a measure of necessity amidst surrounding difficulties. It is a measure which gives relief and deserves the popular approval.

Such has been our general course of action on the great measure of relief and reform—and to that action thus thwarted and perplexed, we confidently invite your candid and generous consideration. Could the Governor have been induced to depart from his oracular reserve, and appealing to the impartial judgment of the people, a reliance which never fails, frankly have indicated his views or expressed his willingness to take counsel, free and honest counsel, with the Legislature on such subjects, much time and expense might have been spared, and long ago might we have returned to those who sent us hither and told them that counsels of patriotism had prevailed, popular necessities been relieved, and wholesome reform enforced. If the result had been different, the responsibility would not be with us. If we had left the people without relief, we should have left them in the hands of the Executive.

But this engrossing subject is not the only one for which legislation was needed. Nor is it the only one in which the wishes of the people have been frustrated by the unstable and perverse will of the Executive.

At least ten Executive vetoes disfigure the Journals of this session, and in but one of them has the Governor pretended to indicate other than considerations of local expediency of which the Representatives of the people believed they were the best judges. And in the single exception, strange as it may seem to our fellow-citizens, so few of whom are ignorant of the provisions of the Constitution under which we live, the Governor founded his objections on a clause in an obsolete Constitution which more than two years ago was abrogated by a vote of the people. Nor had the Executive the manliness either to admit the error, if error it was, or assign the true cause of the misrepresentation until it had been discovered and rebuked by the vigilant action of the Representatives of the people. For proof of this assertion, now made with regret but from a sense of justice, the undersigned refer to the Journals, where it will be seen that in a Message on the 10th of February last, the Governor quoted as in force the old Constitution as justifying his negative to an important bill, and that on the 12th, not however, until after the mis-quotation had been detected in the House of Representatives, he acknowledged it in a supplemental communication and attributed it to a mistake in transcribing. No one can read the passage with the context, and believe that it was an accidental error. We ask the people to examine the Journals and then judge for themselves.

This is the solitary instance in which the Governor has frustrated our Legislation on account even of pretended constitutional scruples. A few instances of his abuse of the power the constitution has conferred on him are fresh in our recollection. They will show to the people how the public time has been wasted by the constant and frivolous Executive interference.

It became necessary to supply the omission of a Prothonotary in Huntingdon county to notice the record of a deed barring an entailed estate. A petition was presented, referred and examined, and a bill to the effect required was passed into a law. No remonstrance was presented though ample time was afforded. No public policy was affected. The bill passed in connexion with an important public bill extending to all Religious societies, without distinction, the right to hold lands for churches and burial grounds. Notwithstanding the public exigency, and for no adequate reason, the Executive returned the measure with his unex-

plained objections. The stain of religious intolerance was left on our Statute Book, and the public time wasted by the necessity of re-enacting that which was confessedly unexceptionable.

If the people of Lancaster county desire to abolish an useless Court prostituted to party uses, the Executive differing in opinion, at suggesting no constitutional difficulty, vetoes the bill but suggests the reference of the question to the votes of a portion of the people of the county.

If according to his suggestion, the question is referred to the decision of all who contribute to the support of the Court have a right to decide on its continuance, the obduracy of Executive will is not softened, and he vetoes the bill again, because he thinks on the question differently from the Representatives whom the people of the very county has elected.

But worse than all—the Governor will not permit the Legislature to regulate the discipline of a county prison—a bill providing for a change in the mode of appointment of Inspectors, Wardens, and Doorkeepers of a prison in Chester county was passed by both Houses, and has been vetoed by the Governor for no other pretext than that which differing views of expediency afforded. The people must judge of this abuse of power.

If this be tolerated—if on all questions of local interest when the people have spoken first in the choice of representatives, then through those representatives, and the Legislature has exercised its sound and honest discretion, the Executive is to interfere and thus defy the popular will, far better would it be to dispense with the complicated system of popular representation, its expense and its delays, and give to the government that unity of design which appears in the view of the Executive would seem to be its perfection.

At any other period than this, the undersigned are free to admit they believe a different course would have been pursued by the Governor. A wanton abuse of power without object, they are disposed to attribute to no public functionary. But on the eve of an election, when the incumbent of the Executive office is a candidate for re-election, the infirmity of human nature, always developed in the tenaciousness of office, is only overcome by a spirit of independence, such as even by his friends is not claimed for the present Executive.—To retain the possession of patronage and power, to cultivate factions or party influences however minute—whether among the tip-staves of a Mayor's Court, or the turnkeys of a County goal,—to secure all doubtful friends—to dispense with the execution of the laws—to pardon admitted libellers before trial, and give a plenary indulgence to them to violate all law hereafter, are some of the fruits of the privilege of re-election operating on unscrupulous partisans. The undersigned have had no reason to regard the present possessors of power to be exceptions to the rule.

Sensible of this exposure to temptation and yielding to the expression of public opinion on this point, the undersigned at an early period of the session procured the passage of an amendment to the Constitution limiting the Executive to a single term. If on any one point the public voice has spoken, it is on this. The promise of the venerable HARRISON, a promise, the sincerity of which even political animosity did not question that in no event would he be a candidate for re-election, and his opinion that such an amendment to the Federal Constitution was desirable, has consecrated this One Term principle in the affections of the people of Pennsylvania, and each day's experience tends to ripen that sentiment into deliberate judgement. Does any one doubt that had the present Governor of Pennsylvania been ineligible for a second term, he would not have more faithfully discharged his high duties and would have raised himself beyond the sphere of party movement to which he seems to be confined? Unfavorable as is the judgement which the undersigned have been compelled to form of the present Executive, they have no hesitation in saying that his conduct and policy would have been different had the temptation to do wrong been withheld.

Before the 4th of March last, when the present Governor was re-nominated, the amendment to the Constitution had passed the Senate where it was resisted by the friends of the Administration, and was under consideration in the House of Representatives. It afterwards passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming majority, but eight members voting in the minority, and they all accredited friends of the Executive.

It must next indirectly be submitted to the people, always the last and surest resort, and by them at the next General election it must be decided.—We submit it to you as part of our acts. Having weighed it well, having looked at it in all its relations to the interests of the people which we were sent here to guard, we submit to you, and to your decision now as ever shall we submit. The next legislature must revise this act of ours and we appeal to you to make this the test hereafter.

There was one matter of great public interest to which the attention of the undersigned was early called. They refer to the condition at