

STAR & REPUBLICAN BANNER.

G. WASHINGTON BOWEN, EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

"The liberty to know, to utter, and to argue, freely, is above all other liberties."—MILTON.

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IV. All Letters and Communications addressed to the Editor by mail must be post-paid, or they will not be attended to.

POLITICAL.

ADDRESS OF

The Democratic Republican members of the Legislature, to the People of Pennsylvania:

The undersigned Democratic Republican members of the Legislature, being about to separate after the termination of a long and eventful Session, and many of them to surrender the trusts which have held for the people of this Commonwealth, back to the hands of those by whom they were conferred, have felt that it would not be amiss to render to their constituents an account of the manner in which those trusts have been discharged. They are aware that the body of which it was perhaps their misfortune to be members, has presented a spectacle by no means flattering to the pride of this ancient Commonwealth, and has achieved little which is calculated to entitle it to a very exalted place amongst those assemblies which have impressed upon our Statute books the inspirations of a lofty political morality, or the spirit of an enlarged and enlightened patriotism. They are deeply sensible that the heavy judgment of the people has already fallen upon the majority of that Assembly of which they have formed a part, and that a portion of the obloquy with which that majority has been visited, is likely to be reflected upon the unwilling participants of their deliberations, whose opinions have been uniformly disregarded, and whose numbers were entirely inadequate to their enforcement. In the righteousness of that judgment they are, in all honesty, constrained to acquiesce—against the propriety of its infliction they have no argument to offer, unless they may be allowed the humble plea that though little has been accomplished which could redound either to the honor or the advantage of the State, less has perhaps been done of a mischievous character than could, under the circumstances, have been reasonably expected. They protest, however, against its application to themselves. They have enjoyed no power except that of remonstrance, and they are obnoxious to no responsibility but that of a failure to employ the feeble weapon with which they have been armed, in defence of the Constitution of the State, and the rights and interests of the people.

The last annual election resulted, as you are aware, in the complete ascendancy of the Federalists in both branches of the Legislature. A triumphant majority of that party, flushed with their recent victory, and breathing nothing but destruction to the banking and credit systems of this Commonwealth, accordingly assembled at Harrisburg, and the patriots of the land contemplated with alarm the mustering of those explosive, and insurrectionary elements which had gathered above the political horizon, and threatened to pour their accumulated wrath upon the devoted heads of the people of this State. The materials of which that majority was composed were of a character well adapted to the purposes with which it was charged. Men of no practical experience in the affairs of life—beardless enthusiasts, full of crude and chimerical notions of reform, and with no better idea of a banking institution than such as might be picked up in the various but unmeaning vocabulary of a village newspaper—tyroes in political science whose whole knowledge was confined to the noisy inanities of a town meeting—such were the master-spirits whom the fermentation of the political cauldron, and the chances and changes of political life had thrown upon the surface, and invested with the power of legislating upon the rights and property of their fellow men. With such men, of course, our government itself was but a subject for experiment, and the interests of the people as nothing when compared with the application of a favorite system, or the success of a new and untried theory.

To oppose these political speculators who aimed only at acquiring notoriety by the novelty and boldness of their opinions, without regard to the public cost, was a feeble array of representatives, scarce strong enough to embarrass and wholly incompetent to resist the revolutionary movement, which, under the impulse administered to it at the polls, threatened at first to trample down all intervening obstacles, and turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, to open for itself a pathway of ruin in its onward march towards the goal at which it was professedly aimed. The friends of order and of law, who, respecting the teachings of experience, were content to be no wiser than those who had gone before them, and deprecated every thing like experiment upon the property

and industry of the people, were reduced to a minority in the Senate, and overwhelmed by the disparity of numbers in the popular branch, and the State of Pennsylvania, delivered over into the hands of a few misguided theorists, seemed destined by the decrees of an inscrutable Providence to undergo all the tortures which the extremest folly, and the wildest fanaticism could conveniently inflict.

As if to deepen the gloom which overhung the Commonwealth at the crisis to which we have adverted, another chapter in that series of calamities which has so prominently distinguished the present administration of the General Government, was unrolled almost contemporaneously with the fall elections. In that contest the destruction of the Banks had been the banner cry of the successful party, and with the announcement of their triumph, and the shouts which went up with the smoke of the battle field, and disclosed the results of the struggle, the light of hope seemed to be at once extinguished, and confidence fled affrighted from the land. A second suspension of specie payments on the part of the Banks, originating in the State of Pennsylvania, and soon pervading nearly the whole Union, seemed to present at the auspicious moment, the long sought opportunity of destroying those institutions, and paving the way for the grand experiment of an exclusive metallic currency, which, by reducing the wages of labor, and the prices of agricultural products from the 'nominal' (or paper,) down to the 'real' (or specie) standard of the hard money countries of Europe, should enable us to dispense with a Tariff of Protection, and in the language of one of our own Senators, "cover this great country with benefits and blessings." The Banks were at the mercy of the Legislature, prostrated by the long and disastrous war which had been waged against the credit and the commerce of the country of which they had been the main instruments, and ready to receive the doom which had been so long threatened, at the hands of those who denied the obligation of contracts, and respected not the sanctity of charters. Every accident of the times seemed to conspire in presenting a conjuncture unusually favorable to the execution of the long cherished designs of the now dominant party. That conjuncture was hailed by their presses throughout the State, as particularly auspicious to the realization of all their dreams of financial perfectibility, and that portion of the people who had been persuaded into the same way of thinking accordingly looked forward to the assembling of their representatives as the signal of a revolution which should cure the diseases of the currency, and restore to them the prosperity of which they had been so long deprived.

The day of the meeting of the Legislature, and of the expected deliverance of the people from the chains which were supposed to have been forged about them by the Banks, at length arrived, and as the reformation of those institutions and the repeal of charters had been made the great question at the polls, they became, of course, the great question of the session. The reformers, as they were pleased to term themselves, were soon industriously at work in both branches; a proposition was introduced into either house for the repeal of the charter of the United States Bank, and bill after bill in rapid succession, distinguished by every variety of whim, and uniform only in the deplorable ignorance of the whole subject which was discoverable in all, was evolved from the revolutionary crucible, and laid on the legislative anvil to be elaborated and fashioned into a thousand shapes, and then dismissed for some other absurdity, more transcendent than any which had gone before. To none of these bank regulators however did it seem to occur that any information was necessary to guide them to the proper result. Whether the Banking Institutions of State had abused the indulgence of the people by extending their issues since the suspension, or whether the people at large were desirous that they should be hurried into a premature resumption, were inquiries which seemed to be unworthy of the consideration of those who were so ready to undertake the important business of reform, and to adjust the delicate and nicely balanced machinery of that complicated system whose every movement was connected with the property and the labor of the community, and whose violent derangement might readily prove fatal to both. It has been well remarked of surgery that the boldest operator is he who has the stoutest nerves and knows least of the delicate structure and organization of the body which has chanced unfortunately to fall beneath his experimental hand. If the remark is equally true of legislation, where interests equally delicate and complicated are frequently involved, never was a legislative body better qualified for a bold practice than the late House of Representatives of this State. There was no misgiving there amongst those who flourished the operator's knife, provided they could draw distinction for themselves. They did not stop to inquire into the necessity or the probable consequences of the measures which they were so forward to recommend. "Resumption!" "immediate resumption!" "Reform! radical reform!" without regard to the wants or wishes of the people, was the unmeaning cry; not a resumption which would be permanent and healthful, but one which should be short lived and unnatural—a mere galvanic movement which should be the precursor of a second death more terrible than the first; not a reform which should regulate and improve, but one which instead of regulating should only extirpate and destroy. The

first step in the grand experiment of the Federal Government to perpetuate its ill-gotten and ill used power by overthrowing the monied institutions of the States, and establishing a Government Bank upon its ruins, was to be taken here. It was in vain therefore for the minority to attempt to resist the vandal spirit which threatened to overturn everything which fell within its desolating track. Resistance seemed to be only calculated to exasperate it into still higher fury, and they accordingly hesitated whether it was not their duty to suffer it to flow on unimpeded until its violence was spent. They were aware that the public mind in many portions of the State had been inflamed by the most incendiary appeals into a condition of morbid excitement, which was but too faithfully reflected by their representatives. They knew that for years past the very atmosphere had been loaded with the most vehement and unmeasured denunciations of those institutions—that the polished and courtly phrases of "chartered monopolies," "licensed swindling shops," "wholesale rags manufactories," and others of the like character had been flung from newspaper to newspaper and echoed and re-echoed throughout the Commonwealth, until they had become almost the exclusive staple of a profligate and licentious press—and that moreover the party with which they were connected had been characterized as the especial patrons, and systematic defenders of those and all other offending corporations. The party which attributed its past failures to the ascendancy of the Republicans in one or other branch of the Legislature, was now in the undisputed ascendancy in all, and it became a very grave question with the minority whether they ought to take even the responsibility of assisting in the defeat of any of those long cherished projects of reform which they had been uniformly charged with resisting against the earnest wishes of their political opponents, and to the great prejudice of the people at large. They were united in the belief that their very best remedy for that rabid spirit of radicalism, at once servile and imperious, which had invaded our firesides, and threatened to pull down our very altars, would be found in its immediate though partial embodiment in our laws, and its practical operation on the business and interests of the community. They were not, however, at liberty to vote otherwise than in strict accordance with the conservative principles on which they were elected. Though powerless for good they might be still competent to a certain extent to resist evil, and it was their obvious duty to struggle against it while resistance continued to be availing, and if they failed, to acquit themselves at least of all participation in the responsibilities of the fearful experiments which seemed to be in contemplation.

Their efforts however were at first entirely unsuccessful. A sullen determination to execute the work to which they supposed themselves to have been called, seemed to have taken possession of the minds of the majority. Resistance was apparently useless. Argument, entreaty, expostulation, were alike vain. They heeded not the remonstrances of the minority, but moved onward in unbroken rank, and with the regularity and precision of a disciplined host towards the consummation of their darling schemes. There were some amongst them it is true, and foremost amongst that number was the Speaker of the House of Representatives himself, who had intelligence enough to foresee the probable consequences of the measures which they were adopting. They were about to do a deed which in his emphatic language, would "produce a scene of unparalleled ruin and disaster, from the centre to the circumference of this Commonwealth," but like him they were borne onward by the general current which had floated into the seat which he disgraced, and like him they had not "the nerve to resist the will of the democracy," and to give the lie to the professions upon which they had been elected. Their own little ephemeral interests as politicians far outweighed the high and solemn obligations in public duty, and the great permanent and abiding interest of the people. General, admitted public disaster—ruin unexampled and universal, pervading all interests, and circling outward from the centre to the remotest boundaries of the state, was as nothing when compared with the petty and shortsighted ambition which had traded on an imposture and would be bankrupted by its detection. If they should fail in meeting the honest but mistaken views of those whom they had themselves assisted in deceiving, they were destined to encounter merely the wrath of an offended constituency but the still more terrible frowns of the Federal Executive. If on the other hand they succeeded even at the expense of that ruin which was so graphically depicted by Speaker Hopkins, they could seek refuge from the storm which they might have provoked at home, in the arms of that Executive with whom the condemnation of the people has never failed to furnish a passport to the highest favor. The wishes and opinions of the administration at Washington were not left merely to be guessed at by their admirers and supporters at Harrisburg. The extent and application of their patronage were equally well understood. It was essential to the success of their gigantic and oft defeated though never abandoned schemes of political and personal aggrandizement that the first blow should be struck in Pennsylvania, because her powers of endurance and her fidelity to the party were supposed to be the strongest, and it may be readily conceived that they were not likely to want instruments where the interests of the representative could be so conveniently

arrayed in opposition to those of the people. Such was the condition of parties in the Legislature, when at the critical moment the Executive of this Commonwealth finding her credit to be trembling to its foundations under the influence of the destructive counsels which seemed to hold undisputed sway and to menace its entire ruin, felt it to be his duty to interpose for the purpose of arresting the mad career of those who had hurried her to the brink of the precipice, and were about to take the final and the fatal plunge. Perhaps it would have been more respectful and certainly more conformable to the gains of our institutions if that officer had been content to await the final action of the Legislature, and take the responsibility of the constitutional negative. He seems however to have considered the peril too imminent for delay, and he accordingly thought proper to assume the still higher responsibility of meeting the question in advance and arresting the measure which was then in progress by an anticipatory veto. He stretched forth his hand over that body, and though that hand no longer dispensed as heretofore the bounties of the State, it was still potent enough to roll back the lava flood which threatened to desolate the land. The nerves of the timid were strengthened by the example of their immediate chief, and those of the majority who were able to appreciate the effects of their legislation, under the lead of the honorable Speaker, separated at once from their destructive confederates.

The secession however was not immediately fatal. The struggle was not yet ended. The Administration at Washington was not to be foiled in its favorite purpose without a further effort, and the Representative Halls were converted into an arena on which the antagonist powers of the State and the General Governments—the advocates and the opponents of the credit system, contended for the mastery. In that contest the undersigned could not hesitate to take sides with those who stood up in the defence of the rights and interests of their own State against the encroachments of Federal power. If they had acted otherwise they would have been false to the principles to which they stood pledged, and equally false to the State of which it was their pride to be citizens. They were aware that her prosperity was in a great measure dependant on the preservation of that system which the General Government was endeavoring to destroy, and that with the enormous debt of thirty-four millions of dollars which she had already incurred in the prosecution of her gigantic schemes of improvement, the destruction of that system and the reduction of all prices to a metallic standard would more than quadruple the burdens of her people, and bring down the value of her whole freehold almost to the level of the immense debt for which it stood pledged. With an annual deficiency at present in her revenue of more than a million and a half of dollars, which must probably be supplied by taxation, and would constitute an annual burthen of nearly five dollars on every tax payer in the Commonwealth, they could not consent to aggravate that burthen by diminishing the resources of the productive classes to such an extent as to require twenty days labor, or as many bushels of wheat, to pay a debt which could now be discharged with five only of either. It was not their desire, however to legislate at all on the question of resumption. They were satisfied with the existing laws, and were content to leave in the hands of the people that power of coercion which they already enjoyed, and would be sure to exercise whenever it should become necessary to their own interests. It was not, however, for them to choose their own course. The majority were agreed as to the necessity of some species of legislation in order to preserve appearances at least, and the undersigned had no alternative than to choose between that which would preserve though it might perhaps deceive, and that which would inevitably destroy. They chose the former, and the result is now before you in the act of the late session legalizing the suspension of specie payments until the fifteenth day of January next, and stipulating, doubtless on the principles of divorce recommended in the annual message of the Executive, for a loan of three millions of dollars for the purpose of supplying the immediate wants of the Government. The great measure of bank reform which had convulsed the Commonwealth to its foundations, and cost so much travail to its authors, perished of neglect at last; several of the old Banks were re-chartered, and a new one of an experimental character presented to the Governor for his approbation; and the bill to repeal the charter of the Bank of the United States, which at the critical moment had once more interposed to sustain the credit of the State by paying the semi-annual interest on her immense debt, was permitted to slumber undisturbed on the files of both Houses, where it has been consigning to oblivion among the rubbish of the session, and will probably know no resurrection hereafter.

Connected with, and essentially dependant on the foregoing, were other questions of infinite magnitude and interest which engaged our anxious attention, and occupied a large share of our deliberations. The prosecution of four public Improvements was one of those, and one too on which our own ideas were as various as the supposed interests of our respective constituencies, some of us being of the opinion that the depressed condition of our public credit, and the extreme embarrassment of our treasury required an immediate suspension of the work on the several unfinished lines of Canal, while others entertained the belief that

true economy required those improvements on which large sums of money had been already expended to be pushed forward with all possible activity to completion. Amidst this diversity of opinion, and on a question which has always been of a local and never of a party character, there was no room, of course, with the minority, for the indulgence of any thing like party feeling. It is not to be denied, however, that some of those who advocated a suspension may have been confirmed in their opinions of its propriety by their conviction of the complete irresponsibility of the Canal Commissioners, and their utter want of confidence in the integrity of the men under whose direction the moneys appropriated must necessarily have been expended. The fact was notorious, and it deserves to be remembered by the people, that within a little more than a year after the installation of the present Executive, the expenditures for the single article of repairs on the several finished lines of Canals and Rail Road within this Commonwealth had swollen to the unexampled and astounding sum of about nine hundred and eighty thousand dollars, (\$980,000) being within six thousand dollars of the whole amount expended for the like purpose during the three years of the previous administration, with the exception of the extraordinary casualty above Huntington in the summer of 1838, and exceeding by nearly one hundred and sixty thousand dollars (\$160,000), the sum total of revenue derived from all our public works during the last fiscal year! The appropriations to that object at the previous session, inclusive of a provision of one hundred and forty-five thousand dollars (\$145,000) for debts incurred for the like purpose prior to the 1st of February, 1839, amounted to no less than eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and yet the Legislature was informed that on the first day of April of the present year, the whole amount had been expended, and a new debt incurred without authority of law, to the extent of nearly two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars; and that a further appropriation of at least six hundred thousand dollars would be required to pay that debt, and continue the several lines in active operation during the present season. No intelligible account was furnished to the Legislature of the manner in which any portion of this money had been expended, with the exception of perhaps about two hundred and ninety thousand dollars. To this extent even all was mystery and confusion; beyond this point, nothing but clouds and darkness rested over the whole question. It was impossible for the minority to guess even the extent of the public necessities in this particular; they did not hesitate to express their suspicions that there was something wrong; they endeavored to unriddle the mystery, but no pains seemed to be taken to enlighten them, and the faith of many of them was not sufficiently strong to authorize an appropriation of the amount asked for, upon the mere unsupported declarations of the officers who were interested in obtaining the funds, and might under the present system of unlicensed and uncontrolled expenditure, apply it to any purpose, which they might think proper. They were moreover advised that the number of officers, and with them of course, the expenses of superintendence upon the public works, had been multiplied of late to an alarming extent, and they were not disinclined to exercise their control over the public purse for the purpose of correcting these abuses, of limiting the enormous power of the Canal Commissioners, and of establishing some system of accountability which would bring them more effectually within the reach of the Legislature. It is admitted therefore that these considerations were not without their effect in strengthening and fortifying the positions of those who may have advocated a suspension upon other grounds, while, on the other hand it seemed to be equally obvious that a large appropriation for these purposes was essential to the success of the bill. If a few of the opponents of the administration were disposed to apply the proper check to its extravagance by refusing to trust individuals in whom they had no confidence, and who were entirely unaccountable for its use, with moneys which might be expended for political purposes, it is at least equally certain that many of the votes of the federal majority were influenced by considerations exclusively referable to the approaching elections. If the fact were not so, it was clearly not the fault of those individuals themselves. There was no want of industry on their part in endeavoring to impress upon their political friends in the Legislature the importance of further appropriations for that purpose, and the force of the argument may be conjectured from its extraordinary results. The most stubborn and inflexible of the opponents of further appropriations at the former session—the representatives of many of those counties which have heretofore been uniformly opposed to the whole System of Improvement, were all at once mollified and subdued by some potent but mysterious influence, and the singular spectacle was presented to the public of a Bill supported by the natural enemies of the system and opposed by many of its warmest friends. The undersigned are not unaware of the species of magic which was employed to work these marvellous transformations.—The fact is notorious that caucus after caucus of a strictly party character was held during the extra session within the secret chambers of the Capitol, and that the whole business of that session was made to wait upon the tardy action of those midnight conclaves where the will of a small majority of the dominant party, and a very small minority of the Legislature was attempted to

be substituted for the legitimate authority, and a hand which was entirely unseen permitted to control the whole destinies of this Commonwealth. That formidable species of party drill was not however confined to a single question. Almost the whole legislation of the State seemed to have been transferred to that dread and irresponsible tribunal—unknown to the Constitution and to the past practice of this government—where the fetters of party could be riveted upon the limbs of the reluctant, their remonstrances stifled, and the freedom of thought and opinion which ought to belong to the Representative extinguished under the pressure of that heavy despotism which is alike fatal to every thing like integrity of purpose and independence of character. It is not however for the minority, who were of course excluded from these mysterious assemblages, to say what may have been the extent of their influence upon the particular question. They might perhaps be inclined to differ in opinion on that subject, and they merely state the fact as an item in the history of the times, which deserves to be remembered hereafter by those who may be disposed to study the history, or scrutinize the doings of this remarkable Legislature.

The condition of the public credit was another of those topics, intimately interwoven with the foregoing, which challenged the attentive consideration of your representatives. For some cause, perhaps not altogether unconnected with the results of the last elections, the stocks of this Commonwealth, which had always enjoyed a degree of credit commensurate with her inexhaustible resources and hitherto untarnished honor, began about that period to descend in the market, and have so continued until they have reached a point of depreciation far below those perhaps of any other State in the Union. How much of that decline is attributable to the unskillful management of her finances, for many years past, it is impossible to conjecture. It can not be doubted however that a large portion of it may be fully ascribed to the ascendancy of those opinions, which, in utter disregard of the common obligations of morality, as well as the fundamental principles of our social compact, either questioned the binding efficacy of a solemn contract, or denied the authority of one generation to bind that which was to follow it. It is not to be disputed that great industry had been employed in certain quarters to propagate the opinion in other lands that there was no constitutional authority in this or any other State to pledge the public faith for the performance of any contract which its Legislature might think fit to authorize and as though the means adopted elsewhere had not been sufficient to accomplish the object in themselves, the same doctrine was publicly announced on the floor of the Senate of this State, and in the most imposing and authoritative manner, by the accredited organ of the very committee to which that subject most particularly appertained.

[CONCLUSION NEXT WEEK.]

WHOSE OX IS GORED?—When John Quincy Adams was President, he signed all the land patents himself, and was called an aristocrat because he used a silver pen for that purpose! Martin Van Buren has an appropriation of \$1500 per annum passed for his son to perform that duty, and yet he is a democrat! Pshaw! there is no more democracy in him, than the autocrat of Russia.—Pa. Telegraph.

THE PROVIDENCE CLAM BAKE.—The following items formed a part of the stores provided for the great clam bake at Buttonwood's on the 4th.—220 bushels of clams, 60 bushels quahogs, 1000 pounds brown bread, 500 pounds white bread, 5 barrels fish for the chowder, 15 barrels crackers and pilot bread, 8000 pounds ice, with other things in proportion. Whether any clams will be left on the Narragansett shore after this affair, is within the possibility of a doubt.

FEDERAL POTATIONS.—The disgust which federal aristocrats express at "hard cider" has recalled to recollection, facts which rebuke their hypocrisy in a striking manner. We well remember, in common with others, when the first hickory pole was erected in honor of Andrew Jackson, by the Bucktails of New York, in front of Tammany Hall. The foot of that pole was regularly christened by throwing the contents of a pewter mug of beer over it and a barrel of the same liquor was emptied into the hole dug to receive it—the Grand Sachems of the party stood around, dipped it up again with their pewter pots, and the faithful drank of it! If hard ciderism be an "enormity," what are we to call that exhibition?
Pennsylvania Telegraph.

REMARKABLE.—Charles Cist, Esq. who is engaged in taking the census at Cincinnati, says:—I found a lady who, at the age of 29, had fourteen children, the oldest being born on her fourteenth birthday! And another—a case more remarkable—in which her son stood by her side within a few months as old as she was when married, and the mother not yet 26!—Consequently, the mother was about 13 when married.

TROUBLE BREWING.—It is said that Isaac Hill is about to recede formally from the Lecco Foco regular party of New Hampshire. He will still support the Administration, but intends hereafter to do it on his own hook. He is about to establish a new New Hampshire Patriot. Isaac wants to be elected U. S. Senator in Hubbard's place, but the regulars say no.