



PROPOSALS,

For publishing, in the town of Halifax, a weekly newspaper,

CALLED THE

FREE PRESS.

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EXPERIENCE has so fully tested the utility of Newspaper publications, that the Subscriber deems it unnecessary here to dwell on the advantages resulting to a community from such an establishment. For the satisfaction, however, of those persons who may feel an interest in the success of the proposed undertaking, and also to afford a landmark for future guidance, he will endeavor to state, as near as possible, the course he intends to pursue.

The following subjects will chiefly engage attention:

A summary of the proceedings of our National and State Legislatures, with occasional extracts from the Speeches of our most distinguished Orators and Statesmen.

A particular account of all foreign and domestic events which may be thought generally interesting.

A correct Price-Current of the principal articles of export and import.

Also, to encourage Agriculture and Domestic Manufactures; to promote Internal Improvement; and to develop the resources of the country.

To disseminate useful information, whether of a Literary, Scientific, Moral, or Religious nature.

And to promote that free spirit of inquiry, respecting public men and measures, which is deemed the safeguard and conservative principle of Republican institutions.

Communications on any of the above subjects will meet with immediate attention.

GEO. HOWARD.

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CONDITIONS.

"The Free Press" will be published every Friday, at THREE DOLLARS per year, consisting of 52 numbers, and in the same proportion for a shorter period. Subscribers at liberty to discontinue at any time, on paying arrearages.

Advertisements inserted at fifty cents per square, or less, for the first insertion, and twenty-five cents each continuance.

Lists of Letters published at the terms prescribed by law.

Letters addressed to the Editor must be post paid.

For the convenience of correspondents, a box is placed at the office door, to receive their favors.

Persons holding Subscription papers, will please forward the names as soon as convenient.

Printing-Office.

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GEO. HOWARD,

Respectfully informs the inhabitants of Halifax, and its vicinity, that he is now ready to execute

PRINTING,

In all its variety, with neatness and despatch.

Blank Warrants for sale

AT THIS OFFICE.

DOMESTIC.

SPEECH OF

MR. BRANCH, OF N. C.

In the Senate of the U. S. on a motion to postpone indefinitely, the consideration of the Resolutions proposing amendments to the Constitution of the U. S. in relation to the election of President and Vice-President.

Mr. Branch asked the indulgence of the Senate for the purpose of submitting, for their consideration, a few thoughts in relation to the important subject matter under discussion. He said it was due to the state he had the honor in part to represent, for him to support the amendments to the Constitution, which propose to establish a uniform mode for the appointment of Electors of President and Vice-President, and to himself, to oppose the indefinite postponement of the various propositions now pending.—With the sentiment of the Legislature of the state, he most heartily concurred.

In entering on the subject, he said that he should endeavor to conform to the decision of the Chair, and that he would not intentionally bring into discussion matter foreign from the true question before the Senate; for he firmly believed that the decision of the presiding officer was correct, and ought to be enforced.

It would become necessary for him, however, to animadvert on the Constitution, as it is at present, and to call the attention of the Senate to the pernicious practices which had obtained, and grown up under it, which threatened, ultimately, to subvert the liberties of the people. It was the duty of an able surgeon to probe the wound to the bottom, that he might be better enabled to devise and apply an effective remedy.

It would not be denied, he said, that it was the intention of the Convention which framed the Constitution, to give to the people the election of their Chief Magistrate. But what have we been told by my highly esteemed friend and colleague, (Mr. Macon,) who is certainly high authority? Why, that the President had, since the days of Gen. Washington, been always elected by Congress.

This, said Mr. B. is the most alarming declaration, and surely it becomes necessary that something should be done to prevent that from taking place in future. The Constitution provides, that the President shall be elected by the people, through their electors; but we find that a plan has been found out, setting aside this provision—the President is to be chosen—and the people are called upon, only, to conform to the will of their rulers. Now, if these unconstitutional proceedings are to be continued, and the President hereafter is to be chosen by Congress acting in Caucus, it is manifest that the Constitution will not only be practically altered, but that a door will be opened to the greatest abuses and corruption. We will soon find that the President will be chosen only by means of intrigue and management with the members of Congress.

Is not the mischief, therefore, abundantly evident? Either make some alteration, so as to give efficacy to the vote of the people, or let them no longer be deluded with the fallacious idea that they exercise the power themselves. It is not worth while to disguise the fact from ourselves. We all see it. Indeed, it must be manifest to the most superficial observer, that the different departments of the government, instead of acting as checks on each other, are naturally drawn to play into each other's hands; particularly the Executive and Congress. The gentleman from New-Jersey, (Mr. Dickerson,) to whom I have listened with much pleasure, has failed to assign any reason why it is unsafe to return the election to the electors. I must therefore presume, said Mr. B. that none exists.

Let us then, said Mr. B. throw off this usurped authority, and return to the people the rights of which they have been wrongfully shorn. From whence do the members of Congress derive the power to elect the President of the United States? I hazard nothing, said Mr. B. in saying that the power is not to be found in the Constitution, and that it is, consequently, an encroachment upon the sovereignty of the people: the more alarming, inasmuch as it is exercised in the corrupt atmosphere of Executive patronage and influence. Make me President, and I will make you a Minister, a Secretary, or, at all events, I will provide you with a good birth, suited to your wants or capacity. And thus we shall barter away the rights and privileges of the people, at the expense of the best interests of the country, and the charter of our liberties. The mischief is abundantly manifest. Let us not, then, turn a deaf ear to the admonitions of duty, and the voice of an enlightened community, but rather let us have the magnanimity to return—to leave the things which belong to the Constitution, even though in doing so, we part with some of our influence. The President and Congress were intended, by the wise framers of our Constitution, to act as checks, each upon the other; but, by the system at present practised, they lose the benefit of this salutary provision. For, as has been observed by my honorable colleague, the Congress have always made the President, and will continue to do it. Yes, sir, the voice of that orthodox and experienced statesman has said so, and I have no reason to doubt the correctness of his assertion.

It ought not to be said, observed Mr. B. that we are incapable of acting on this important subject calmly and dispassionately. Our present session is comparatively unlimited—it is, in truth, the long session—our table is not burdened with important business; we sit but two or three hours in the day, and but five days out of the week; this objection, therefore, cannot be sustained. And as to the Senate of the United States, composed of gentlemen advanced in years, possessing a character—and justly, too—for their discretion and intelligence, being hurried away by passion or ex-

citement, I cannot, said Mr. B. believe it for a moment. We are all convinced that no alteration can be made in time to affect the approaching Presidential election. Hence, whatever excitement may be felt, it will not be of a pernicious character, but will rather tend to elicit the best and most effectual remedy. If we suffer the present propitious moment to pass by, what may we expect? Why, sir, that the nation will again fall into a state of apathy, and that nothing will be done until the people are again called on to elect another Chief Magistrate, when we shall have to deprecate the recurrence of all the mischief at present complained of, and which threatens such alarming consequences to the peace and security of society.

Mr. MACON, in explanation of the allusion made by his honorable colleague to his remark, that the President had always been, with the exception of Gen. Washington, elected by Congress. He repeated the observation, with a firm conviction of its correctness, that this had been the case, and in his opinion it always would be the case. If the members of Congress did not act in Caucus, they would influence the people in some other way. The people were always writing to the members to get their opinion upon the different candidates, and their opinions would have great effect. Mr. M. said he was willing to alter the constitution—but Congress, said he, will elect the President, be the Constitution what it may.

From the Milton Gazette.

Spontaneous combustion.—

A curious fact of spontaneous combustion occurred in this neighborhood a few days since. The wife of Mr. W. B. discovered about 10 o'clock in the morning, an unusual and very pungent smell, which was likewise inhaled by several of the family. It excited considerable uneasiness, as it seemed to increase, and a general search took place to find out the cause. The unusual and certainly peculiar smell soon directed them to the spot—it was found a quantity of Hops, that had been gathered of the last crop, and after being well dried, and put into a striped homespun cotton gown, moderately pressed in, and laid on the top of a pile of cotton seed, was discovered to be on fire, and by a gradual heat had almost mouldered into ashes—on raising it and admitting the air it was soon in a blaze. The cotton seed were likewise partly consumed.

Cotton has been known to take fire from being damp and confined in a close and heated atmosphere; and in this case, I find upon inquiry, the seed and the hops were immediately under the roof of the house which was not ceiled overhead; and from the recent heavy and constant rains, a small quantity of water may have found its way through the roof and gradually dropt on the seed* and hops, producing the requisite moisture, combined with atmospheric

*Our Cotton Gins, in proportion to the order they are in, leave more or less cotton on the seed.

causes, produced the fire. But, if it is admitted that cotton, or cotton seed, thus situated, may produce heat and from heat to flame, what assistance, if any, would hops lend to it, or perhaps the fact itself may have originated in the hops. I do not lay this down as an hypothesis of my own, nor do I believe that the conclusion should always be drawn from the premises. Philosophers and Chemists perhaps might discover the true cause, or combination of causes, and as it is an unusual circumstance, (at least to me,) it may deserve their consideration.

From the Hamburg, S. C. Gazette.

Duel.—We sacrifice some feeling in relating the circumstance of a duel, fought on Thursday last, (25th ult.) at the U. S. Arsenal in Georgia, between two very young men by the names of Cogdell and Wigfall, the former of Charleston, the latter of this district. The ground work of this affair is said to have originated at Yale College, the particulars of which, perhaps, it would not be prudent to publish, but suffice it to say the combatants met on the field with rifles, at thirty paces—at the word fire, young Wigfall received his antagonist's ball below the breast bone, which came out on the right side between the second and third ribs, having touched the liver in its course, of which he died on the following day.

Singular notion.—

We have seen a letter, says the New-York Gazette, from Saco, of the 8th March, announcing the death of Thomas G. Thornton, United States' Marshal for the District of Maine, who died on the 4th. This letter states, that Mr. Thornton had requested his friends to keep him as long as they could—then to put his body in a lead coffin, well soldered; over this a coffin made of inch boards; then one of two inches; one of four inches; and another, for the outside, of eight inches thick, all well bolted together; and to bury him at night, between the hours of 10 and 12 o'clock.

A happy Winding up.—

We understand that the Marine Insurance Society of this city, (Richmond, Va.) whose stocks were sold at auction on Monday, will divide at least \$1000 more than its capital.—Comp.

Education.—

Is strangely neglected in some parts of our country. If the sparseness of the population prevents the establishment of Schools, surely parents might, without losing any valuable time, teach their children to read and write. We have just seen, in a North-Carolina paper, a copy of the presentment of a Grand Jury of Edgecomb county, concerning a public nuisance, to which six out of the eighteen jurors signed their marks, instead of their proper names! The Foreman of this Jury was a gentleman, formerly a Representative in Congress, of uncommon literary acquirements. The advantages of education are at least unequally distributed there.