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By George Howard,

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COMMUNICATIONS.

For the Free Press.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

"By their fruits shall ye know them."

Mr. Editor:

When I submitted to the perusal of the public, by your favor, a few undigested hints, the hasty product of a leisure hour, it was very far from my intention to engage in the Presidential controversy; nor should I thus have obtruded my opinions, but for the singular and unprecedented course pursued by the friends of Mr. Crawford. Not content with approving or condemning every measure, "without regard to party," which Mr. C. has formerly advocated or opposed, and failing to elevate him to the height which the other candidates have reached in public estimation, they have adopted the adverse course, and endeavor to level the others by means the most strange and reprehensible. I have again resumed my pen for the purpose of making some remarks on the article which appeared in your last two numbers (18 and 19) under the title "Candidates for the Presidency."

"Mr. J. Q. ADAMS is a man of splendid talents, a fine scholar, an elegant writer, and possesses considerable knowledge and experience in civil affairs; but he lacks political integrity."

Why so? Because "he cut a somerset and vaulted out of the federal into the republican ranks in a way the most dishonorable;" and, in evidence, his opinion in favor of Jefferson's embargo is produced. By way of illustration, the writer continues: "How different was Crawford's conduct!" Different indeed! he acted "understandingly" on the same subject; he cut a somerset and vaulted out of the republican into the federal ranks, "because he had foresight to know what the whole world (i. e. Crawford's friends) now knows, that it would be a useless measure and not produce the desired effect." What reference the case of the traitor Arnold, introduced as a comparison, has to the conduct or qualifications of Mr. Adams, is beyond my comprehension; but it is really astonishing that professing republicans should produce this act of Adams, in favor of a republican measure, as an unerring criterion that he lacks political integrity, and Crawford's opposition to it as infallible proof of political foresight!!

"Mr. CLAY is a gentleman possessing some talents, but nothing that will bear any thing like a comparison with the efforts of the ancient or modern school." He is "miserably destitute" of "sound

judgment," and although "he can, with Jefferson's manual in his hand, preside over the House of Representatives," yet "he is unfit for higher office."

To establish these assertions, his being the principal agent in effecting the passage of the Bank law, Roads and Canals, and the Tariff, is brought forward. Mr. Clay is a western representative; these bills will unquestionably operate to the benefit of that section of the Union, and have received the sanction of a majority of the Members of Congress; yet, wonderful to relate! his advocating them is urged as conclusive evidence of his being miserable destitute of sound judgment. ("How different was Crawford's conduct!" he acted understandingly, and repeatedly recommended to Congress a revision of the Tariff, which he must have known would be peculiarly oppressive on the section which he represented, and calculated to benefit the manufacturing, at the expense of the agricultural interest; yet this "friend of truth" states that "he is opposed to that system of government which will foster one interest at the expense of another.") Yes, fellow-citizens, Clay, whose persuasive, dignified, and natural eloquence has heretofore been considered the pride and ornament of our parliamentary proceedings; whom the aged would listen to until their faculties were gasping, and the young would reverence as a being of a superior order; whose productions have been exultingly compared with the best efforts of ancient or modern orators; and whose unrivalled qualities as Speaker of the popular branch of our National Legislature have elicited universal admiration, is now discovered to be miserably destitute of sound judgment, to possess only some pretensions to oratory, and requiring Jefferson's manual in his hand to enable him to preside over the House of Representatives.

"Gen. JACKSON may have some uncultivated notions of military tactics, but that he knows any thing of the theory of war, that he can train and fight a large army in the field, is not pretended by any of his military friends. He possesses patriotism, courage, and invincible fortitude. The nation owes him a large debt of gratitude, which it is willing to pay;" but, "he is not qualified for the Presidency."

The objections urged by this writer against Gen. J. may be classed under three heads:—1st. *incapacity*, as a Member of Congress, and Judge of the Supreme Court of his native (adopted) state. 2d. *Opinions*, relative to the conduct of Governor Rabun; of the Hartford Convention; of the Tennessee Senate; and of party spirit. 3d. *Acts*—his vote on the Tariff; suspending the *habeas corpus*, and imprisoning a Judge of the U. S. Court. I will briefly notice these in the order in which they stand.

*Incapacity*—In 1796, Gen. Jackson was elected to the Convention assembled to form a Constitution for the state of Tennessee. The same year he was honored with a seat as a Representative in our National Councils; the next year as a Senator; in which station he continued until 1799, when he resigned his seat. In Congress he

acted invariably with the republicans, endeavoring to arrest the passage of those hateful acts which disgraced the administration of John Adams. (How different was Crawford's conduct! Where was "the champion of the republican party," "in those stormy times?" he was acting "understandingly" at Augusta, toasting, complimenting, and expressing *unlimited confidence* in the *wisdom* and *justice* of those measures which stamped such foul blots in our political history.) Gen. Jackson was then appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee; this office he accepted with reluctance, and withdrew from the bench as soon as possible. I will pass over his military services, as they have no connexion with his legal attainments, noticing but one remark, in relation to the battle at New-Orleans, which fully characterises the spirit that dictated these opinions of the *Friend of truth*, and which cannot fail to call to remembrance the conduct and expressions of some of these *republicans* during the late war:

"His (Caius Marius) victory over the Cimbri and Teutones, was as far before the battle at New-Orleans, as the splendor of the meridian sun before a twinkling star."

Of Gen. J.'s knowledge of the "theory" of war, I am unable to speak; but the history of our country clearly demonstrates that in *practice* he is superior to any emergency, whether contending against the wildly savage or the disciplined veteran.

In 1816, Mr. Monroe had it in contemplation to nominate Gen. J. as Secretary of War; he declined engaging in the civil affairs of government, assigning as a reason his endeavors to restore a much enfeebled constitution, which had been greatly impaired by the hardships incident to his military campaigns during the war. (How different was Crawford's conduct! he *always* acts understandingly; after opposing, step by step, the preparations for war, and giving a reluctant vote in its favor, he declined taking an active part in its dangers and responsibilities, and with "intuitive facility" this "champion of the republican party" retired into honorable exile, as Minister to France, until "those stormy times" had blown over: no sooner was the political horizon calm, but he immediately again made his appearance on the scene of action, and seized with avidity the first office that was presented to his view.) In 1821, Gen. J. was appointed to act in the first place as Commissioner for receiving the Florida, and then to assume the government of them. After completing the temporary organization of the two provinces, he delegated his powers to his Secretaries, his health forbidding a protracted residence in that country. In 1822, he was appointed Minister to Mexico, which office he declined, preferring the rural pleasures of his farm to the gaudy pageantry of imperial courts. In 1823, he was again elected to the Senate of the United States, which station he now occupies. This is a brief summary of the several civil offices which Gen. J. has

filled, and for which he was thought capable: and, need we say more, in the discharge of the duties incumbent on him, he has met the approbation of the Executive of the U. S. and of his fellow-citizens. In these several stations he has acted with integrity & judgment; and his preferring a private to a public life, unless in times of danger and difficulty, is the only circumstance in his political career that can be construed into an evidence of incapacity.

*Opinions*—on this subject I have not much to say. When *private* opinions, expressed in letters or social conversation, are resorted to as evidence of merit or demerit in *public* men, it plainly exhibits to what straits the writer is reduced. The opponents of Gen. J. not satisfied with pursuing this novel course, do not even hesitate to bring forward *spurious* expressions; witness the following, given by the *Friend of truth* as his language to Gov. Rabun:

"How dare you to give a military order when I am in the field."

Gen. J. in his letter to the Governor said:

"You, sir, as Governor of a state within my military division, have no right to give a military order when I am in the field."

Our political history unfortunately abounds with instances wherein persons, to promote their own views, have acted in a manner that merited the unqualified censure of every true patriot. That a "blunt old soldier, who is above disguise," should speak of such persons and their "miserable plans," in a manner to give offence to these *radical republicans*, will not excite any surprise when it is remembered that they have recently discovered that the unlimited confidence in the administration of John Adams, expressed by Mr. Crawford, "deserved the approbation of all honest men." That the embargo of Mr. Jefferson was "a useless measure and (did) not produce the desired effect." That the Hartford Convention was composed of "quiet spirits deliberating for the public good." And, that the adoption of the sentiments recommended by Washington, and advocated by Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, relative to party spirit, "would leave nothing but the calm of despotism."

*Acts*—Gen. Jackson's conduct in relation to the Tariff, and the motives which governed it, are before the public. It is to be lamented that the southern policy is, in this instance, so much at variance with the eastern and western; and contemplating with a fearful foreboding the diversity of sectional feeling and interest exhibited in the debate on this oppressive bill, it is a lamentable fact that as far as the sentiments of the Presidential candidates have been made known, they appear to be *all* in favor of the Tariff. Another charge against Gen. J. under this head, is, suspending the *habeas corpus*, and imprisoning a Judge for issuing a writ during such suspension. A short sketch of this affair, may perhaps afford the best explanation of his conduct. On Gen. J.'s arriving at New-Orleans, in 1814, as commander of the 7th military dis-

trict, expecting every moment an attack from an elated and powerful enemy, the Governor of Louisiana stated to him that "the country was filled with British spies and stipendiaries." Gen. J. suggested to the Legislature the propriety of suspending the *habeas corpus*. The crisis would not admit of delay, and while that assembly were slowly deliberating upon their power to adopt the measure, he proclaimed New-Orleans and its environs to be under martial law. A Judge of the U. S. Court determined to try the question of supremacy between the civil and military power; he was immediately arrested (not imprisoned, as the *Friend of truth* has stated) and sent without the city, where he was left, with this order placed in his hand:

"I have thought proper to send you beyond the limits of my encampment, to prevent a repetition of the improper conduct with which you have been charged. You will remain without the line of my sentinels until the ratification of peace is regularly announced, or until the British have left the southern coast."

The moment the impending danger had ceased, civil law was re-established, which was hardly done when the General was arrested and brought before the Judge to answer for his conduct. He made a masterly defence, declaring "at such a moment constitutional forms, I thought, should be suspended for the preservation of constitutional rights." When the Judge proceeded to pass sentence, the audience became noisy and tumultuous; the Judge hesitated, and uproar ensued. Jackson addressed the people thus:

"If you offer to resist the execution of the law on me, I will order out my troops against you, and in support of the civil authority. When our country was in danger, I upheld the military, because it was necessary to save the country. I will now support the civil authority, because it is necessary to preserve the laws and the constitution."

Could we require greater devotion to the laws or the welfare of our country? Assuredly not. The opponents of Gen. J. frequently reiterate the assertion, that he has *violated* the Constitution of our country, and triumphantly point to this act for confirmation: that instrument justifies his conduct, as an officer of the general government, in suspending the *habeas corpus*, for it literally points to such an emergency—the 9th section of the 1st Article contains these words:

"The privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* shall not be suspended, unless when, in cases of rebellion or *invasion*, the public safety may require it."

Will it be said that the public safety was not in danger at New-Orleans? I presume not. In this instance, as well as in every other which has occurred in the chequered life of Gen. J. it can be confidently said, that he has no views but the public good, and seeks no support but the integrity of his actions.

Yes, Jackson, who "never ranked high as a lawyer," was thought by his fellow-citizens, capable of assisting in the formation of the Constitution of their state; of representing them in our National Councils; and administering justice from their