



## THE "FREE PRESS,"

By George Howard,

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## COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

Mr. Howard:

In one of your late papers I have read a piece, over the signature of "Numa." You may be assured, it is not my intention to rival the author of that extraordinary production, in the vulgar abuse he thought proper to heap upon those gentlemen who attended the Caucus at Washington. If his object is to be pre-eminent in Billingsgate, I yield the palm without a struggle. To the unmeaning jargon of words, used by Numa, I feel somewhat at a loss in what manner to reply. If he had any object beyond easing his stomach of its bitterest gall, it must have been to make an impression upon the public mind, that those who attended that meeting at Washington were not only opposed to the late war, but to Mr. Jefferson's administration. I presume it is only necessary to mention some of their names, to shew the fallacy of this statement: every man the least acquainted with the history of our country, knows the distinguished part taken by John Holmes, then of Massachusetts, in their legislature, in support of the late war, and of our Republican administrations. Governor Dickerson, of New-Jersey, was considered one of the ablest writers against federal doctrines and federal oppression in the year '98, and has uniformly supported the Republican administrations down to the present time. Governor Barbour, of Virginia, was not only active during the late war, but his republican principles have never been questioned from the first division of parties. General Chandler was a prisoner the greater part of the war.—The name of Burwell Bassett is identified with republicanism itself—I will not mention many other names, that stood high in the Republican ranks, who attended that meeting, it would be a useless waste of time, but call upon Numa to point to a single individual that attended the Caucus, who was opposed to the late war, or Mr. Jefferson's administration. I will now ask, in the name of common sense, what is this mighty bugbear a Caucus, with which N— not only expects to frighten the old women and children out of their wits, but the men out of their right and privilege of voting for the person they think best qualified to fill the Presidential Chair? I suppose he will go so far as to admit, that it is not a four-footed monster, neither a bear nor a tiger? What then is it, which is likely not only to destroy our Constitution, our republican principles, but may perhaps introduce a pestilence in the land, (if Numa's horrid description of it is true)? why it is nothing more nor less than what happens every day among

us the people without giving birth to any extraordinary convulsion in nature. I will ask if there is a constable appointed, a justice of the peace commissioned, or a member of the Legislature elected, without a consultation among their friends, and generally a request that such a person would be a candidate to fill the appointment, whatever it may be? Does not this grow out of the very nature of a free and elective government? If we had a despot, whose will was law and who had the power of making all appointments, it would be useless to consult who was best qualified, but bow in submission to his mandate. From the extent of our territory it is impossible, in the nature of things, that a majority of our fellow-citizens, can be personally acquainted with all the Presidential candidates: how then are they to gain information as to their qualifications? It will not, I presume, be pretended, that we should vote at random, and select by accident an individual on whose faithful administration of our government depends not only peace and war, but the life, liberty and property of every individual in these United States. Were you empaneled on a jury, where but the smallest amount of property was at stake, would it not be considered the greatest outrage upon common justice to decide without evidence? Will you then decide the most important question that can be submitted to freemen, without using that precaution which would govern our most inferior courts in their search after truth. If from the reason above stated, you cannot be personally acquainted with all the candidates for the Presidency, what is the most effectual way of gaining information? Is it not the testimony of those of your fellow-citizens who have an opportunity of serving with them in public life, who have known them for years, and who have the same common interest and feeling with yourselves? If their evidence does not satisfy your minds, reject it & make further enquiry. All who know how to estimate our present free and happy government, should give his vote, as if he had taken the most solemn oath to select the man best qualified. For God's sake then, do not be led away by a senseless clamour, by an unmeaning parade of words. You have been told that the meeting of the friends of Mr. Crawford, when he was recommended for the Presidency, was dictation, tyranny, and much of such slang has been used about them; this might possibly go down late of a Saturday evening at a muster-ground, but certainly can never be intended for the sober sense of the good people of this country: is any man bound to vote for Mr. Crawford from that recommendation, unless he chooses to do so? How then is it dictation? And it is certainly a most extraordinary species of tyranny to give the people information on the subject of politics, farming, or any other matter in which they may feel an interest. I had always understood that to withhold information was the most effectual way to make slaves of men: such

has been the doctrine of kings and despots. I will endeavor, in a few words, to give you some of the effects produced in this country by Numa's hideous monster, a Caucus. In the year '97, Mr. Adams was placed in the Presidential Chair by the influence of the federal party. It was believed, by the best informed of the republican party, that our Constitution was violated by some of his obnoxious measures; and if his high-handed career was persisted in, would eventually destroy our government and substitute in its place a monarchy or an aristocracy. About the time that he was about to be re-elected, the republican members of Congress met together and recommended Mr. Jefferson: they also exposed the measures of Mr. Adams's administration; and by similar meetings they have elected Mr. Madison and Mr. Monroe, so as to keep their ascendancy down to the present day. This certainly was a grievous offence to those high-toned gentry, who lost their power because they wanted to ride over the necks of the people. Upon them the word Caucus has the same influence that the sight of water has upon a subject of hydrophobia; and it must have been in one of those violent paroxysms that Numa squeezed that shapeless monster out of his brain. Have not the other candidates for the Presidency, Gen. Jackson, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Clay been brought forward by different state legislatures? But forsooth, theirs were nominations, much more dignified than a Caucus. Can it be believed that the people of this country can be imposed upon by such a play upon words? It is to me apparent why holding a Caucus is so very criminal in the eyes of some gentlemen: 1st, it put down the old federal party. 2d, Nominated Mr. Crawford, because they believed him honest; that he had more judgment, & that he would administer the government more for the benefit of the great mass of the people than any of the other candidates. And lastly, we now come to the unpardonable sin in the eyes of Numa: can you believe it, tell it not in Gath, this detestable Caucus would not nominate General Jackson, believing Mr. Crawford to be better qualified. If the friends of Mr. Adams or Gen. Jackson had been the most numerous in Congress, we should have heard nothing from them but hosannas in favor of this long established usage among the republicans, and which had been their salvation by keeping them together. Every member of Congress, no doubt knew well the merits of Gen. Jackson as a military man, but they had other qualifications to look for, when about to recommend a person for the Chief Magistracy. Commodore Hull captured the first British frigate; he was foremost in the path of glory in the late war; he conquered the British; why not make him President? because your good sense teaches you that commanding a ship, and administering a free government are very different matters. Suppose we should have another war, would it ever enter the brain of any man to give Gen. Jackson the command of a

seventy-four, or Com. Hull the command of an army? I will then ask if there is not the same difference, or perhaps greater, in managing our foreign relations, our commerce, our fiscal concerns, &c. &c. than there is between commanding an army on land and a seventy-four at sea. I am afraid I shall become tiresome; I wish, however, to say a very few words as to the People's Ticket, which chimes very well with the railery against a Caucus. Are we not all the people? Have we any separate and distinct order of men? Have we any king or nobles? Where, then, is the necessity of this subterfuge, but for the purpose of imposition? Had there been an Adams Ticket and a Jackson Ticket, and the people been permitted to make their own choice, which these anti-caucus men prate so much about, the People's Ticket would not then have been transferable stock, either for Mr. Adams or Gen. Jackson, as might best answer the views of the master-jugglers behind the curtain. The friends of Mr. Crawford come out openly, and state their reasons why they prefer him; they have but one Ticket, take but one chance; they stand entirely aloof from all combinations. If a majority of their fellow-citizens think with them, they will be gratified; if not, they are prepared to bow with submission to the decision of that majority. I wish to have paid my respects to your correspondent *Halifax*: it appears to me, to use the common phrase, he is completely the Bull in the China shop; he forms parties, moulds Radicals, just to suit himself; he in fact has every thing his own way; but I have already far exceeded my intended limits, and will not trespass longer.

A FRIEND OF TRUTH.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

"Great wits jump together."

Mr. Howard:

This expression is fully verified in an article in your last paper, by a writer under the signature of "A." A friend of Mr. GALLATIN, attempting to extenuate his conduct in the famous Whiskey Insurrection of 1794, indiscreetly stated, that "the part he acted in the drama of that day, will fill the brightest page of his biography;" which called forth a correct account of Mr. G.'s connexion with that dark transaction. The editor of the Washington City Gazette, who is notorious for stating any thing but the truth, finding that this circumstance was operating to the disadvantage of the Caucus nomination, without any circumlocution flatly denied that Mr. G. had any part or lot in that affair. This declaration, in accordance with the motto which I have selected to introduce this communication, chiming with your correspondent A.'s wish on the subject, evidently induced him to repeat the assertion, to substantiate which he particularizes two works which do not mention Mr. G.'s participation in that transaction, and deduces from thence that he was wrongfully accused by "the ignorant." Mr. Gallatin was an influential leader in the noted Whiskey

or Western Insurrection, and was more than a year connected with the insurgents, during which time he generally acted as secretary of their meetings, which were occasionally so formidable that President Washington deemed it necessary to send 15,000 men to disperse the rioters: the character of those meetings will be best explained, by quoting the following resolution which was referred, with several others, to a committee of which Secretary Gallatin was a member:

"Resolved, that a standing committee be appointed, to consist of — members from each county, to be denominated a committee of public safety, whose duty it shall be to call forth the resources of the western country, to repel any hostile attempts that may be made against the citizens, or the body of the People."

I would recommend to A. and to those who are incredulous on this subject, a perusal of Gov. Findlay's "History of the Western Insurrection," and Judge Brackenridge's "Incidents of the Western Insurrection;" if these should fail to remove their doubts, I would refer them to Mr. Gallatin's penitential acknowledgment to the legislature of Pennsylvania of his "political sin," as he termed his conduct in that Insurrection, and to the admission of the fact, by such of his supporters of the present day, as have any regard for their veracity; which perhaps will be sufficient to convince even "the ignorant" of the truth of the statement. The imputation cast on Washington's administration, by A. in stating that "the still tax was laid to maintain a standing army in time of peace," will be treated with deserved indignation by an intelligent community; and his assertion that Mr. Gallatin's "efforts dethroned John Adams," will be classed among other instances of the extraordinary lengths to which the advocates of the Caucus nomination are prepared to go in support of their candidates.

Of Mr. Gallatin's claims for the Vice Presidency I forbear to speak at present. He has "done the state some service," and has voluntarily retired to private life; the political manoeuvring of the Caucus party introduced his name again before the public, but while such an enthusiastic burst of grateful attention is exhibited by the American people in favor of another foreigner, I would not wish to use an expression that would have a tendency to dampen that feeling. I will only ask our citizens if they are prepared to see a foreigner, a ringleader of the only insurrection that ever disgraced our country, a man who cannot, even to this day, speak plain English, in that seat which has been occupied by a Washington, a Jefferson, a Madison, and a Monroe? There is a strong probability that such will be the case should Mr. Gallatin be elected Vice-President, and the Presidential election be carried into the House of Representatives; for the Constitution provides, that should the House fail to elect a President previous to the 5th March, the Vice-President elect takes the Chair. Reflect on this, fellow-citizens, and let the ballot boxes in November next speak your sentiments. Z.