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ADDRESS OF MR. EDWARDS, Presented to the House of Representatives by the Speaker, April 19, 1824.

WHEELING, VA. April 6, 1824. Sir: I have the honor to request you to present the Address herewith transmitted, with its accompanying Notes and Documents, to the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, Sir, your most obedient servant, NINIAN EDWARDS. Hon. Henry Clay, Speaker of the H. of Representatives, &c.

Address to the honorable the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States.

As certain proceedings at the last session of Congress, under the authority of the House of Representatives, and a recent report to your honorable body, by the Hon. Wm. H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, seem to have been intended, and are calculated, to cast upon me imputations injurious to my character, which I know to be unjust, and which I think I can demonstrate to be so, I trust an apology can be necessary for my requesting leave to present my vindication against those imputations, directly to your honorable body in order that it may be conveyed to the nation through the same channel by which I have been assailed.

This is a right which, under similar circumstances I should suppose, ought not to be denied to the humblest individual in the Union. In this case, it is due to the nation itself, in consideration of the station I lately held, and that which I have now the honor to hold; and, owing to the peculiar circumstances of my case, it is emphatically demanded, on my account, by every principle of honor, and every regard to justice. Nor is it unprecedented in either House of Congress, in cases which certainly had no greater claim to such indulgence.

It will be seen that I was called upon by a committee of the House of Representatives of the last session, as a witness to testify before it, that I was subjected to an examination, which has not its parallel in the records of any free country; and that, after the lapse of about twelve months, and just as I was on the eve of my departure for a foreign country, an attempt has been made to impeach my credibility, on grounds which must have been, at all times since my testimony was given, within the command of the honorable gentleman by whom they have been so opportunely alleged.

To refuse to permit me to repel such an attack, in the manner proposed, would be to overthrow the longest established precedents, and to establish in their place, the odious, oppressive, unjust, and indefensible principle of allowing the credibility of a witness to be impeached, and yet denying to him the right to support it before the tribunal under whose authority he had been called on to testify.

But, independent of all considerations, in regard to myself, personally, I humbly conceive that your honorable body might well desire to receive my vindication, and every corroboration which I can give to my testimony, on your own account, in order to enable you the more clearly to ascertain the truth of, and the more satisfactorily and correctly to decide upon, statements now before you, and not yet acted on.

Notwithstanding all the casting about an "A. B. plot," the ingenious attempts that have been made, and the stratagems that have been adopted, by certain newspaper editors and others, to mislead and deceive the public mind into a belief that the committee, appointed at the last session on that subject, had thoroughly investigated all the statements made by a writer under the signature of A. B. in regard to certain suppressed documents, and that Mr. Crawford had been "triumphantly acquitted," in relation to the whole of them; I assert, without the fear of contradiction, that it is known to your honorable body that neither of these committees extended their investigations into those statements, beyond about four paragraphs, which were mere bagatelles in comparison with other letters and matters that were expressly charged, and incontestably proved, by the documents furnished by Mr. Crawford himself, to have been withheld contrary to the resolutions of the House which required their production.

These important statements, and the matters and things contained in my testimony, have never been investigated by any committee, nor acted on by the House; and if my testimony had been, it is now revived by Mr. Crawford himself, and, surely, if it be competent to him to attack it, it cannot be fair or just to withhold from me the equal right of defending and supporting it.

of the following statements and documents, without being conversant, that a very small portion of similar would have rendered a part, at least, of those interrogatories unnecessary and useless, even in the opinion of the committee itself. (.)

Whatever may have been my agency in procuring the Bank of Edwardsville to be made a depository of public money, it had nothing to do in originating the great system adopted by Mr. Crawford, of employing the local banks, and, in several instances, in direct violation of law, by allowing them a permanent deposit of nine hundred thousand dollars, equal to a salary of \$54,000 per annum, for receiving and transmitting the public money, which the Bank of the United States was bound to do without compensation, and would have done, without those immense losses to the public, which must inevitably result from the adoption of a plan so contrary to the letter and spirit of the bank charter, and to the avowed intentions and objects of Congress in granting it.

The effect of my application to have the Bank of Edwardsville made a depository of public money, was merely to have deposits made there, that otherwise would have been made in the Bank of Missouri, which previously had been authorized to receive the public moneys, collected by the two Receivers in Illinois, who alone were directed to make their deposits in the Bank of Edwardsville. My agency in this transaction, therefore, did not prevent the depositing of a cent in the Bank of the United States; and your honorable body may well judge, whether the public interest could have been much jeopardized, by the change I recommended, from the following statement, extracted from the documents presented to you by Mr. Crawford.

The Bank of Missouri had a capital of \$210,000, of which, the stockholders drew out of it, on pledges of stock, 186,335, leaving only \$23,665 for the further accommodation of themselves, and others. Upon this last sum, its real banking capital, it discounted and paid on over drafts, to the amount of \$244,345 53. The whole amount of its discounts, including payments on over drafts, was \$430,680 43; of which sum, its directors alone were responsible for \$397,492 14, &c. as is presumed to be the case, they were chargeable with over drafts, to the amount of \$11,622 27.

To this bank, Mr. Crawford allowed a permanent deposit of \$15,000 dollars, equal to a salary of \$9,000 per annum. He permitted the public money to accumulate in it, to the amount of \$726,031 90, in the course of nineteen successive months, ending with the 1st of September, 1819, without exacting those precautionary returns and statements, which he himself considered essential, to ensure the fidelity of all the banks, appointed to receive the public money; and, eventually, he received from it, in part payment of its debt, contrary to the positive injunctions of the resolution of Congress of 1816, a large amount of uncurrent notes, some of which were not worth twenty five cents in the dollar.

Much as he has mystified this subject, in several of his reports, and particularly in that one which is part of document 105, (in the 8th volume State Papers, 2d session 17th Congress) in which he blends a deposit in the Bank of Missouri, of \$64,613 58, with "the special deposits which passed through the Bank of the U. States;" it cannot excuse, or even successfully disguise, the flagrant impropriety of his having received, at par, the uncurrent notes above referred to; for, by the very document last mentioned, it appears that this deposit had been "re-transferred to the Bank of Missouri, and assumed as such, in September, 1819," which was previous to the receipt of those notes. His own letter to the Cashier of the Bank of Missouri, dated 23d March, 1819, and the Cashier's answer, dated 25th of June, 1819, (4 and 5) clearly shew, that no justification for receiving uncurrent paper can be derived from that circumstance. Besides, he received uncurrent notes that were not, and could not, have been included in that deposit; for, not to mention other cases, the notes which he received on the "Bank of Georgetown, Kentucky," were not, at that time, even receivable in the land offices. Nor was there ever any contract between the Bank of the United States, or the Treasury Department, with the Bank of Missouri, from which the latter could derive any right to tender, or be any justification for receiving, those uncurrent notes.

But, had it been otherwise, it would not be less difficult to justify the placing of this bank upon a footing so different from that of all other similar depositories of public money.

Under all these circumstances, it would seem incredible, that any injury to the public could have resulted from the change of deposit, for which I applied; and the attempt to subject me to censure, for the small participation which I have had in this business, ought to be considered as a plain acknowledgement of the awful weight of responsibility that rests upon him, whose special duty it was, to take care of the public money. My testimony, however, did not long continue, for, finding the Bank of Edwardsville, on my return from Congress, soon after it had been authorized to receive the public money, involved in some difficulties, I determined to sustain it against the dangers that then threatened it, and, after seeing it in a safe situation, to relieve myself from all kind of responsibility for that, or any other bank. Accordingly, in the same year, I made a publication in several newspapers, and in two different States, of my determination to be held no longer responsible for that, or any other bank. This publication can be established by a part, if not the whole, of the respective delegations, now in Congress, from the States of Illinois and Missouri. It was forwarded to Mr. Crawford, and I have no apprehension that he will ever deny having received it.

He had, also, been put upon inquiry, in regard to the Bank of Edwardsville, by a bitter philippic, in ample detail, against it, which he received from the Hon. Mr. Benton, of the Senate. This was shewed to Col. Johnson and myself, and a copy of it was transmitted to the bank, where, I suppose, it now remains.

He was fully apprized of those very difficulties of the bank, which produced my determination to retire from it. They were

communicated in letters from myself to Col. Johnson, which were intended to be, and were, forwarded to Mr. Crawford. The receipt of two of them is acknowledged by his letter to Col. Johnson, of 16th July, 1819, in which he says, "Yours of the 23d ult. come to hand this morning. The circumstances connected with the Bank of Edwardsville, as described in the two letters of Governor Edwards, submitted by you to my personal, will receive due consideration." In the same letter, he says, "With Governor Edwards I had no personal acquaintance, before the last Winter. The opinion which I had formed of his talents and integrity, from the official correspondence which had been carried on between us, both in the War and Treasury Department, has been confirmed by personal acquaintance."

The different subjects upon which he had occasion to set my opinion, or decision, during the last session of Congress, were fairly and candidly stated; his comments upon them were judicious, and it afforded me great pleasure to be able, after due examination and reflection, generally to coincide with him." The session here spoken of is the one in which I made the application in favor of the Bank of Edwardsville.

Had Mr. Crawford been as much disposed to profit by the impressive lessons of experience, which he was constantly receiving, as I was by those of a few months only, it might have prevented a vast accumulation of "massive funds," and have enabled him, much earlier, to have secured to the Bank of the United States, "in their just extent, the advantages intended to be secured to it by the charter," which he fairly promised to Congress, in his report of the 10th December, 1817, (6) and the necessity for which, he seems to have been duly sensible of, in another report, (3 vol. State Papers, 2d session 17th Congress, p. 77,) in which he says, "In the winter and spring of 1819, the bank of the United States was, in the opinion of the enlightened officer who presided over its direction, in a great degree indebted for the preservation of its credit to the forbearance of its creditors, and to the support which it received from the Treasury Department. Such were my impressions of its critical state, that I felt it my duty to accept propositions made by the Board of Directors, which, under other circumstances, would have been declined." It is wonderful, therefore, that, with these impressions, he should have thought it consistent with his duty, to have extended such favors as have been noticed, to a single local bank; much less to the multitude that shared his patronage, and could not have existed without it.

It would be just as fair and candid to impute me in the unjustifiable indulgence that has been extended to the Bank of Edwardsville, since its failure, as to endeavor to involve me in any kind of censure for its continuance as a depository of public money, after the fall of 1819. At the time of its failure, its resources were, I am well satisfied, more than amply sufficient to have secured its debt to the government. But, every man of common experience and observation knows, that the resources of all banks in its situation, must necessarily become more and more impaired, and more liable to be misapplied. Yet, strange and incredible as it may appear, I have never, nor do I believe, though I reside in the same village in which the Bank is located, that Mr. Crawford has collected one cent from it, or made adjustment with it, or resorted to any measure to coerce the payment of its debt. He, who could find motives for an indulgence so extraordinary, and, at the same time, so inconsistent with, and detrimental to the public interest, could not have required either my recommendation or sanction, for continuing this Bank a depository of the public money after the fall of 1819.

I come now to the report that contains the dextrous insinuation against my credibility. So much of it as relates to this subject, is in the following words, viz: "The hon. Mr. Edwards, late a Senator from Illinois, having stated, on his examination before a committee of the House, on the 13th of February, 1823, that the late Receiver of Public Moneys at Edwardsville had, on his advice, and in his presence, written a letter to the Secretary, enclosing a copy of the publication which Mr. Edwards represents himself to have made sometime in the year 1819, announcing his intention of retiring from the Directorship of the Bank at Edwardsville, and that he had advised the Receiver to withhold the deposits from the Bank until he could receive further orders from the Secretary, and that the Receiver afterwards informed him, that he had received a LETTER from the Secretary, directing him to continue the deposits. The Secretary deems it proper to state, that no such letter from the Receiver is to be found in the files of the Department; that the receipt of such a letter, and that, on an examination of the records of the Department, it appears that no ANSWER to any such letter, directing the Receiver to continue the deposits, was ever written to him, by the Secretary of the Treasury."

This statement bears intrinsic evidence that it was intended to deprive me of the benefit of my justification—not voluntarily made, but drawn from me by the committee, in regard to the Bank of Edwardsville, and to subject me to the odious suspicion of having sworn falsely. Were there any doubt on this subject, it would be removed by the conduct of a distinguished individual, whom it might not be respectful to name in this communication, and who, since I left the city, has not thought it beneath his dignity to go about exhibiting the report, and expressing his opinion that it "placed me in a dilemma." He may yet find it more difficult for his patron to get rid of one, of infinitely deeper interest.

Believing, as I call upon my God to witness, I sincerely and confidently do, that Mr. Crawford did receive the letter mentioned in the above report, and that it is now in his possession, or has been purposely destroyed, I can but regard this attack upon my reputation as unparalleled by any thing I have ever witnessed, or heard of, as emanating from so respectable a source, except certain insinuations and insinuations, to fix upon a much more distinguished individual of this nation the disgraceful charges of a guilty participation in horrid, and the passing of counterfeit money, which I have some where met with in the course of my reading. Malicious insinuation

is the resort of a timid mind. Wiful misrepresentation denotes a wicked one.

In regard to the one which has been selected for making this attack upon me, it is very much resemble the same case which Mr. Crawford resorted to, at the last session of Congress, to defeat a certain applicant for a land office appointment. This gentleman had been before the President for many weeks. He was supported by gentlemen of the first respectability, and of different parties in the States of Illinois, Missouri and Tennessee. No objections to him were anticipated by himself or his friends. And none were made till the President was about to transmit his nomination to the Senate. Then, when a nomination could no longer be kept back, by any resistance whatever, and not till then, did Mr. Crawford exhibit his objections. The gentleman's residence was too remote, and the session of Congress too far spent, to admit of any defence or explanation from him; and thus he lost the appointment. As this case is strongly marked by certain characteristic traits, which tend to illustrate the objects and design of this well-known attack upon me, I refer, for a further explanation of it, to my letter to Mr. Crawford on the subject. (7)

In the latter part of the week previous to my departure from the city, on calling to take my leave of the President, I met with Mr. Dickens, to whom, in a short conversation with him, I communicated my intention of leaving the city on the Sunday following, (one day before the date of Mr. Crawford's communication,) and but for an accidental engagement of the Secretary of State, which prevented his signing a paper that it was necessary for me to carry to the Treasury Department, (I had after the hours of business in that Department had elapsed, I should have departed from the city before Mr. Crawford's communication was made; and probably should not even have heard of it, till after I had left the U. States.)

But, independently of what I stated to Mr. Dickens, my intended departure was strongly indicated by the business I was engaged in transacting in the public offices. It was generally known, and, if it had not been, it was very naturally to have been expected.

Deprived of all opportunity of defence, a victory over me might, indeed, have been easy; but, surely, the triumph would have been most ignoble.

By way of availing myself of further characteristic traits, I beg leave to state, that an inspection of the public documents is sufficient to shew that, in repeated instances, Mr. Crawford's replies to calls upon him by the House for information, &c. have been so tardy and protracted, as to prevent the possibility of investigating them during the sessions in which the calls were made; and to require a great degree of charity—possibly, however, not more than is justly due—to resist the belief that he has been as much disposed to evade as to invite a scrutiny into his conduct.

Even the correspondence which accompanied the report in question, though required by a resolution of the 8th May, 1822, to be laid before the House as early as practicable, after the commencement of the then next succeeding session, has been delayed to so late a period of the present session as to render an investigation of it, before the first Monday in December next, impossible.

Notwithstanding all these circumstances, it may be that Mr. Crawford did not intend to take an undue advantage of my absence. He must well know with what indignant condemnation such an attempt would be denounced by every magnanimous and generous bosom. What surprises me most is, that a just apprehension of so degrading a suspicion had not induced him to have exhibited his insinuation a little sooner, or to have declined it altogether. But, whatever may have been his intentions, I could not have been more disadvantageously affected by any contrivance or stratagem that he could have adopted, to deprive me of a fair opportunity of defence.

Scarcely convalescent from a long indisposition, exhausted with the fatigue of travelling, and required to proceed on my journey with all convenient despatch, I must leave him unanswered, or content myself with such a defence as, with all these disadvantages a very short time of necessary delay on my journey may enable me hastily to present. But, what I regard with the most concern is, that writing, as I must do, without having it in my power to refer to, and re-examine, certain documents, I shall not be able to avail myself of some important circumstances which they would establish, and may be betrayed into some slight inaccuracies, to which all men are liable who have to trust to memory alone. I promise, however, to be more accurate than Mr. Crawford has been, in cases in which he had before him every means of being entirely so.

Having endeavored to establish my right to make my defence before your honorable body, and taking it for granted that a request so reasonable, under all the circumstances that have been mentioned, will not be denied me, I presume I shall be indulged in every legitimate right of defence that belongs to my case.

Among these, it will scarcely be denied that I have a right—

1st. To corroborate my own testimony. 2dly. To shew, by any means in my power, that the statements made against me are inconclusive; and, particularly, to avail myself of any circumstance that is presented by the documents in the case in which I was called on to testify, for the purpose of invalidating those statements. And, 3dly. Directly to impeach the credibility of those who have assailed mine. The latter I shall probably waive; for, though I have at all times, felt myself at liberty to animadvert upon Mr. Crawford's official conduct, and to defend my own, both of which he has found me prompt to do, in cases that never yet have met the public eye, yet I never have intentionally treated him with the slightest indecorum, or a want of that respect that is due to his station. (8.) Respect for your honorable body would, of itself, be sufficient to induce me to abstain from the language of passion, or abusive vituperation, before you. Respect for myself would prevent me from using it any where else. I cheerfully leave that resource to bullies, political tools, mercenary hirelings, and those who, conscious of their inability to defend their own conduct, can find no better means

of diverting public attention from themselves to others. I shall, nevertheless, freely, and insist on, such facts as I know to be true, and insist on, however, any other circumstances of them than the most innocent of which they are susceptible. If I shall point out particular omissions and violations of duty, or shew that letters, which ought to have been communicated to the House, have been suppressed, and that various misstatements have been officially made, I shall attribute them to nothing more than forgetfulness, inadvertence, inactivity, or some lameness, but innocent views of the subject.

This will be sufficient to shew that the negative statements of Mr. Crawford, and the officers employed in the Treasury Department, ought not to prevail against my positive statement on oath. If others should suppose this forbearance on my part to be too lenient, and that the case which I shall exhibit an evidence of intention less innocent, let it be remembered that their views of the subject would unquestionably render the case the stronger in my favor.

With these preliminary remarks, I proceed to my defence against this malapropos statement of Mr. Crawford.

It will be recollected, that I was not a volunteer in giving my testimony before the committee, and I can conceive of no motive which could be supposed, by any but a most depraved mind, misled by its own wicked operations, to have influenced me to make an uncalculated statement. As to my responsibility, in consequence of having applied to Mr. Crawford to cause certain deposits to be made in the Bank of Edwardsville, in preference to that of Missouri, surely I have shewn that enough was known about the latter bank, at the time my testimony was given, to have freed me from all apprehensions in regard to any responsibility that I had imposed upon myself, even if I had not withdrawn, as already stated, from the "Directors' list" of the former. But Mr. Crawford does not deny that he received my publication, and even if he had not received it, it having been made in two different States, and being having been, as I have shewn, put upon inquiry in regard to that bank, and informed of the difficulties it had had to encounter, I certainly might rely upon the notoriety of my acts, in this respect, with a much better grace than he shews upon a supposed priority of his repeated but unpublished omissions, to comply with the most positive legal injunctions, as an excuse for those omissions, which he does in his letter of the 24th February, 1823, to the Chairman of the Committee of Investigation; and in which he also seems, almost to insinuate, that his violation of his duty was equivalent to a fulfilment of it.

It could have been no object with me to have established an additional suppression upon him; for, if time do not fail me, it will be seen, before I am done with this subject, that I had in my possession proof, whose credibility could not be questioned, of his having suppressed, in a variety of other instances, letters enough, of a much more important character and delicate bearing, for any purpose that the utmost malignity could have contemplated, as possible to be effected by such means.

The amount of my statement before the committee, as well as I can now recollect it, (not having it in my power to refer to it for examination,) but which will be supplied at Washington, is—

1st. That, for the reasons therein mentioned, I made a publication of my intention to retire from the "Directorship" of the Bank of Edwardsville. 2d. That I advised the Receiver of Public Money at that place, to withhold his deposits from the bank; till he could receive further orders from the Secretary of the Treasury. 3d. That the Receiver did write to the Secretary on the subject, enclosing my publication, &c.

4th. That the former afterwards informed me that he had received a LETTER from the latter, directing him to continue the deposits.

Now it is not denied, and dare not be, that I did make the publication alluded to, and this I could not have done, for the reasons that influenced me, consistently with the known friendship and intimacy that then subsisted between the Receiver and myself, without giving him the advice mentioned in the second part of the above statement. But, that I did give that advice, is much more strongly corroborated by the fact, that the Receiver did actually withhold the deposits, and Mr. Crawford knows it. This might be established by the monthly returns of both the Receiver and the bank. But these are in the possession of Mr. Crawford. I, however, felicitate myself upon being able to satisfy your honorable body of the fact, by documents that have been furnished by himself, but which, thank God, are now out of his power.

By his report of the 27th February, 1823, (8 volume State Papers, 2d sess. 17th Congress 31, 33, and 35,) it will be seen that the amount of deposits stated to have been in the Bank of Edwardsville, to the credit of the Treasurer, was, At the end of the 2d q'r of 1819, \$45,560 68 At the end of the 3d q'r of 1819, 45,475 04 At the end of the 4th q'r of 1819, 53,191 59

The two first of these statements are presumed to be correct, or nearly so. The latter is entirely so, or, as I will prove to your satisfaction, if there is any kind of confidence to be reposed in previous statements exhibited to you by Mr. Crawford. Had it been intended to disguise the fact of the Receiver's having withheld the deposits, as above stated, and to give some semblance of plausibility to the recent insinuation against myself, nothing could have been more ingeniously, or more disingenuously, contrived, for these purposes, than this last statement. If it had been truly stated that, instead of \$53,191 59, the real amount in deposits, at the end of the fourth quarter, was \$59,191 59, the contrast between this sum and the amount of the previous deposits, might have afforded some corroboration to my statement before the committee. But this subsequent event has proved, it was intended to question. I will, however, make the case too plain for doubt.

By the report last referred to, it appears that the amount of deposits in the Bank of Edwardsville, was \$59,191 59. (See 4th Page.)