

# SOUTHERN CITIZEN.

WHAT DO WE LIVE FOR, BUT TO IMPROVE OURSELVES AND BE USEFUL TO ONE ANOTHER?

VOLUME IV.

ASHEBOROUGH, (N. C.) FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1840.

NUMBER 18.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
BY  
**BENJAMIN SWAIM.**

## TERMS

Two Dollars per annum, in advance, or Three Dollars, if not paid within three months from the date of the first number received.

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From the Ohio Confederate.

## SPEECH

OR

**MR. O. P. BALDWIN,**

Delivered at the great Ohio Whig Convention, which assembled at Columbus, on the 22nd Feb. 1840.

Fellow-citizens—We have often heard the trite maxim, that our Republic depends for its strength and perpetuity upon the virtue and intelligence of our people. Foreigners have affected to deride the idea that such a foundation can sustain the fabric of our institutions.—And, indeed, judging from the past triumphs of this corrupt administration, even an American might feel inclined to doubt the fulfilment of his hopes, and distrust the honor of his countrymen.—But, if any one has thus allowed his heart to fail him, least the goodly superstructure of our liberties had, after all, been built upon the sand, and should be washed away by the first storm, the spectacle we have this day witnessed must have dissipated all his apprehensions. We have seen the people coming to the rescue, we have seen the log cabins pouring forth their thousands, we have seen the farmer leaving his toil, the mechanic his work shop, we have seen the old man and the boy, all gathering in one mighty crowd to defend the constitution and the laws, and vindicate the virtue and intelligence of the American people. Why do we come here this day? Is this a convention of office-holders, of men who are congregated from self-interest; of men who depend on the charity of the public for their daily bread, and wish to secure to themselves the spoils they have so long enjoyed? No. The men who compose this convention ask no favors from the public purse, they earn their bread by their own industry, they depend on their own strong arms and stout hearts for the support of themselves and their families.—If they are governed by selfish motives, why do they not join the party in power? If they want bread and butter, is not Martin Van Buren always ready to give it those who will sing Hosannas in his praise? Why then are they Whigs?—because they love principle better than money or office.

Of the two candidates for the Presidency, Martin Van Buren of Kinderhook, and General Harrison of Ohio, I wish to say a few words. Without going into any detail of the public or private life of Mr. Van Buren, I will state the impression which I have received of his character during the time that I resided in his native county, and from conversation with persons who had known him long and well. From early youth he has been distinguished for the most inordinate ambition. I do not mean to assert that ambition is a crime, but I mean to say, that Martin Van Buren's ambition has always been of the most selfish kind. It has not been that generous

spirit of emulation, which, while it seeks great success, seeks also to deserve it. His maxim ever has been that the end justifies the means. And I do not doubt that if the secrets of his heart could be laid open, it would appear that from his very boyhood, he has had his eye upon the Presidency of the United States, and that to obtain that object he has ever been determined to make any sacrifice,—to sacrifice principle, and honor, and friendship, to stifle every generous emotion, and never to do an act which would not have a bearing directly or indirectly, upon the great end in view.—His whole life shows that he has acted upon this resolution. When he found that the friends, who encouraged him in his youth, were not as influential as others, who were their enemies, he gave them up. When these in their turn could no longer be serviceable to him, he deserted them also, always, however, managing to get one step higher on the ladder. You all know how he treated De Witt Clinton, a man who he had professed to love and honor. That great statesman found to his cost, that in assisting to elevate Van Buren from obscurity, he had only lifted a viper from the ground, which repaid him for his kindness by stinging the hand that raised it. And thus has he constantly proceeded, using his friends as stepping stones, and crawling along up the hill, till he has at last arrived at the top, and thus verified the saying of the poet, that "worms may creep where eagles dare not soar."

Now place by the side of such a picture, the character of William Henry Harrison, the Cincinnati of North Bend. If he has ambition, it is of that noble kind which will either gain its objects honorably, or not at all. His ambition is not a devouring flame, which consumes the heart, while it lights the mind to greatness. His ambition has been for his country, and not for himself, for free principles, and not for the elevation of his own name. You all know there is no such thing as selfishness in his nature. It has ever been generous, manly, kind, and though he may live in a log cabin; yet its doors are ever open to his friends, and the stranger and the poor man are never turned away from its hospitable board. Let his old fellow soldiers call on him, and see if he has forgotten them, or will cast them from him like broken tools no longer fit for use. No. That may be Martin Van Buren's nature, but it is not the nature of William Henry Harrison. And as for that desire for the Presidency which has characterized Martin Van Buren from the time when he went to school, I do not believe that General Harrison would have thought of such a thing to this day, of his own accord.—He had left public life as he supposed for ever; he had satisfied himself with the laurels he had already acquired in battle, he had retired to labor on his farm. And it was there at that honest employment; it was there, working with his own hands; it was there, following his plough, that the country found him, when she offered him the highest, the best reward in the gift of man, the Presidency of a free people.

Let us now return to Martin Van Buren again, and since there is nothing in his character to recommend him, let us see if there is any thing in his conduct as a public man which should induce us to yield him our support. Where was he in the late war? Our country was then in an hour of adversity, of bitter trial. She was assailed by the power of an immense empire, and on her North Western border the clouds of war were thickening, and hordes of mercenary soldiers and savages were doing their work of slaughter and pillage.—Our country needed men. Her armies required to be supplied. She called, she implored all her sons to go up and help her. Did Van Buren answer that call? No. Where was he? Snuggly seated at Kinderhook, warming his feet by the fire. He never raised his arm in her defence. He never fired a gun at her enemies. Fighting was not in his line. The sword and the rifle were not his weapons. The sight of cold steel gave him an ague. In the expressive language of an Indian "he too much dars'nt."

And now what has he ever done in civil life? Has he ever benefited our commerce or our trade? Has he ever

originated any great plan for the national advancement? No. But instead of all this, he has deranged the finances of the nation, and brought general distress and insolvency upon the land. What has he ever done for the West? When and where did he ever raise his voice in her behalf? No where. He has uniformly acted and voted against the interest and prosperity of this portion of the Union. And in all his public career, he has exhibited the most shameful inconsistency, inconsistency with his own avowed principles, inconsistency with his own previous actions. So perpetually is he shifting his ground, that there is no knowing where to find him. And I know not what reason he can give for his mutations, unless indeed he answers as a Shaker once answered to some one who asked him, "why do you Shakers always turn round in a circle?"—"Why," he replied, "does't the scripture say, 'Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?'"

Let us now return to Gen. Harrison and see if his public life has been as useless as that of Van Buren. I need not inquire of you where Gen. Harrison was when the flame of war raged upon our frontiers. Instantly, instantly he girded his sword to his side, and flew to the rescue. You know how arduous was the task committed to his hands, how vast was the extent of country he was obliged to defend with a small force, and now numerous and well appointed were the armies of the enemy. But he succeeded, in every battle he succeeded, he never knew defeat, and at length driving the foe from our shores, he carried the war into their own Territories and most signally routed them at their own firesides. Ohio owes it to General Harrison, that her sons were saved from slaughter, and her daughters from the violence of a brutal soldiery. Ohio owes it to General Harrison that all her fields were not laid waste, her cities burned to ashes, her hearths crimsoned with the blood of her children. Go, visit Lake Erie, gaze upon the fleets, the white winged messengers of commerce, which cover her waters, go, view the fair and flourishing cities upon her borders, whose streets resound with the hum of a busy population, and whose spires rise proudly towards Heaven, and then remember that Ohio owes it to General Harrison that that Lake is serviceable to our trade, that those cities have arisen in the wilderness, and that the altars of a pure faith are not superseded by the foul rites of Indian idolatry. And the Government of the United States owes it to General Harrison, that the most fruitful portion of her Territory, the West, the beautiful West, the brightest star in our national banner, is not transferred to deck the dradum of a British King. And what has Martin Van Buren ever done for his country that will compare with benefits like these?

But time would fail me were I to attempt even a brief enumeration of all the services which entitle the Hero of Tippecanoe and the Thames to the gratitude and suffrages of American citizens. There is another light in which, for my own part, I love to regard him as much as in his military career. There is a name, by which he is sometimes called, which to my ear has more music, and speaks to my heart with a more moving eloquence, than the title of Hero and Conqueror. It is the name of the *poor man's friend*. He has won this title most justly, most honorably. Contrary to his own interests, he procured the passage of the law by which the Western lands were to be sold in such small portions that every poor and industrious citizen could obtain an ownership in the soil, and a support for himself and his family. This single measure has enhanced the prosperity of the West beyond all calculation; it has brought within our borders the tide of emigration; it has assisted to clear away the forests, and introduce the abodes of man, and the comforts of civilization into the heart of the wilderness. It has done more. It has narrowed the line of distinction which before existed between the rich and the poor, and checked the tendency of that spirit of aristocracy which had already begun to display itself in a republican country. It has given the poor man an interest in his country, in her institutions, in her pros-

perity. He feels that she is his own country, that her welfare is his welfare; and with the means to educate his children, he looks forward with happy expectation to the time when they shall be able to fill a place in the councils or the armies of his native land. Gen. Harrison has indeed been the poor man's friend, and at the next election the poor men will prove it. Let our opponents sneer at the poverty of our candidate. Wait till next October, and the people from the log cabins will teach them a lesson in good manners, such as it is to be hoped, they will not soon forget.

It is alleged by the friends of the Administration that General Harrison has never distinguished himself except as a Military Chief. This comes with remarkable propriety from the party which supported Gen. Jackson for the Presidency, a man who never composed one of the Messages or State papers to which his signature was affixed. But the charge is false. The Administration of Gen. Harrison as Governor of the North Western Territory, is alone sufficient to refute the allegation. His reported speeches in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States; his letter to Gen. Bolivar, the various productions of his pen which have graced our literary periodicals, all exhibit him to us, in the most favorable light as a Statesman, a profound and correct thinker, an eloquent debater, and a classical and fascinating writer. That he has not the same kind of talent with Mr. Van Buren we frankly admit. He is not a crafty and insinuating politician. He does not seek like a feeble vine to entwine himself around the popularity of others, and thus arrive at a lofty elevation. No. Like the majestic trees of our western wilds, he depends on his own native vigor, on his own self-derived strength, and with no other aid than these, we shall soon see him lift his head above the sickly parasite which has raised itself into notice, by clinging to the old hickory for support.

Another of the slanderous assertions of the Loco Foco press is the charge that Gen. Harrison is a coward. I will not insult your understandings by offering a grave reply to such an absurd and scandalous libel. In connexion with this charge may be noticed the petticoat story, that insane attempt of our loco-loco bretheren to be witty and sarcastic. In the plenitude of their generosity they are pleased to present us with a petticoat for our candidate. We are reluctant to deprive them of so necessary a part of their own wardrobe. We do not wish them to be generous at the expense of their own convenience. They should recollect that a war is expected by many with Great Britain, and in that case, they may have use for the petticoat themselves. But if they insist upon it, we will take it. Let them invest the old soldier with the petticoat; let them call him the "old Woman," let them take the sword from him, and if they will wait patiently till the election, we venture to say that the way that "old Woman" will handle her broom, and sweep the country, and "clear the kitchen," will make the name of "old Woman" illustrious to the end of time.

Again, gentlemen, if Gen. Harrison, is, as his enemies represent him, a coward and an ignoramus, is it not most strange that the Whigs should have selected him as their candidate for the Presidency? Our opponents will not deny that there is some sagacity, some political tact in the ranks of the opposition; nor will they deny, I presume, that the Convention which nominated Gen. Harrison was composed of a most venerable and talented body of men, many of whom had mingled in political strife from their early youth. Of course these men were desirous their cause should succeed, and they knew the obstacles they would have to overcome, and they knew how much depended on the person who was their candidate, and they laid their choice among the bravest and wisest of the land, and yet, we are told, they choose for their representative, a coward and an ignoramus.—Oh, but say our opponents, "they chose him because he was the most available candidate." They did indeed; and let me ask these wise men, what made him the most available candidate? Will these democrats tell us that the people,

whose sagacity they are so fond of praising on all other occasions, are thus desperately in love with a coward and ignoramus?

I believe the only remaining crime of which Gen. Harrison is accused is *old age*. It is not proved that age has impaired the strength and acuteness of his intellect, or diminished the vigor of his body. From all that I can learn on the subject, the lapse of time seems only to have increased the firmness of his mind, and the greatness of his heart. We are told by an inspired penman that "a hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the ways of righteousness."—The life of Gen. Harrison has been characterized by an integrity unsurpassed by the most distinguished instances of human virtue recorded on the tablets of history. It may be his fault in the eyes of some politicians that he is both old and honest. But we cannot so consider it. The country does not so consider it. And, with us, such an old age as General Harrison's, is a recommendation and not a disadvantage. He stands before us like some ancient oak, with its many roots riveted to the soil, and its broad limbs spread in bold outline against the sky. Long will the sunlight of honor and renown linger amid its venerable branches. And when at last, that brave old tree, lashed by the storm, and riven by the lightning, shall totter to its fall, around its trunk will the ivy of popular affection that has so long clasped it, still cling, and mantle with greenness and verdure its ruins and decay.

Fellow Citizens, will we not go home and do all in our power to rescue our Government from the unfortunate hands into which it has fallen? There are men here of gray hairs, men who perhaps assisted to win for us the freedom which we now enjoy; old men, who saw the birth of our Republic, and yet, who are not so old, but that if the Administration party again prevail, they may follow the Republic to its grave.—And if they do, I know that they themselves would not wish to survive. I call upon them again to step into the field, again to save the ark of liberty from the unhallowed hand of its enemies. I call upon them to use their influence. And even should they not, by reason of their infirmities, be able to say much in our behalf, let them only show themselves on our side, let the people only see that they are with us, that such men are Whigs, that such men are the friends of General Harrison, and it will be enough. Their very appearance will argue a righteous cause, their gray hairs will plead with more than human eloquence, their wounds will speak trumpet tongued, and with an angel's voice, in behalf of the justice and the patriotism of our principles.

I call upon the young men who with myself are just embarking on the sea of life. We have not the consolation which our fathers have, should our liberties be now overthrown. They may find a refuge from their sorrow and mortification in the grave. But we may live, live only to remember that we once were freemen. We may live to see the Sun of national liberty set forever, and the dismal night of anarchy and despotism succeed. We may live to behold such scenes as France witnessed in her revolution, when a nation of unchained demons seemed turned loose upon the earth; we may see the doctrines of agrarianism and infidelity triumphant, the laws of morality and good order set at defiance, until some American Napoleon shall arise, and erect an unlimited monarchy upon the ruins of the Republic. Would we not better die than live to behold such a spectacle? If we would prevent such a result, if we would secure the inheritance of our freedom, let us now do it. We have a gallant, a noble leader. We have at our head a tried old soldier, a man, whose ancestors for centuries have been the sworn friends of human rights, a man whose veins are full of Republican blood, a man who has met the enemies of his country before, and has conquered them wherever they were to be found.—With such a leader, and in such a cause, success is certain.

Ungrateful persons begin by underrating the benefits bestowed upon them.