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FROM THE TRENTON FEDERALIST

## REFLECTIONS

On the Politics of Pennsylvania.

The political affairs of Pennsylvania present a critical crisis, for the consideration of that body of its citizens who are denominated Federalists. We at once reject as puerile and declamatory, the assertions, that on the event of this election hangs the hopes of a steady and just government. The frequent cry of ruin, and indeed the progress towards it, notwithstanding all the efforts of true patriotism, should make men very cautious how they act upon such occasions, or what expectations they ground upon their exertions. The truth is, and experience sanctions the fact, that we are not to look for any very important consequence on the side of permanent civil liberty, from a casual success over the projects of a foolish and innovating and restless democracy. It has fairly been tried in this and other countries, and the experiment proves (just what reason would teach) that those who assume the name of the people, will ultimately get the mass of the people on their side, and where there is universal suffrage, will batter down every institution on which they do not comprehend, or which stands in the way of ambitious demagogues or ignorant but well meaning enthusiasts;—the first thing then for the Federalists as a body, is to consider the loss and gain of any part they may take in the feud which now agitates the popular sea of Pennsylvania. We have calmly and deliberately taken a view of this question, under circumstances most favourable to an impartial opinion, and do not hesitate to pronounce that, they should take no part between the contending factions. The pretence held out by the Constitutionalists of preserving that precious instrument, & with it legal and political security, by the election of Mr. McKean, is both weak and insidious. The constitution in the hands of Mr. Kean & his party, has been used as a scourge, and presented no proofs of honourable administration, or political safety: Let reflecting men look back upon the six years of "Mr. Kean and the Constitution," and count up its blessings and its honours, it has been distorted by its boasted executive, (so energetic and so pure) to every purpose of popular corruption and tyranny, and we can venture to say there is not a sensible and sound federalist in Pennsylvania who, on reflection, will not agree, that more purity, and more of equal political liberty would have been diffused over the state through the medium of a single house of representatives, with all the executive powers, annually elected. Under such a form of government, it would be impossible to extinguish the influence of talents, of property, of virtue, of correct political efforts—these the federalists would bring into operation at every election, and if we are not greatly deceived, would, at this moment, and will in future, should that form of government prevail, stand on the highest ground of political ascendancy. In New-Jersey this opinion is verified by the fact, the government is completely popular—nominally there is a double branch, but in fact, the whole executive, legislative, and judicial power, is in a single body of representatives annually chosen. Many federalists concluded that our political affairs would be desperate under this form of government, when it should get into the hands of a democratic administration. They acknowledge, however, their error, the governor indeed, and the joint meeting have, with regard to some petty offices and trifling arrangements, been vindictive, unjust, and mean; but with reference to all the great and essential points and principles of conduct and legislation, federalism has been triumphant. The reason of this is that the form of the constitution left the democrats exposed to opposition, to detection, and controul—they could be checked at every fall election, and this salutary principle has ensured, and will ensure to federal men the full effect of all their votes, their property, & their talents.—Is there an observing man in New Jersey who will not confess (setting aside the mere holding of paltry offices) that federal principles and influence is stronger than ever.—But what if the party thus checked and controuled had come into power under a constitution, with a strong and permanent

executive power, like that of Pennsylvania, it is evident that federalism would have been crushed—the party would have gone on fearless of opposition, and executed at their pleasure every project likely to weaken and destroy their political opponents.

Let not then the terrors held out of a more popular form of government, determine federalists to take a part with the supporters of Mr. McKean: Could they, even by their interposition, uphold it, let them consider, both from what they have felt and what they may expect, whether their political power or the civil security will be any way advanced by retaining Messrs. Dallas & Co. in the administration of such a constitution. To us it appears evident, that a strong constitution in the hands of demagogues, whether they call themselves by one name or another, are most destructive weapons; and since power is likely to go and be kept in such hands, the only way to divide and soften its rigour is to render the form of government purely elective and annual; then all classes of men and denominations will be sure to come in for a share, and be able at least partially, to protect themselves against folly, perfection, and insolvency.—To test the question, whether this or a freer form of government would be most advantageous to federalism, let us for a moment contemplate. The democrats in Pennsylvania in possession of this constitution—a governor for nine years, with such executive power of appointment and patronage, and his other indirect influence, would, in the completest manner put an end to the hopes and the efforts of those men who wish once more to see the reign of constitutional principles and judicial security. It is unnecessary to pursue the reflections which such a state of things suggests; and that the democrats will get hold of this government in Pennsylvania, either at the ensuing election, or a little later, is evident to all men who allow experience and common sense to direct their judgments. The cry of aristocracy, lawyers, courts of justice, the people, &c. &c. will prevail, and Mr. McKean and his co-adjutors, as well as the federalists, if they join to preserve the constitution, only club their efforts to hand it over to Messrs. Snyder, Duane, & Co.—The truth is, that a good and perfect constitution, in the hands of honest and intelligent men, is a blessing; but in the hands of ignorance, passion, and party, it must tend to sanction and perpetuate error, innovation, and tyranny.

These considerations should at least allay the fervour of first impressions, and induce federal men to calculate how much is gained to them and their principles, even if the constitution is supported; if they succeed, let them remember, that Messrs. McKean, Dallas, & Co. or Snyder, Duane, & Co. will administer it over them.

But, again—what rational prospect is there that their junction with the constitutional party will ensure the election of Mr. McKean, or even if it does, that a convention will be prevented? The probability is, that Mr. McKean and his whole party will be cryed down in three months—they will be identified with federalists—stigmatized as aristocrats—decided as enemies of the people—intimidated by threats and violence—and, in short, be thrown out with utter disgrace. Mr. McKean and his supporters first corrupted the people, and then abused their principles, and disappointed their wishes—nay more, insulted their feelings by ignominious epithets, and disgraceful reflections upon their ignorance, and depravity: can any reflecting person, knowing the means and the exertions of the democratic leaders, with such facts & materials to work with, doubt but that the friends of the people will overcome the friends of Mr. McKean: and should Mr. McKean be elected, still how is the constitution preserved? The people may call a convention themselves, or the popular branch do it for them. Now, what will be the disgraceful position of the federalists, if, after so much insolence and injury from the present ruling party, they join their standard, even unsolicited, and find themselves, at the end of three months, involved with them in utter ruin and annihilation? It deserves the grave and deliberate consideration of all those who have been thus treated by both the contending factions, what they

are to gain in the struggle by interfering.

1st. Can they be assured that by joining with the constitutionalists, they will succeed in electing Mr. McKean?

2d. If they should succeed in his election, still is it not clear that the popular party will sooner or later remodel the constitution?

3d. Is it clear that the constitution as administered by one or other of these parties, is beneficial to the community?

4th. Can they with honour or character interfere—had they not better let the storm of factions proceed, and reserve themselves, their honour, their efforts, and their principles to a period more favourable for their success and example? These loose hints are put to press in haste, though not without having undergone much consideration. It seems fortunate, that as yet the leading federal characters in Pennsylvania have suspended any decision—it is hoped they will ponder well the consequence of any connection with the present parties. If they will set up a governor of their own nomination, they can vote with honour and safety, though certainly with no present prospect of success.

## New-Jersey Politics.

Exertions are making in New Jersey to introduce among the democratic party the same kind of dissensions as exist in this state and in the state of New-York. James Sloan, a man well known in the shambles of Philadelphia by the beef and the politics which he dispenses there, a member of congress and a butcher, is endeavoring to put himself at the head of the revolutionary faction. For this purpose he has made an address to the people of the state in which he highly commends the conduct of the Snyder party, and urges his adherents to imitate it by turning out the present members of their republican legislature, and putting in others still more republican. Upon this subject he has the following remark.

"First let me awaken your attention by observing that two sessions of our legislature has (have) been held since we obtained a complete victory over federal tyranny, by electing a majority of those called democratic republicans in both houses.—Here let me ask this important question:—What have they done? What oppressive laws have they repealed, or what beneficial laws have they passed?"

If we take this man's testimony, there fore, and he is a man of the first consequence among the democrats of New-Jersey, that state has gained nothing as yet by turning out the old tory federalists and putting in the genuine republicans. Hear further what this patriot and man of the people says upon the subject.

"This surprising inattention of our legislature to business of the first importance to the people, (particularly the last session, when banks and incorporated companies, the genuine progenitors of monied aristocracies, dangerous to the liberties of the people, were increased in a manner before unparalleled in the state) hath to discouraged many that they say it is in vain to strive any longer."

It certainly is discouraging, Mr. Sloan, to find that the men whose election was to introduce a political millennium into your state should immediately adopt measures so very aristocratic, and so imminently dangerous to the liberties of the people as to be unparalleled by those of the wicked federalists that preceded them. Now we have foreseen all these consequences from the beginning: and we gave timely warning of them to the democrats of that state and of this: but they were slow of heart to believe. Nothing but actual experience could satisfy or convince them.—Now they have had the experience and are compelled to acknowledge the correctness of our predictions; but strange to tell, they still claim to be honest men, anxiously concerned for the public good, yet, instead of retracing their steps and endeavoring to gain the high and solid ground from which they departed, they are employing their whole strength to plunge the people still deeper into the slough of democracy. When will our countrymen learn wisdom enough to cast off such unfaithful and selfish counsellors?—U. S. Gaz.

From the BALANCE.

New-York Politics.

The line of separation is at length distinctly drawn between the democratic factions in this state. The Clintons have at length openly declared war against the Livingstons, and offensive operations are commenced. Dark insinuations and ambiguous terms are no longer employed.—The tides set to with relentless fury, and the political horizon is already darkened by the innumerable arrows of the contending bands.

It is impossible to calculate, with any certainty, at present which party is to be exalted, and which humbled. The Livingstons are the most numerous—the Clintons the best organized and disciplined. The latter have long been prepared for the event. Their captains have been employed, and furnished with ammunition and accoutrements. They have been skirmishing and reconnoitering. They secured the "vantage ground" before they avowed their hostile intentions.—But, after all, their impetuosity may lead them into an ambushade. Their ferocity will alarm and disgust, rather than allure the surrounding multitude. Victory itself may prove worse than defeat.

The Livingstons, taken by surprize, and acting only on the defensive, have hardly time to rally enough of their forces to present a respectable front to the enemy.—They do not appear to want courage or spirit; but they are not yet sufficiently recovered from their confusion, to exhibit any remarkable specimens of skill. At the head-quarters of the commander in chief they are muttering in considerable strength; and appearances promise a stout defence.

As our distant readers may feel interested in the event of this sanguinary war, we shall give a brief sketch of its progress, from week to week, until it becomes tiresome. And in the first place, it may be proper to mention such of the papers as have taken a decided part in the controversy.

On the side of the Clintons, Cheetham's Citizen and Watch Tower take the lead;—the Newburgh Rights of Man—the Hudson Bee, and the Herkimer Monitor, are subalterns.

The Livingstons are defended by the Morning Chronicle—the Poughkeepsie Barometer—and the Newburgh Recorder.

The Albany Register is carefully skulking between the factions, until it can see the strength of each, at the next session of the legislature.

## THE GOVERNOR.

A writer in Cheetham's paper, after mentioning, as a very extraordinary circumstance, that Gov. Lewis had, within a few months after his elevation, entirely lost the confidence and forfeited the esteem of those who raised him into office, states, "That without having rendered a single important service to the republican party, without distinction for TALENTS or VIRTUE, the republicans with a liberality equalled only by the merits of their cause, named him as their chief, and supported him successfully, &c."

His language is plain enough. It requires neither comment nor explanation. It is an unequivocal confession that the democrats at the last election supported a man for chief magistrate of the state, who possessed neither talents nor virtues. But this is not the worst of it. By making this confession, they convict themselves of the grossest hypocrisy and knavery, in attempting to palm Mr. Lewis upon the people as one of the best of men. If we had all the handbills that were circulated for the purpose of promoting the election of Mr. Lewis, we might furnish a very pretty counterpart to the above extract. But we have only two. The reader must, therefore, be contented with a short extract from each of these.

"In the selection of the candidate for Governor, we have been attentive to those qualifications which ought to adorn the character of a Chief Magistrate, and to those political opinions which are most congenial with the public sentiment, and best adapted to promote the public prosperity. The private character of Chief Justice Lewis is fair and un-

\* Dutchess County.