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POLITICAL.

DEBATE IN THE SENATE,
On Mr. Van Buren's nomination.

REMARKS OF MR. HAYNE.

Mr. President: Before the question is taken on this nomination, I desire merely to state the grounds on which my vote shall rest. I do this as an act of justice to myself, without desiring or intending to influence the vote of any gentleman here. When the resolution offered by the Senator from Maine (Mr. Holmes) was before the Senate, a few days ago, proposing, among other things, an inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Van Buren, I took occasion to say, that though I could not vote for that resolution, because, in the form in which it then stood, it proposed to make a call upon the President, which I not consider as quite respectful in its character, and also because, even in relation to Mr. Van Buren himself, it was altogether too vague and indefinite to lead to any practical result; yet that, if any Senator would move for an inquiry, in proper form, I would not only vote for it, but cheerfully abide by the result. The friends of Mr. Van Buren, while opposing the resolution of Mr. Holmes, had not themselves thought proper to institute any such inquiry. I do not mean to censure them for this, nor to draw any inference from their course, in this respect, unfavorable to Mr. Van Buren. They believed the charges against him required no investigation, and for my own part I was willing to acquiesce in the suggestion, which had been thrown out, that from the nature of the case it was peculiarly proper that each gentleman should make the necessary inquiries for himself, and having satisfied his own conscience, act accordingly. I have, Mr. President, pursued this course, and by the result shall my conduct, on this occasion, be governed. From the time when Mr. Van Buren took possession of the Department of State up to the moment of his departure for England, I have been an attentive observer of passing events here. I have, also, since this nomination came before the Senate, taken pains to inform myself, from the very best sources, as to the correctness or incorrectness of my first impressions with respect to the conduct of Mr. Van Buren while Secretary of State, and the result has been, a firm conviction that I ought not to give my advice and consent to his appointment as Minister to England. From facts and circumstances which

have fallen under my own observation, many of them notorious to the whole country, as well as from information derived from sources on which I implicitly rely, I have arrived at the following conclusion: that when Mr. Van Buren came into the cabinet, he found a state of circumstances here that opened a door to the establishment of an influence favorable to his personal views; that, instead of exerting himself to remove the causes of discord and dissension by which the Executive was unhappily surrounded, he dexterously availed himself of them, and wielded them for the promotion of his own personal and political interests, and for the advancement of his friends and supporters to office, to the exclusion of almost all others. It is known to all who hear me, that Gen. Jackson came into office under most auspicious circumstances, which, properly improved, could not have failed to secure for his administration the highest honor, and, as I still believe, lasting benefit to his country.

It is notorious that the fruits of the great political victory which brought him into power, have been, in a great measure, lost. The expectations of the country have not been fulfilled. Dissension and discord have divided a party who were once cemented together by the strongest ties. Men who espoused Gen. Jackson's cause at the earliest dawn of his political fortunes, who stood by him in the heat of the contest, have been discarded from his confidence and proscribed; while those who came in (like Mr. Van Buren himself) at the eleventh hour, who never lifted a finger in his defence, or raised a voice in his favor, now have undisputed sway. Sir, I have no doubt whatever that for all this, the country is chiefly indebted to the influence of Mr. Van Buren, successfully, though cautiously, directed to the single object of advancing himself, at the expense of all who were supposed to stand in his way; and what is worse, at the expense of the success of the administration, and at imminent hazard to the best interests of the country.

I firmly believe, Sir, that it was not until Mr. Van Buren discovered, in the course of the last winter, that, by creating a unity of interests between the President and himself, and alienating him from his faithful and true friends—instead of elevating himself, he was pulling his benefactor down—that he determined to break up the Cabinet, by withdrawing himself, and driving his colleagues from their stations; taking care, however, to provide a safe retreat for himself in this mission to England. I think the dissolution of the Cabinet, under all the circumstances which attended it, was most unfortunate for the Executive and disreputable to the country; and such, I am persuaded, is the opinion of the great body of the people, of all parties, throughout the United States. From all that I have seen and heard upon that subject, I have not the shadow of a doubt that this event would not

have taken place, but for the firm and manly resistance made by certain members of the Cabinet to the views of Mr. Van Buren. If they had enlisted under his banner, and consented to follow his lead, all would have been well. I believe, moreover, that Mr. Van Buren, while Secretary of State, used the influence derived from his high office, for the purpose of controlling, injuriously, the domestic and social relations of this community; and that his conduct was, in other respects, inconsistent with the dignity of his station and the character of the country. Having arrived at these conclusions, after a careful and deliberate examination of the whole case, my duty is, of course, made plain. We are called upon to give our advice and consent to the appointment of Mr. Van Buren to a high and most responsible office. I know that a decision in his favor will be regarded here, and held up elsewhere, as a triumphant acquittal from all the charges that have been preferred against him. I cannot consent to be an instrument in producing such a result, believing as I do, that these charges are true.

Allusion has been made to the strong prejudices which are said to have followed Mr. Van Buren through his whole political course, and of which it is said he is now to be made the victim. For my own part I am unconscious of being under the influence of any such feelings. Though I have never had the honor to be classed among the personal and political friends of this gentleman, yet, so far from having ever indulged any prejudice against him, my feelings towards him have been of an opposite character. Up to the time of his going into the Cabinet, but a single circumstance had occurred to shake my confidence in him as a public man; and notwithstanding this, he went into the Department of State with my "advice and consent;" and I should have continued in the same relation towards him to this day, but for a course of conduct while in that office, which I honestly believe has brought incalculable evils upon this country. In coming to these conclusions, I have not been governed, as has been supposed, by "vague rumors merely." My opinions have been made upon facts and circumstances which are notorious, some of which have fallen under my own observation, and upon information derived from the most unquestionable sources. It is possible I may be deceived, but if so, I can only say, that so strong are the convictions under which I am acting, that if I were now a juror in the box, sworn to give a true verdict in the issue now made up between Martin Van Buren and his country, I should feel myself constrained to give that verdict against him. On this conviction I shall act. Be the consequences what they may, I shall do what I believe to be my duty, in recording my vote against Mr. Van Buren, as Minister to England.

REMARKS OF MR. BROWN.

Mr. Brown said, that unwilling

as he had been to participate in the discussion, he could not, in justice to his own feelings, and to the distinguished individual whose nomination as Minister to England was then before the Senate, refrain from giving utterance to the mingled sentiments of indignation and regret at the course which the debate had taken—a course which struck him as at least extraordinary, and extremely unjust towards the nominee.

The acrimony with which Mr. Van Buren has been assailed, the epithets which had been so liberally bestowed upon him, required some vindication at the hands of those who were favorable to confirming his nomination, against the injurious, and, as he believed, unwarrantable charges which had been preferred against him. He would here take leave to remind gentlemen that reproachful epithets afforded but a poor substitute for argument, and more especially when addressed to a body whose deliberations should be governed by calm and dispassionate consideration.

The Senate had been told by the honorable gentleman (Mr. Clay, who had preceded him in this debate, that Mr. Van Buren, when acting as Secretary of State, had disgraced his country, by certain expressions contained in his instructions given to Mr. McLane, late Minister to England, in relation to the negotiation between the United States and Great Britain on the subject of the West India trade. Waiving all discussion as to whom the responsibility should attach, for instructions given to our foreign ministers, whether to the President of the United States, or to his Secretary of State, he would concede to those opposed to the nomination the principle contended for by them, that the Secretary of State was responsible for his official conduct, to the fullest extent. He knew Mr. Van Buren too well to believe, for a moment, that he would desire that any shield should be interposed to screen him from a proper responsibility; he believed he would sooner court the strictest inquiry than to endeavor to escape from it. But to return to the instruction. What was the language which was deemed so exceptionable? In order to remove an impression that a feeling of hostility was felt in this country towards Great Britain, which the improvident course of the late administration in relation to the West India trade had produced, the late Secretary of State had alluded, in his instructions, to the change which the people of the United States had made, in those who administered our government, in the following language: "The opportunities which you have derived from a participation in our public councils, as well as other sources of information, will enable you to speak with confidence (as far as you may deem it proper and useful so to do) of the respective parts taken by those to whom the administration of this government is now committed, in relation to the course heretofore pursued upon the subject of the colonial trade. Their

views upon that point have been submitted to the people of the United States, and the counsels by which your conduct is now directed are the result of the judgment expressed by the only earthly tribunal to which the late administration was amenable for its acts." In making this suggestion, Mr. Van Buren had asserted what was most true. Public opinion had discarded the late administration from power; and the party to whom the people of the United States had committed the reins of government, had been, and were then, favorable to the proposed arrangement. He could, therefore, recognize in this no solid objection; but to his mind, it had more the appearance of the captiousness of verbal criticism than any thing else. If there was any thing in the language which he had noticed, of a submissive tone, as gentlemen had supposed, by proceeding a little further in the instructions they would have found language which would effectually have removed all their apprehensions; and shows if the late Secretary of State knew how to use the language of conciliation, he also knew how to speak in a tone of manly firmness, when urging the just claims of his country.

That part of the instructions to which he had reference was as follows. "If Great Britain deems it adverse to her interests to allow us to participate in the trade with her colonies, and finds nothing in the extension of it to others to induce her to apply the same rule to us, she will, we hope, be sensible of the propriety of placing her refusal on those grounds. To set up the acts of the late administration as the cause of forfeiture of privileges, which would otherwise be extended to the people of the United States, would, under existing circumstances, be unjust in itself, and could not fail to excite their deepest sensibility. The tone of feeling which a course so unwise and untenable is calculated to produce, would doubtless be greatly aggravated," &c. Here was language firm and spirited, and indicating any thing else but a disposition to yield or compromise the honor of the country, and he could but consider it as extremely unjust on the part of the opponents of the nomination, to single out detached parts of the instructions, without adverting to their general tenor, and viewing them as a whole; the only fair rule to be resorted to, in the exposition of public documents.

But to come back to the charge of disgrace which had been so strongly relied upon. How, Sir, has the Minister to England disgraced his country? Where was the evidence of the imputed disgrace to be found? Was it to be found in the fact, that an arrangement had been made between the United States and Great Britain, in relation to her colonial trade, substantially on the very same basis as that proposed under the administration of Mr. Adams; and were gentlemen who then approved that measure, now prepared to condemn the present administration for having suc-