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## The Tarborough Press,

By GEORGE HOWARD, JR.

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## POLITICAL.

### MR. CALHOUN'S LETTER.

Fort Hill, Dec. 21, 1843.

Gentlemen:—I herewith enclose you, as the organ of those who have nominated me for the Presidency in this State, subject to a convention fairly constituted, an Address to my political friends and supporters, assigning my reasons for not permitting my name to go before the proposed Convention to be held in Baltimore in May next. I transmit it to you, because I deem it respectful and proper to make it known to those to whom it is addressed, through you, and in order to afford you an opportunity to take such measures in relation to it, as you may deem proper, if indeed, you should deem any necessary. All I have to request is, that its publication should not be unnecessarily delayed.

With great respect I am, &c. &c.

(Signed.) J. C. CALHOUN.

Hon. Jacob Bond P'On and other members of the Committee.

### The Address of Mr. Calhoun to his political friends and supporters.

I have left it to you, my friends and supporters, through whose favorable estimate of my qualifications, my name has been presented to the people of the United States for the office of Chief Magistrate to conduct the canvass on such principles, and in such manner, as you might think best. But, in so doing, I did not waive my right to determine, on my individual responsibility, what course my duty might require me to pursue ultimately, nor have I been an inattentive observer of the canvass and the course you have taken.

It affords me pleasure to be enabled to say, that on all leading questions, growing out of the canvass, I heartily concurred with you, in the grounds you took, and especially in those relating to the mode in which the Delegates to the proposed Convention to be held in Baltimore, should be appointed, and how they should vote. You have, in my opinion, conclusively shown, that they should be appointed by Districts and vote *per capita*; but your reasons, as conclusive as they are, have proved in vain. Already New York and some other States have appointed Delegates en masse by State Conventions, and one State (Virginia) has resolved that the votes of her Delegates should be given by the majority, and be counted *per capita*. Their course would necessarily overrule that which you have so ably supported, should you go into Convention, and, would leave you no alternative, but to yield yours and adopt theirs, however much you may be opposed to it on principle, or to meet them on the most unequal terms, with divided against united and concentrated forces.

The question then is, what course, under such circumstances, should be adopted? And that question, you will be compelled speedily to decide. The near approach of the time for meeting of the proposed Convention will not admit of much longer delay. But as your course may depend in some degree on that which I have decided to take, I deem it due to the relation subsisting between us, to make mine known to you without further delay.

I, then, after the most careful and deliberate survey of the whole ground, have decided, that I cannot permit my name to go before the proposed Convention, constituted as it must now be, consistently with my principles, which have ever guided my public conduct. My objections are insuperable. As it must be constituted, it is repugnant to all the principles, on which, in my opinion, such a Convention should be formed. What those principles are, I shall now proceed briefly to state.

I hold, then, with you, that the Convention should be so constituted, as to utter fully and clearly the voice of the people, and not that of political managers, or office holders and office seekers; and for that purpose, I hold it indispensable, that the delegates should be appointed directly by the people, or to use the language of Gen. Jackson, should be "fresh from the people." I also hold, that the only possible mode to effect this, is for the people to choose the Delegates by Districts, and that they should vote *per capita*. Every other mode of appointing would be controlled by political machinery, and place the ap-

pointments in the hands of the few, who work it.

I object, then, to the proposed Convention, because it will not be constituted in conformity with this fundamental article of the Republican creed. The delegates to it will be appointed from some of the States, not by the people in Districts, but as has been stated, by State Conventions en masse, composed of Delegates, appointed in all cases, so far as I am informed, by County or District Conventions, and in some cases, if not misinformed, these again composed of Delegates appointed by still smaller divisions, or a few interested individuals. Instead then of being directly, or fresh from the people, the Delegates to the Baltimore Convention will be the Delegates of Delegates; and of course removed, in all cases, at least three, if not four degrees from the people. At each successive remove, the voice of the people will become less full and distinct, until at last, it will be so faint and imperfect, as not to be audible. To drop metaphor, I hold it impossible to form a scheme more perfectly calculated to annihilate the control of the people over the Presidential election, and vest it in those, who make politics a trade, and who live or expect to live on the Government.

In this connection, I object not less strongly to the mode in which Virginia has resolved her Delegates shall vote. With all due respect, I must say, I can imagine nothing more directly in conflict with the principles of our federal system of government, or to use a broader expression, the principles on which all confederated communities have ever been united. I hazard nothing in saying, that there is not an instance in our political history, from the meeting of the first revolutionary Congress to the present day, of the Delegates of any State voting by majority and counting *per capita*; nor do I believe an instance of the kind can be found in the history of any confederated community. There is indeed something monstrous in the idea of giving the majority the right of impressing the vote of the minority into its service, and counting them as its own. The plain rule—that which has ever prevailed and which conforms to the dictates of common sense, is, that where a State votes as a State, by a majority of its Delegates, the votes count one, be they few or many, or the State large or small. On the contrary, where the votes of all the Delegates are counted, they vote individually and independently, each for himself counting one. And it is to be noted, that wherever this latter mode of voting exists among confederated States, it is in all cases founded on compact, to which the consent of each State is required. In the absence of compact the invariable mode of voting in such States is, in all cases, by the majority, their vote counting one. The course which Virginia has resolved to take, is in violation of this plain and fundamental rule, and if it should become a settled practice, would be destructive of the foundation on which the whole structure of the State Right doctrine is reared.

I hold, in the next place, to be an indispensable principle, that the Convention should be so constituted, as to give to each State, in the nomination of a candidate, the same relative weight, which the Constitution secures to it in the election of the President, making due allowance for its relative party strength. By the election, I mean the whole—the eventual choice when it goes into the House of Representatives, as well as the primary vote in the electoral college. The one is as much a part of the election as the other. The two make the whole. The adoption of the one, in the Convention, which framed the Constitution, depended on the adoption of the other. Neither could possibly be adopted alone. The two were the result of compromise between the larger and smaller States, after a long and doubtful struggle, which threatened the loss of the Constitution itself. The object of giving to the smaller States an equality with the larger, in the eventual choice by the House, was to counterpoise the preponderance of the larger in the electoral college. Without this, the smaller would have voted against the whole provision, and its rejection would have been the consequence. Even as it stands, Delaware voted against it. In confirmation of what I state, I refer to Mr. Madison's report on the proceedings of the Convention.

Having stated what I mean by the election, it will require but a few words to explain my reasons for the principles I have laid down. They are few and simple, and rest on the ground, that the nomination is in reality the election, if concurred in, as far as the party is concerned. It is so intended to be. The leading reason assigned for making it, is to prevent a division of the party, and thereby prevent the election from going into the House, where the smaller States would have the advantage intended to be secured to them by the Constitution, by being placed on an equality with the larger.

Such being the intended object and effect, I now submit to every candid mind, whe-

ther the Convention ought not to be so constituted, as to compensate in the nomination for the important advantage in the election, which the smaller States surrender by going into a Convention. Would it not be unfair—a palpable want of good faith and subversive of the compromise of the Constitution to withhold it? Or, if demanded, would it be short of an insult to refuse it? Can it be thought that the smaller States are so debased and absorbed in the party politics of the day, as to permit themselves to be thus indirectly stripped of a right, which their high minded and patriotic ancestors held so dear, as even to prefer the loss of the Constitution itself, rather than surrender it.

I object, then, to the proposed Convention, in this connection, because it makes no compensation to the smaller States for the surrender of this unquestionable and important constitutional right. Instead of that, its advocates peremptorily and indignantly refuse any, and treat with scorn every attempt to secure it. Some have even gone so far, as to deny, that the eventual choice of the House constitutes any portion of the election, and to manifest open hostility against the provision of the Constitution, which contains it.

If there was no other objection, the one under consideration would be insuperable with me. I differ utterly from the advocates of the proposed Convention, in reference to this provision. I regard it as one of the first importance, not because I desire the election to go into the House, but because I believe it to be an indispensable means, in the hands of the smaller States, of preserving their just and constitutional weight in the Presidential election, and through that, in the Executive Department and the Government itself, which I believe to be essential to the preservation of our sublime federal system.—I regard the adjustment of the relative weight of the States in the Government to be the fundamental compromise of the Constitution, and that on which our whole political system depends. Its adjustment constituted the great difficulty in forming the Constitution. The principle on which it was finally effected was, that, while due concession should be made to population, a provision should be also made, in some form, to preserve the original equality of the States in every department of the Government. The principle was easily carried out in constituting the legislative department, by preserving the equality of the States in one branch, (the Senate) and conceding to population its full preponderance in the other. But the great and difficult task of reducing it to practice was, in the Executive Department, at the head of which there is but a single officer. So great was it, that it occupied the attention of the Convention, from time to time, during the whole session, and was very near causing a failure at last. It would have been an easy task to constitute that department, either on the principle of the equality of the States in the government, or that of population. To combine the two, in the election of a single officer, was quite a different affair; but however difficult, it had to be performed, at the hazard of losing the Constitution.

It was finally accomplished, by giving to the larger States nearly the same preponderance in the electoral college, as they have in the House, and to the smaller, in the event of a choice by the House, the same equality they possess in the Senate; thus following closely the analogy of the Legislative Department. To make it as close as possible, it was at first proposed to give the eventual choice to the Senate, instead of the House, but it was altered and the present provision adopted, for reasons which did not affect the principle.

It was believed by the framers, the practical operation of the provision would be, that the electoral college, in which the influence of the larger States preponderates, would nominate, and that the House, voting by States, where their equality is preserved, would elect who should be the President. To give it that operation in practice, the provision, as it originally stood in the Constitution, was that each elector should vote for two individuals, without discriminating which should be President, and if no one had a majority of the whole votes, then out of the five highest, the House voting by States, should elect one, and the person not elected, having the highest number of votes, should be the Vice President. It has been since altered, so that the electors should designate which should be President, & which Vice President, the selection of the House was limited to the three highest, that if this provision of the Constitution had been left to operate by itself, without the intervention of caucuses, or party conventions between the people and the election, that the practical operation would have been such as I have stated, and such as was clearly intended by the framers of the Constitution.

The object intended is important. The preservation of the relative weight of the States, as established by the Constitution in all the Departments, is necessary to the success and duration of our system of Gov-

ernment; but it may be doubted, whether the provision adopted to effect it in the Executive Department, is not too refined for the strong and I may add, corrupt passions, which the Presidential election will ever excite. Certain it is, that the practice of nominating candidates for the Presidency, by Conventions constituted as they proposed, shall become the established usage, it will utterly defeat the intention of the framers of the Constitution, and would be followed by a radical and dangerous change, not only in the Executive Department, but in the Government itself.

The danger was early foreseen, and to avoid it, some of the wisest and most experienced statesmen of former days so strongly objected to Congressional caucuses to nominate candidates for the Presidency, that they never could be induced to attend them; among them it will be sufficient to name Mr. Macon and Mr. Lowndes. Others, believing that this provision of the Constitution was too refined for practice, were solicitous to amend it, but without impairing the influence of the smaller States in the election. Among these I rank myself. With that object, resolutions were introduced, in 1828, in the Senate by Col. Benton, and in the House by Mr. McDuffie, providing for districting the States, and for referring the election back to the people in each State; there should be no choice, to elect one from the two highest candidates. The principle which governed in the amendment proposed, was to give a fair compensation to the smaller States for the surrender of their advantage in the eventual choice by the House and at the same time to make the mode of electing the President more strictly in conformity with the principles of our popular institutions and to be less liable to corruption, than the existing provision. They received the general support of the party, but were objected to by a few, as not being a full equivalent to the smaller States. The principle embraced is identical with that on which you proposed to constitute the Baltimore Convention, but which has been so dictatorially objected to by some, who then took so prominent a part in its favor. If you have not succeeded, there is at least some consolation in reflecting that if others have since changed, you now stand where you then did, in the purer and better days of the party. I was in favor of it then, as I am now, not because I consider the resolutions as perfect, theoretically, as the existing provisions of the Constitution, but because I believe it would in practice more certainly accomplish what the framers of the Constitution intended. But while the provision stands as it does, I would regard myself as little short of a traitor to that sacred instrument, should I give my assent, directly or indirectly, to any practice which would have the effect of divesting the smaller States of the due weight which it secures to them in the Presidential election, whether designed or not. And here let me add, that as objectionable as I think a Congressional caucus for nominating a President, it is in my opinion far less so, than a Convention constituted as is proposed.

The former had indeed many things to recommend it. Its members, consisting of Senators and Representatives, were the immediate organs of the State Legislatures, or the people; were responsible to them, respectively, and were for the most part of high character, standing and talents. They voted *per capita*, and what is very important, they represented fairly the relative strength of the party in their respective States. In all these important particulars, it was all that could be desired for a nominating body, and formed a striking contrast to the proposed Convention; and yet, it could not be borne by the people in the then purer days of the Republic. I act, with Gen. Jackson and most of the leaders of the party at the time, contributed to put it down, because we believed it to be liable to be acted on and influenced by the patronage of the Government—an objection far more applicable to a Convention constituted as the one proposed, than to a Congressional caucus. Far however was it from my intention in aiding to put it down, to substitute in its place what I regard as an hundred times more objectionable in every point of view. And, if there must be an intermediate body between the people and the election, unknown to the Constitution, it may be well questioned whether a better than the old plan of a Congressional caucus can be devised.

In taking the ground I have, in favor of maintaining the right secured to the smaller States by the compromise of the Constitution, I am actuated by no partisan feeling or desire to conciliate their good opinion. If the case was reversed, and the rights of the larger, instead of the smaller, were invaded, I would with equal readiness and firmness, stand up in their defence. I am the partisan of neither one, nor the other, but simply a supporter of the Constitution, and what I believe to be just and fair. I regard the Constitution, as the only ark of safety for all, and I believe that in defend-

ing it, I defend the interest and safety of each and all—the greater, as well as the smaller—the States invading the right of the others, as well as the States whose rights are invaded.

I have laid down the principle, on which I rest the objection in question, with the limitation, that the relative weight of the States should be maintained, making due allowance for their relative party strength. The propriety of the limitation is so apparent, that but a few words, in illustration, will be required. The Convention is a party Convention, and professedly intended to take the sense of the party, which cannot be done fairly, if States, having but little party strength, are put on an equality with those which have much. If that were done, the result might be, that a small portion of the party from States the least sound, politically, and which could give but little support in Congress, might select the candidate, and make the President, against a great majority of the soundest, and on which the President and his administration would have to rely for support. All this is clearly too unfair and improper to be denied. There may be a great difficulty in applying a remedy in a Convention, but I do not feel myself called upon to say how it can be done or by what standard the relative party strength of the respective States should be determined; perhaps the best would be their relative strength in Congress at the time. Laying down the principle, I added the limitation for the sake of accuracy, and to show how imperfectly the party must be represented, when it is overlooked. I see no provision in the proposed Convention to meet it.

But, in order to realize how the Convention will operate, it will be necessary to view the combined effects of the objections which I have made. Thus viewed, it will be found, that a Convention so constituted, tends irresistibly to centralization—centralization of the control over the Presidential election in the hands of a few of the central, large States, at first, and finally in political managers, office holders and office seekers; or to express it differently, in that portion of the community, who live, or expect to live on the Government in contradistinction to the great mass, who expect to live on their own means, or their honest industry; and who maintain the Government, and politically speaking, emphatically the people.

That such would be the case, may be inferred from the fact, that it would afford the means to some six or seven States living contiguous and not far from the centre of the Union, to control the nomination, and through that the election, by concentrating their united votes in the Convention. Give them the power of doing so, and it would not long lie dormant. What may be done by combination, where the temptation is so great, will be sure ere long to be done. To combine and conquer, is not less true as a maxim, where power is concerned, than to "Divide and conquer." Nothing is better established, than that the desire for power can bring together and unite the most discordant materials.

But the tendency to centralization will not stop there. The appointments of delegates en masse by State Conventions, would tend, at the same time and even with greater force, to centralize this control in the hands of the few who make politics a trade. The farther the Convention is removed from the people, the more certainly the control over it will be placed in the hands of the interested few, and when removed three or four degrees, as has been shown it will be, where the appointment is by State Conventions, the power of the people will cease, and the seekers of Executive favor will become supreme. At that stage, an active, trained and combined corps will be formed in the party, whose whole time and attention will be directed to politics. It will be their sole business. Into their hands the appointments of delegates in all the States will fall, and they will take special care that none but themselves or their humble and obedient dependants shall be appointed. The central and State Conventions will be filled by the most experienced and cunning, and after nominating the President, they will take good care to divide the patronage and offices both of the General and State Governments, among themselves and their dependants. But why say will? Is it not already the case? Have there not been many instances of State Conventions being filled by office holders and office-seekers, who, after making the nomination, have divided the offices in the State among themselves and their partisans, and joined in recommending to the candidate whom they have just nominated to appoint them to the offices to which they have been respectively allotted. If such be the case in the infancy of the system, it must end, if such conventions should become the established usage, in the President nominating his successor. When it comes to that it will not be long before the sword will take the place of the Constitution.

Such are my objections to the mode in which the proposed Convention is to be