



NORTH-CAROLINA STATE GAZETTE.

"Ours are the Plans of fair delightful Peace,
"Unwrap'd by Party Rage to live like Brothers."

From the National Intelligencer.

CALUMNY REFUTED.

The tongue of calumny has been deeply, and constantly employed in vilifying the Postmaster General for the dismissal of postmasters: With what justice the public will be enabled to judge, when they have attended to the facts herein stated.

On the truth of this statement the People may rely; and the enemies of the government and of the postmaster-general are challenged to contradict it, or to state another case.

Before the dismissal of a single officer by him, the correspondence of one of the principal officers had been frequently violated; two appointments made by the Postmaster-General had been suppressed, and the papers never heard of, and the seal of the department had been twice broken at some of the offices.

There are one thousand and ninety-five deputy post-masters in the United States, each accountable to, and liable to be dismissed, by the post master-general; of this immense corps of officers, it was a rare thing to find a single officer who was friendly to the government of the country. The whole phalanx might be called federal, and many of them ranked with the most bitter opponents of the administration. To them was entrusted the whole correspondence of the country, under a system, where, from its extent, it is very difficult to trace the suppression of intelligence to any particular office. They too, hold the power of circulating the plans of their party with concerted system into every county in the Union, free from expence; and at the same time possessed the power of suppressing the communications of the administration itself, as well as of its friends. This power was certainly in some instances called in exercise, though, to the honor of the department and the officers themselves, it is believed, those instances were not frequent. The great majority of those in office, are men of honor and character, and discharge the duties of their offices with diligence and fidelity.

In this state of things, although the postmaster-general justly considers the republicans as fully entitled to their proportion of the honors and emoluments of office, yet, to furnish an additional evidence of a disposition to conciliate the feelings of every part of the community a disposition originating not from fear, but a sincere desire to allay the fervor of party spirit, which has in truth characterized the present administration, he has dismissed from office but forty five post-masters, out of one thousand and ninety five. That he has not yet restored to the republicans an equality of office, but trusts principally to the natural progress of the departments to effect an end so just and desirable, is to be attributed to a spirit of conciliation, and to a wish to avoid those evils, which might result from the introduction of too many new officers.

Out of the forty-five, one was dismissed for insanity.

One who had been appointed in the fever of 1798 in the room of one of the most promising characters of the Union, who was displaced for a decent though noble maintenance of his opinions, at a time when nineteen-twentieths of the officers were friends to the administration, was dismissed, to do justice to the person whom he had succeeded.

One, because he could not be answerable on his bonds, being a minor under the age of eighteen years.

One, for flagrant abuse of the government, and charging the executive with treason, and every other crime.

Two, for having aided the enemies of the country during the revolution, and maintaining to this day the same regard for British supremacy and royal government: Persons who ought to be permitted the free exercise of opinion, to have the enjoyment of their property and the just protection of the laws; but who, it is believed, ought not to be employed as officers of a government, which they condemn and calumniate.

Two, for such negligence and inattention, that the mails were

retarded, and the public incommode.

Three, for farming out their offices for the halves, and wholly neglecting to bestow their personal attendance upon them.

Four, for wilful misconduct of various kinds:

Five, because their local situations were not convenient either for the public service, or for the accommodation of the people of the vicinity.

Eight, printers, or editors of newspapers; and,

Sixteen, to give place to some of the friends of the administration to participate in the offices of government.

The reason for not permitting the printers or editors of newspapers to be postmasters, are, that they have a strong inducement to suppress the papers of several printers, and to extend the circulation of their own: and an uncommon interest in abusing the privilege of franking. They enjoy superior advantages over their fellow craftsmen; This produces jealousies, bickerings, and constant irritation; and however fairly the duties of the office may be discharged, these evils can never be avoided. Indeed, the propriety of the exclusion was so manifest, that the late post master-general had for years made it a rule, not to appoint printers of newspapers. The wisdom of this measure has not been doubted but by Callender, who, having been refused an office in the department, feels all the venation of disappointment. How can it be said, that preferring characters, who are least liable to suspicion, who have the least private interest to oppose to the regular discharge of their public duties, is sanctioning a suspicion and blasting the characters of printers? They are undoubtedly valuable and important members of the community. But does it follow that it is not the duty of an officer to select such persons as are least liable to distrust, and who unite in their characters the most general confidence? Or will it be forgotten that the rule applies indiscriminately to all printers? And can it be believed that the post-master-general wishes to cast a stigma upon the republican printers? In the mad rage of the opposition to destroy the fair fame of this officer, they have published that this rule was applied to remove federal printers, but forgotten when an opportunity presented of appointing a republican editor: As an evidence of this pretended duplicity of conduct they point out the instances of Mr. Blake, the editor of the *Aegis*, and of Thomas Perrin Smith, *Esq.* of Maryland, who, they say, is also an editor. But here, as in every other instance, their charges are malicious and unfounded. Mr. Blake never was appointed. Mr. Smith was appointed by the late, not by the present post master-general. Whether he be the editor of a paper or not is unknown. In truth, the removal of printers or editors has been limited to cases where there were rival presses in the same town, or where the jealousies before mentioned, had produced serious dissatisfaction. There are a number of federal printers, and one republican printer still in office.

Several cases which have arrested the public attention, and which have called forth the utmost violence of attack and bitterness of invective against the postmaster-general, require a more particular investigation. The first is the case of William Hobby of Augusta, Georgia, who was dismissed under a persuasion that he was the editor of a newspaper. This he has been proper to deny. However the fact may be, it was so understood by the postmaster-general; and after the publication of Mr. Hobby's letter, Governor Jackson and Mr. Milledge offered to certify, that the *Augusta Herald* was universally called Hobby's paper, that he was the real and sole editor, and that they had never heard it denied, 'till that letter was published. Nor is it probable that Mr. Hobby's connection with that paper, was the only reason for his dismissal; for complaints of misconduct were made against him by several of the most respectable citizens of that state, among whom is the speaker of their house of assembly,

whose letter on this subject, was read on the floor of congress. The postmaster-general declined the acceptance of a certificate from Gov. Jackson and Mr. Milledge, on the principle, that it would be improper for an officer at the head of any department in the government, to enter with any person, into a newspaper contest on the subject of his official conduct.

To Mr. John Tryon, of Lebanon, in the state of New-York, a successor was appointed, because the situation of the former was inconvenient. Mr. Tryon lives on the post road from Berkshire to Albany, near the Massachusetts line; and no other principal road leading from any other place unites with this post road near Mr. Tryon's. Mr. Jones, his successor, lives in the centre of population and of the town, by the meeting house on the same post road. The new turnpike from Hartford and the roads, leading to towns which depend on the New Lebanon office for intelligence, unite with the road first mentioned at or near the house of Mr. Jones. The residence of Mr. Tryon was nearer the springs; but the visitors of those waters, in their daily rides pass Mr. Jones's door. A number of the inhabitants of the town petitioned that the office might be kept near the meeting house. Mr. Tryon, who was considered by the postmaster-general as a gentleman well entitled to the confidence of the department, discovered that the petition was soon to be forwarded, wrote to the postmaster-general on the subject, and suggested the propriety of establishing two offices in the same town, one at the meeting house, and one at the springs: The latter would turn off the mail, which is conveyed in a coach, from the post road for a considerable distance, and make it necessary to pass and re-pass one of the most difficult hills or mountains in that part of the country.

On adopting this plan, he suggested his readiness to resign his office, and requested the postmaster general to delay his decision on the petition. The decision was accordingly delayed. But it was ultimately determined that the centre of the town, where so many roads united, and where it would soon be necessary to open the Hartford mail, was the proper place for the office; and that it was not proper to establish another within two miles and an half to accommodate, for a few months in the year, those persons who visited the springs, especially as the road was very convenient, and the visitors generally passed Mr. Jones's every day. It is also worthy of being remarked, that Mr. Tryon wrote a second letter to the post master-general on the subject, contained in the first, offering to resign his office, and recommending Mr. Ter. Bofs for his successor. The motives of Mr. Tryon, will be justly estimated by those who know that Mr. Ter. Bofs was his tenant.

The third is the case of Augustin Davis, printer of a newspaper. This man, tho' he returned thanks to the postmaster-general for his liberal and gentlemanlike conduct, and assured him that whatever decision was made, he was fully convinced would be dictated by what was thought necessary to promote the public good, has published a long statement of a correspondence between himself and the postmaster-general, vilifying and calumniating the character of that officer.—That Mr. Davis was satisfied with the conduct of Mr. Granger he cannot deny, for declarations importing his approbation, were made by him at Alexandria and the Bowling-green. The inconsistency of men's conduct, who are governed by a desire to subserve the interest of a party, is strongly exemplified in Mr. Davis. He proposed to evade the rule relating to printers, and editors of newspapers, by dividing the business between himself and his son, one was to take the post-office, and the other the printing office, both being under the same roof. This was considered inadmissible, and as tending to destroy the benefit of the regulation. The construction which Mr. Davis made, has not been opposed by

the head of the Department in his case only, three of the personal and political friends of Mr Granger have solicited the same and have met with disappointment. The fourth case worthy of notice, and which has been the subject of public comment, is that of Benjamin Lowndes of Bladensburg. As the situation of his office was some distance from the post road, and his house quite remote, the postmaster-general forwarded an appointment to a gentleman of respectability whose situation was convenient for the office. This was done for the purpose of expediting and rendering secure the carriage of the mail. For in going eastward it leaves Washington at one o'clock in the morning; and arrives at Bladensburg long before day light. As Mr. Lowndes's office was at a distance from the road, some time must necessarily have been spent in carrying the way-bag to the office. This would have been inconvenient to the passengers, and, when none were in the coach, would, in the absence of the carrier, have hazarded the main mail to a robbery. About the same time, a new road was opened into Bladensburg which passed by the old office. The gentleman appointed, proposed to take the office if any inconvenience would result from his declining it. The postmaster-general having received information of the new road, requested him to inform Mr. Lowndes that he had no objection to his continuing in office; since by the opening of the new road, his office was convenient for the public service. Mr. Lowndes declined serving any longer, and a successor was appointed. He never was dismissed, but resigned, no objection was ever made against him.

Col. Ezra Taylor of Dresden was dismissed on the petition of the inhabitants of New Milford, a neighbouring town, and of a number of the inhabitants of Dresden, because he lived at one corner of the latter. The late postmaster-general established an office at New Milford, and one at Dresden; and, mistaking the local situation of Col. Taylor, appointed him. The mail carrier was bound to carry the mail thro' both towns: but on experiment it was proved that the rider could not visit both offices. The office at Milford was in consequence wholly neglected. It was also represented in the petition that Col. Taylor had been consulted, and did not wish to retain the office. It was not known to which of the political parties he belonged—he was considered a reputable and distinguished citizen in that part of the country; but was dismissed, and a successor appointed to extend the benefit of the public mails to the inhabitants of two towns, instead of limiting those benefits to a small portion of the citizens of one.

The sixth case to which the public attention has been invited thro' the medium of the newspapers, is that of Mr. Frederic Wolcott, of Litchfield, in the state of Connecticut. His friends wrote privately for his appointment; about the 15th of October he was appointed. At the time his appointment was forwarded, Col. Tallmage was in office. He was not removed, nor did he resign in sufficient time to enable the postmaster-general to fill the vacancy. For the latter retired from office on the last of October, and Col. Tallmage's letter of resignation of the 26th of the same month, in which he recommended Mr. Sheldon as his successor, could not, by the course of the mail, reach the general post-office till the third of November following.—Mr. Wolcott's appointment could not therefore be legal. This is not intended as any reflection on the late postmaster-general, who, undoubtedly, expected Mr. Tallmage's resignation; and did not know that Mr. Wolcott had been for years the calumniator of Mr. Granger. Nor, can we believe, that any one would suppose that the latter would hazard his reputation, by leaving an office in the hands of a man, who had, without provocation and without cause, attempted to defame and destroy his character.

Do these acts declare the persecutor and the tyrant? Or do they manifest the constant attention of a

vigilant officer, to improve and render more useful the department entrusted to his charge? If the removal of the improper persons; be tyranny, he is a tyrant; if the non-appointment of his personal enemy, be persecution, he is a persecutor. But another attempt has been made to destroy the confidence of the public in the postmaster general. This has been done in a manner not susceptible of a precise answer, because there has been no direct charge. But dark insinuations have been published to the world, evidently designed to impress upon the mind a belief; that removals were made with a view to check a free correspondence on the part of the opposition; and to apply an important national establishment to party purposes, and to the corruption of public opinion. Will it be believed, that the postmaster-general, with a little band of forty-five officers, twenty east of the north river, nineteen between that river and the Potomac, and six south of the latter, has undertaken to affect this dreadful purpose, and has fondly hoped to escape the vigilance of 1050 officers, of whom the former administration approved, and many of whom are their friends, and yet devoted to their politics? To suppose it possible; betrays such ignorance of the system as would induce any person, who possessed a decent regard for his own reputation, to seal his lips in silence. But gentlemen have not long been left in the quiet enjoyment of this base method of injuring the fame of a citizen. In every instance, they have been solicited to communicate freely any knowledge they possessed respecting abuses. In every instance they have been assured, that the evils when pointed out, should be corrected; and the offenders subjected to condign punishment. But they have remained silent.—In the management of such a department, errors will be committed; a letter will be occasionally mislaid and lost. Newspapers must unavoidably meet with more accidents, for, notwithstanding the law, they are packed up wet and with carelessness, and will in consequence be frequently worn to pieces in the bags. But no man will presume to say, that intelligence is not conveyed with as much regularity and safety, as at any other period since the existence of the government. It is certainly conveyed with more frequency and with vastly greater dispatch.

This department of government has been repeatedly charged with a wanton abuse of its power, and an unrelenting persecution of the opponents of administration. Will the facts stated justify the imputation? Will the removal of sixteen postmasters, out of one thousand and ninety-five, give a colouring to the calumny? Will those who oppugn the measures of the present government, be willing to have the conduct of the preceding administration, tested by the same principle? They may, because there was no necessity of ejecting from office the opponents of their measures. For by the natural operation of the government, its commencement, and by a selection of friends to fill the which were created during the progress, this necessity could not exist. During the existence of the present administration, they openly and published that no man ought to be appointed to an office, whose principles were opposed to those of their party. And when that persons, who adhered to the same principles would resign, and retain in office those who had their come into the same circumstances, the present administration, persuaded were the doctrine, that they very loudly proclaimed, that the present government pursued their own course, on the altar of the party. But the pointed. And have not been their own procedure, it be driven

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