



"THE 'FREE PRESS,'"

By George Howard,

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POLITICAL.

From the Richmond Enquirer.
To the Citizens of the United States.

The period now draws near when you will be called upon to decide one of the most important questions which has for many years agitated our country. It is to decide what man you will select to be placed at the helm of our government for the next four years after the present worthy incumbent shall go out of office. To choose a man to act in the capacity of President of these states is at all times an important subject, but it is rendered peculiarly so at this time, in consequence of the number of candidates, and the strenuous exertions made by intriguers and office hunters, to avert if possible the choice of the people from being fixed upon a man who for the last eight years has been viewed as the National Candidate—to divide and distract the votes of the states so as to bring the election before the Congress of the U. States, and by these means to take the choice from the people themselves, and to fix a President upon us who may not be our choice, but the choice of the members of Congress.—Against this dangerous and much to be dreaded state of affairs, it is my object to caution you—to point out to you the importance of being united upon this subject for the good of the whole, lest we may be brought to see ourselves placed in the same situation in which we were in 1800, in the memorable contest between Mr. Jefferson and Aaron Burr. We have on this occasion not less than four prominent candidates for the Presidential chair. Let us admit for a moment, that they are all men well qualified to discharge the important and responsible duties of this appointment. When we have arrived at this conclusion, what ought to be our determination! Certainly it ought to be, to support that man, who, in our estimation stands the best chance to be elected by the people. Who is that man! I for one, will answer, Wm. H. Crawford. What evidence do you require to prove this fact? It certainly will be conceded by all that Mr. Crawford's qualifications are not inferior to those of any of the other candidates. From a humble situation in life he has exalted himself by his own exertions to fill many of the highest and most responsible offices under our government. He has fulfilled with fidelity and ability every office which has been entrusted to him. For the last 8 years he has been conducting the finances of our country. This office under all govern-

ments, is one the most important, at the same time the most difficult to manage successfully. A man is called a good Financier who can manage his own estate with success, and keep it all together in times of such difficulty, as we have encountered for the last 6 years. There never was a time since our existence as a government, when a Secretary of the Treasury had such and so numerous difficulties to encounter in managing the monied concerns of our country as Mr. Crawford has seen during his administration of them. Our whole currency from Maine to Georgia has been in a state of chaos and confusion. Our country has never experienced such a shock from bankruptcies and insolvencies as during the last six years.—The banking system in all our states has been carried on to such an extent and so injudiciously that whole states have been rendered almost insolvent. During this period of difficulty and embarrassment Mr. Crawford has literally sat in the whirlwind and directed the storm. He had not the affairs of a single individual, nor of a single bank to manage. He was at the head of the whole Treasury of the United States, and had to steer through this rough ocean of embarrassments, of bankruptcies and insolvencies, and he has managed the Treasury so ably and judiciously that one of the ablest committees ever appointed in our country, (composed, too, of men, a majority of whom were inimical to his elevation to the Presidency,) have declared that he has managed the affairs of the Treasury with ability.—You have been told by the late President of the U. S. Bank, that whilst that institution acting with the utmost caution and under the guidance of some of our ablest men, has lost at least 5 or 10 per cent. upon its capital, Mr. Crawford acting alone and unassisted, has not lost to the U. S. more than 2½ per cent, and a good deal of this is in such a train as to be recovered for the government. Has any of his competitors had equal difficulties to encounter and acquitted themselves with equal honor and credit? I deny that they ever have. The most rigid scrutiny has been made into his conduct, in consequence of the most malicious and unfounded charges against him and he has "come out like pure gold thrice tried." Upon the score of qualifications, then, I imagine he stands equal, if not pre-eminent to any of his competitors.

Has he not higher claims than to this office than any other candidate? In the year 1815, Mr. Crawford was brought forward in opposition to Mr. Monroe. It was contrary to his wishes and intentions to be run as a candidate against Mr. Monroe. He thought Mr. M.'s claims stood upon higher grounds than his own and requested his friends not to nominate him. Notwithstanding this request he was brought forward in the Caucus, and Mr. Monroe succeeded only by a majority of 9 votes. Is this not sufficient to prove to you the high standing of Mr. C. in the nation's eyes?

How magnanimous was his conduct in thus retiring and giving way to Mr. Monroe's pretensions? From this election Mr. Crawford was looked up to by the people of this country, as the successor of James Monroe. What has he done to forfeit your confidence since this election? Has he not rendered more important and essential services since that election, than he had ever done before? Instead of being diminished, ought he not to be exalted in your estimation? At the time Mr. Monroe was first elected, no man was talked of to succeed him but Mr. Crawford. When the period was coming round for the members of Congress to assemble together as usual to recommend to the people a suitable candidate for the Presidency, when it was supposed that the opinions of a large majority of the citizens of the United States had settled down to support Mr. Crawford, it was about this time that the voice of the people was attempted to be arrested, and stifled by sounding in their ears the word *Caucus!* It was at this time that several other gentlemen had set up pretensions to the Presidential Chair, and they knew unless the public sentiment could be put down by sounding something in their ears to produce a re-action, that Mr. Crawford's election was certain. It is the policy of intriguers and office-hunters always to make the people believe that they are to be gulled; that the Constitution has been invaded and the people's rights to be sacrificed by those who are opposed to their pretensions. You have been gravely told that what is now denounced in such severe terms as a *Caucus* is unconstitutional: That Congress are taking the power out of the hands of the people in choosing a President, and you are told this by a set of men who have no kind of respect for our Constitution: Who have been in the habit for years of acting counter to its provisions; by a set of men whose favorite policy it is to erect U. S. Banks; to appropriate the public money towards opening roads and canals, &c. &c. When your eyes are opened to the policy of these men—when you perceive, as you must from their course of conduct, that they and not we intend to deceive you, can you hesitate as to the choice which you will make? Rely upon it, fellow-citizens, that such men are wolves in sheep's clothing. Rely upon it they are plotting danger to the Republic.

What is there, let me ask you, so dangerous in one of those assemblies called a *Caucus*? The members of Congress meet together in an innocent way, and for the purpose of uniting the Republican interest in the country, recommend to you to select a particular man to preside over you. They still leave the choice in your hands, and what injury is done you? You all know that it has been by such a course of proceeding that we have been favored with a Jefferson, a Madison and a Monroe as our Presidents.—Nothing but such an union of the Republican interests could have secured to the people

these choices. Well, what late magic is there in the term *Caucus* that all of a sudden it should be conjured up into such a bugbear that the people of this country are to be alarmed at its sound; and to denounce it as presumptuous and unconstitutional? I can assure you, fellow-citizens, that you need apprehend no danger from a *Caucus*, unless it should take a different direction from any which we have as yet had in our country. Some of the most able and illustrious men of our country, have gone into *Caucus*, and for the most laudable of purposes. And unless some higher tone should be breathed, than we have as yet heard of, a *Caucus* is not so alarming as the intriguers of the present day would persuade you. But if there be any thing so alarming in a *Caucus*, upon how much better ground do any of the other candidates for the Presidency stand than Mr. Crawford? How has John Q. Adams been brought before the people as a candidate? I answer by *Caucus* nominations in several of the states. How has Gen. Jackson been brought upon the carpet? By a *Caucus* nomination which originated in the Legislature of Tennessee, and has been followed up by Pennsylvania and some of the other states. How has Henry Clay been brought forward? but by a *Caucus* nomination in the Legislature of Kentucky. With what degree of grace and propriety then can the friends of these candidates reproach the friends of Mr. Crawford for bringing him forward in the same way? But the great sin of which these gentlemen complain is, that the members of Congress did not go into *Caucus* for either of the other candidates. And let me ask whose fault this is? Were they not all invited? Why did they not attend? I can tell you the reason—because these gentlemen discovered that if they did go into *caucus* Mr. Crawford had by far more friends in the house than any other candidate—and the consequence would inevitably have been that he would have been the candidate recommended. This fact was well known to them all, and they discovered that the only chance which any of their favorites would have, would be for them to withhold themselves from the *caucus*, and sound the alarm to the people that their rights were invaded, and their privileges about to be taken from them by members of Congress going into *Caucus* to make a President for them (as they term it.) Now, what object will these gentlemen accomplish by their course of conduct? The inevitable consequence will be (unless you unite to prevent it) that the election will at last be decided by Congress. The very object which these sticklers for the constitution and the rights of the people, say they intended to prevent, will be accomplished, and the choice of a President will be thus taken from the people themselves. Do you not believe that this event must have been evident, and apparent to the friends of all the other candidates? In fact have not the friends of all these candidates

been already making their calculations which of the three, Adams, Jackson or Clay will stand the best chance before the House? Mr. Clay's friends have lost all hope in his election by the people, and the only calculation they now make for him is, that he is a favorite with the members of Congress. He did much to ingratiate himself by the Missouri compromise. He has done much in his character as Mr. Speaker, and still more by his able support of the Tariff, and the bill for Internal Improvement. The friends of Mr. Adams are also making strong calculations that in the event of the election going before Congress, Gen. Jackson will be withdrawn and his support thrown into the scale of Mr. Adams. They also are endeavoring to win over the friends of Henry Clay in the event of the contest resting between Mr. A. and Mr. Crawford.

You thus perceive, that the event is considered inevitable, that the very object which Mr. Crawford's friends wished to avert by going into *Caucus*, will certainly happen, unless you, as I before said, shall unite to prevent it. By that duty then which you owe yourselves and to posterity—By those privileges which you all hold dear as citizens—to elect your own rules—By that love of union and harmony amongst one another which it becomes you all to cherish as brethren of the same political family; I implore and beseech you to turn out at the approaching election. Rise in the majesty of your strength and put down this pitiful and contemptible course of intrigue which is now carried on to deceive you and to cheat you out of your rights. I have, I hope, clearly proven to you that upon the score of qualifications Mr. Crawford is equal if not superior to any of his competitors. I have shewn you his noble disinterestedness and magnanimous course of conduct in withdrawing from the contest and giving up his pretensions to those of Mr. Monroe in 1816—that since that time he has been viewed as the national candidate to succeed Mr. Monroe, until a new and aspiring set of politicians were started up against him—that he has been recommended by a *National Caucus* at Washington and by a number as large and respectable as that which recommended Mr. Monroe, that the friends of the other candidates are not actuated by any pure motives in denouncing that *Caucus*, and that no good can possibly result to you by the course which they have pursued. Why then are you to cast off this pure and genuine republican Wm. H. Crawford? Why are you to throw out of view his nobleness of character and his magnanimity of conduct? Why are you to lose sight of the great and important services which he has rendered you? Why are you in preference to him to take a renegade federalist, a military and despotic chieftain, or a general government politician? During this great political contest Mr. Crawford has shewn such a disinterested course of conduct, so unambitious—so great a disposition to