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POLITICAL.

REPLY OF MR. KENDALL TO MR. ROBERT WICKLIFFE'S LETTER.

To the Editor of the Alexandria Gazette.

Having observed the tender of your columns as a medium of reply to the strictures of Mr. Robert Wickliffe on my character and conduct when you gave insertion to his production, I determined at once to avail myself of the offer. Incessant official engagements have until this time prevented the accomplishment of that purpose.

Were the facts of the case, or the character of Robert Wickliffe for reckless mendacity, as well known to the People of the United States as they are to the People of Kentucky, I should deem it unnecessary to pay any attention to his malignant effusion. But as it suits the present objects of a party to circulate his libels where the author is unknown, and often with gratuitous attestations of their authenticity, it is due to myself to place the truth within the reach of those who honestly seek it.

If I could be flattered by falsehood, I might feel satisfied with the allegation, that I have been for about twelve years *de facto* Governor of Kentucky and for about eight, President of the United States! But, conscious of never having possessed or aspired to the influence which has been attributed to me, the ascription of it can only impair my self-esteem and teach me a lesson of humility.

"One who will draw a parallel," says Mr. Wickliffe, "between the misfortunes of Kentucky from 1817 to 1824, (the period when Amos held the conscience of our executives) and the condition of the United States since he has been conscience-keeper of Presidents, may readily account for the alarming prospects which now threaten the loss of public credit and the bankruptcy of thousands of our citizens."

The following facts will show how far I "held the conscience" of the Governors of Kentucky from 1817 to 1824.

I took up my residence in the capital of Kentucky in the Fall of 1816. George Madison, who had been elected Governor in the preceding August, died a few days before, and Gabriel Slaughter, the Lieutenant Governor, had just entered upon the duties of the office. A question between the absolute right of the Lieutenant Governor to hold the office for the whole term of four years, and the right of the people to elect a Governor at the next general election, immediately arose; and I maintained the rights of the People to a New Election. The consequence was, so great a degree of hostility between the acting Governor and myself, that we did not exchange words during more than three of the last years of his administration. No man knows the hostile relations which existed between acting Governor Slaughter and myself better than Robert Wickliffe!

At the gubernatorial election in 1820, the candidates were Gen. John Adair, William Logan, Esq., Gen. Jos. Desha and Col. Anthony Butler. Butler was my first choice, Logan my second, and Adair my last. My paper was the chief organ of opposition to General Adair, and yet he was elected. The hostile feelings generated in the contest were so strong, that it was two or three years before the Governor and myself exchanged common civilities, and never did he consult me upon any public measure of political movement during the whole of his administration. No man knows this general hostility between me and Gov. Adair, better than Robert Wickliffe!

The administrations of Slaughter and Adair cover the whole period "from 1817 to 1824," during which, Mr. Wickliffe says, I "held the conscience" of the Governors of Kentucky!

Mr. Wickliffe is quite as unfortunate in his allegations with regard to my support of measures as to my influence over men. The following extract embraces the path of his production on that point, viz:

"When Amos Kendall became Governor *de facto* of Kentucky, public credit was high, and the people were never more prosperous; the State had sustained her character and faith in contracts unimpaired; her bank paper was equal to gold and sil-

ver; but this demagogue and speculator raised the cry against the Bank of Kentucky and its stockholders arrayed the money borrowers and spendthrift speculators of the country against her labor and industry; and finally, at the head of the profligate and unprincipled, triumphed over public morals, and the laws and Constitution. The first act of his party was in 1817-18, to destroy the Bank of Kentucky, and to grant charters to forty odd spurious banks, with a view to flood the State with paper sufficient to meet the demands of himself and partisans." This accomplished, in two short years this demagogue and his partisans reduced the labor and credit of the State to utter prostration. The whole departments of labor were visited by a wide-spread ruin; the banks bankrupted, and the means of paying debts destroyed. Amos's relief for all these mischiefs brought upon the country, was an open violation of public faith by a repeal of the charters of all the banks in existence—those that had faithfully redeemed their paper and fulfilled their corporate powers, sharing the common fate of those that had both cheated and swindled the country.

"This breach of faith and of the Constitution, the first measure of relief for the disease created by Amos, and which he promised to cure, was found but to increase rather than abate the malady. Amos then found out that the fault was in the Courts, not in the Banks of the State—His next prescription for relief against his own acts or evils brought upon the country, was replevin and property laws; and this failing, also, he prescribed the plan for explosion of a metallic currency, and the substitution, in its place of paper through the Commonwealth's Bank. His party, still victorious, followed this prescription also, but the disease got worse. The courts of justice were not as faithful to the Constitution as Amos and his partisans; and his laws of relief were declared to have violated both the Constitution of Kentucky and that of the United States. This gave to Mr. Kendall and his party a new theme.—They inveighed against the Judges, and finally passed a law repealing them out of office, and creating a Court of Appeals, filled with partisans pledged to carry Amos's relief laws into execution. Here the people rebuked the minion, his Governor, and the whole party, by repealing their reforming law, and restoring the old court.—The next, and the dying effort in Kentucky, was to persuade the people of the State to repeal their Constitution, if they were not willing to break it. The people, however, preferred expelling Mr. Kendall and his creatures from office, and he then led his followers over to Gen. Jackson in mass, as his last refuge from scorn, contempt and ignominy."

I first became an Editor in 1815, and among my first essays, were spirited attacks on the Bank of Kentucky, not because "her bank paper was equal to Gold and Silver," as Mr. Wickliffe now asserts, but because, having suspended specie payments during the war, and her notes being at a heavy discount, she was not, in my opinion, doing all in her power to resume payment. When she resumed, my opposition to her ceased, and my partner in business, William Gerard, Esq. was for some years a Director of that Bank. It was the Bank of the United States, and not the Relief Party which destroyed the Bank of Kentucky by forcing her to a second suspension of specie payments. The branches of the former Bank in Kentucky were instructed to collect the specie of the West and remit it to the East; as a means of saving from ruin the principal Bank, then reeling to its fall from the effects of gross mismanagement. The notes of the Bank of Kentucky were collected by the Branches and sent back upon her so rapidly, that after manfully struggling for a few months and even bringing from the East several hundred thousand dollars of specie at a great expense, she was compelled to succumb to her inexorable foe and close her doors. From this blow she never recovered. Yet, Mr. Wickliffe, who knows all this, and who was himself always denounced the Bank of Kentucky as an unconstitutional Bank, now lauds that institution and charges its ruin upon me!

"The first act of his party," says Mr. Wickliffe, "was in 1817-18, to destroy the Bank of Kentucky, and to grant charters to forty odd spurious banks." &c. Instead of being supported, "these forty odd spurious banks" were as strongly condemned by me as they ever were by Mr. Wickliffe. It was a project suddenly started in the Legislature and carried through, not by corruption, but by assiduous management and the delusive prospect that these Banks would enhance the value of property and "sustain industry" wherever they should be located. How far this project was intended to destroy the Bank of Kentucky may be inferred from the fact, that the notes of that bank were made equivalent to specie as a capital for these new banks, which were authorized to commence operation as soon as a certain portion of their capital should be paid in notes of the Bank

of Kentucky or specie! The people of the State, however, who thought their interests ought to have been more consulted in so important a matter, rose up against this monstrous abuse of legislative power, and returned to the legislature an overwhelming majority of members pledged to abolish the whole illegitimate brood of "spurious banks." Here Mr. Wickliffe and myself differed. He believed that the people had no remedy: that they had nothing to do but to submit to a system which had been imposed upon them without their consent and contrary to their will, however fatal might be its effects; and he now denounces the abrogation of these "spurious banks" as a "breach of faith and the Constitution." On the contrary, I believed that the remedy remained in the hands of the people; that their Legislature could, whether their motives were founded in error or corruption, place the dearest interests of the people, the value their property, their civil relations and their political rights, at the mercy of forty-two petty corporations, whose sole motive was the interest of the stockholders, and whose sole object was speculation and gain. I therefore considered the act of the Legislature, which swept them all out of existence, a constitutional display of popular power, as just as it was signal.

"His next prescription for relief against his own acts evils brought upon the country," says Mr. Wickliffe, "was property and replevin laws." The character of this assertion may be known by reference to the editorial columns of the Frankfort Argus during the period when the cry of relief was resounding through Kentucky.—They will be found filled with essays against both "property and replevin laws," with statistics to show that such laws would in the end be more ruinous to the debtor than to the creditor, and were in every way repugnant to the best interests of the people. While this man and his associates were either swelling the cry of relief, or standing with their arms folded, afraid to breast the approaching storm, resolutely and almost alone, I combated the popular delusion, and at the hazard of the office I held at the hands of the Legislature, exerted myself to prevent a resort to expedients which I believed would but prolong and aggravate the embarrassments and distress under which the State was groaning. No man knows all this better than Mr. Wickliffe!

But he continues—"And this failing also, he prescribed the plan for the explosion of a metallic currency, and the substitution in its place of paper through the Commonwealth's Bank." "A metallic currency" was exploded before "the Commonwealth's Bank" was thought of, and the notes of the Bank of Kentucky were at a discount of about fifteen per cent. This project, like that of the "forty odd spurious banks," was started suddenly in the legislature after the failure of and an attempt to pass "property and replevin laws" as a means of relief. Its paternity has always been ascribed to a gentleman who has been for many years a political coadjutor of Mr. Wickliffe. Certain it is, that so far from originating it or being consulted, I come out in opposition to it in the face of the legislature, upon whose votes I depended for continuance in office,—but in vain. The act passed by a decided majority, and a replevin law of two years, in case creditors refused to receive its paper, was afterwards passed to give it the desired effect.

From these facts you will perceive, that, instead of being the author of the Kentucky relief measures, as Mr. Wickliffe now asserts, I was their active opponent as long as there was merit in opposition. Out of what, you will ask, is the tale of Mr. Wickliffe manufactured? I will tell you. After the relief measures had been adopted and the country was accommodating itself to their operation, a set of men, some of whom had silently witnessed the approach of the evil and others actively prompted it, conspired to overthrow it and take from the people all power of mitigating legislation, by new and extraordinary constructions of the Federal Constitution. They discovered that Bank of the Commonwealth was a violation of that provision of the Constitution which forbids the States to issue bills of credit; and that the replevin laws, which, for varying terms, were in Virginia older than the Constitution, violated that clause which prohibits to the States the passage of any law impairing the obligation of contracts. Judges were found to espouse the new doctrines, and a controversy finally arose between the Legislature and the Court of Appeals. In these questions I maintained the constitutionality of those acts whose policy I had condemned, and became in the representations of malevolence and the view of ignorance, identified with the advocates of the Relief System. Mr. Wickliffe has not the plea of "ignorance" to screen him in the gross imposition he has attempted upon the American people.

The constitutionality of the Relief Laws is the only principle embraced in them of which I was ever the advocate. As to the constitutionality of the Common-

wealth's Bank, I have lived to see my opinion confirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States; and I have no doubt the constitutionality of the replevin laws will be affirmed by the same tribunal, whenever the question shall be fairly presented and fully considered.

This course of personal denunciation, without regard to decency and truth, was introduced into the politics of Kentucky by Mr. Wickliffe and his friends, during the controversy between the old and the new courts in 1825. The silence which Mr. Wickliffe has observed for some years, led me to suppose that the serious consequences which had flowed from it, and the awful retribution which had overtaken him, had taught him some regard for the sacredness of truth, and the decencies of civilized life. I shall content myself with a single illustration of this remark.

Late in 1824, a son of Gov. Desha was charged with the murder of Baker, and arrested. He applied to the Legislature at the next session, for a change of venue, on the ground, that he could not have a fair trial in the county where the offence was charged to have been committed. Although the granting of such a request was always a matter of course in Kentucky, Robert Wickliffe when the bill was at its last reading, took occasion to pronounce a studied philippic against it, in which, without a shadow of reason or truth, he charged the unhappy father with conspiracy and corruption to screen his son from punishment. Nor did he cease pursuing the object of his hatred with these imputations, in public and in private, during the whole course of his administration.

The situation of Governor Desha, than whom no State ever had a more honest Chief Magistrate, was such as to excite the sympathy of every feeling heart. The son was charged and finally twice convicted of murder; the father held the pardoning power and believed him innocent. There were circumstances which justified a father in so believing.—After the son had been a second time convicted and a new trial had been a second time granted, the whole of the second jury, as I understood, and a part of the first, petitioned for his pardon. The first conversation I ever had with the Governor upon the subject, was introduced by him with a statement of these facts.

He proceeded to say, that his son had sent for him to the prison—had protested his innocence in the strongest terms—had declared his unalterable purpose not to live unless he were acquitted by a jury, and had told him, that if he sent him a pardon, he would the next hour put an end to his existence. It was found impossible to procure a third unbiased jury, and the wretched man remained in jail from term to term. Finally, on that day of horrors when Beauchamp was executed for the murder of Col. Sharp, after the suicide of his wife and his own unsuccessful attempt, young Desha cut his throat with a razor, severing the wind-pipe quite in two. In that awful moment, when he believed himself entering into eternity, he beckoned for pen and ink, and wrote a solemn protestation of his innocence while his life blood was streaming upon the paper. I saw it afterwards in the hands of his father so besmeared with blood as to be scarcely legible.

A Father, under such circumstances, had a right to believe his son innocent. None but a monster would hunt him down for so believing and acting accordingly. But none of these things moved the flinty heart or quelled the slanderous tongue of Robert Wickliffe!

At length the general denunciations of this man, roused Mr. Benning, the Editor of the Kentucky Gazette, published in Lexington, to a proper notice of the man and his libels. A son of Mr. Wickliffe entered the office of the Gazette and shot him dead on the spot!

The man who had for years persecuted an unhappy father whose son was charged with murder, now felt, if he could feel, the agony of a father upon the arraignment and trial of his own son a similar crime. Young Wickliffe was acquitted, and no man charged his father with conspiracy and corruption to effect it. But the avenging hour was at hand. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," and a short time afterwards young Wickliffe fell in a duel with the successor of Benning.

One would think that these lessons would not have been lost upon Robert Wickliffe. He has indeed for several years been awed into silence by the marked abhorrence of the community around him; but his recent publication shows, that the vengeance of Heaven and the scorn of men have fallen upon a heart of flint.—With mountains of crime upon his conscience, and the blood of the slaughtered Benning and of his own son upon his head, he resumes that course of false and ferocious denunciation, which produced the murder of some of the best men in Kentucky, and some near plunging that State into the horrors of a civil war.

For years, under the effects of this remorseless spirit, I felt that I was carrying

my life in my hand, and was always ready to defend it. Determined not to assault, but always ready to repel. I have met in the street, after one of his fiendish tirades, the man who now assails me from afar, and seen his eye tremble, and wander, and fall—the unerring evidence of a guilty conscience or a coward heart. Through all those exciting scenes, and ever since, I have endeavored so to perform my various duties in public life and in private, as to leave this persecuting spirit without apology or pretext, relying upon the justice of my country to shield me from harm.—Thus far, I have not been disappointed. You know, sir, that instead of being "driven from Kentucky by public indignation," as Mr. Wickliffe now asserts, I left the State in triumph. I left it as the bearer to Washington of the trophies of victory, the votes of Kentucky for General Jackson.

After my departure the Legislature restored to me the office of Public Printer for the State, which Mr. Wickliffe and his associates had taken away, and I was prevented from enjoying it only by the offer of a more acceptable employment in Washington.

Mr. Wickliffe's narrative of my life in this City, though equally destitute of truth; needs no comment from me. If from its manner it were calculated to produce effect, it would still be rendered harmless by the great number of honorable men of all parties scattered through the Union, who know and are ready to denounce its groundlessness and injustice.

Perhaps I ought not to complain of this and other ceaseless denunciations which are heaped upon me. To the contrast with the whole tenor of my life which they present, may doubtless be ascribed more than to any unusual merit or talents of my own, the elevation I now hold, and whatever of standing I possess in the estimation of the American People. To Providence and my countrymen, I trust I shall never cease to be grateful for thus far overruling to my own good, the malevolence of my enemies.

I have a right to expect, that not only you, but all the managers of the public press, who have given circulation to Mr. Wickliffe's address, will do me the justice to publish this explanation.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
AMOS KENDALL.
Washington, June 9, 1837.

PRINTER'S TROUBLES.

In these piping times of pressure, we know of none who fare so hard as the publishers of newspapers. They are complained of if they do not hunt up the cause of the pressure and knock that cause over. And if they hunt it up as they think and knock it over, ten to one if half their friends do not torment them with incessant dindings about their having waked up and knocked down the wrong passenger altogether. If they publish communications censuring the course of the banks, the friends of these institutions will say they are piqued against the banks. If they refuse such communications, they will be accused of having been bought up by the banks. If they make frequent mention of Theatrical entertainments, Divines will preach against them. If they side with the Divines and lean earnestly towards puritanism, or become a little over zealous in professing good works, they will be denounced as bigots, if not hypocrites. In short, if they displease A. they cannot please B. and if they give offence to C. D. will find something else to be mad about. They must set up late of nights, and be up early of mornings. They must see to the proof sheets of the paper, or it will be crowded with errors in the morning. They must purchase paper, type, and all other necessary materials—must employ journeymen at great wages, and pay them every Saturday night, or the paper stops—they must be this—they must be that—they must be here—they must be there—they must take that—they must see this, and notice that—criticise this puff that, and condemn the other—be independent here, subservient there—be spicy on this point—touch lightly on that—use the meat axe about such an one, and soft soap about another—they must be independent and dependent—tall and towering, and yet not quite so consequential. And yet after all this they must wait and wait, be put off and put off to the last go down, after every body else is paid, before their bills can be attended to. This is the way with the world, generally, in regard to publishers of newspapers. We wish every body for a little time could be a publisher, just to obtain a foretaste of the real perplexities of the craft. Newspaper bills are generally small, and might be easily met. In that case, an Editor could afford to be independent at all times and on all subjects.—*Mobile Mer. Adr.*

Mississippi.—The legislature of this State has adjourned after a session of four weeks, having by law authorized the banks to issue post notes payable in 13 months after date, and created ten or fifteen banks—to relieve the people withal