L. D. Hackl

The Cambridge Chronicle.

"UNCOMPROMISING HOSTILITY TO THE RE-ELECTION OF MARTIN VAN BUREN."

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TERMS.

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POLITICAL.

We noticed in the "Aurora" a week or two ago, a reiteration of the base calumny, referred to in the following letter, which was concocted and promulgated in 1836 with a view to injure the election of General Harrison. In the following letter. Gen. Harrison triumphantly vindicates himself from the charge of voting to "sell white men for debt," and proves that his vote was prompted by philanthropy, and a desire to improve and elevate the moral condition of mankind. Those who have read the article in the "Aurora," will but be rendering the old General justice to peruse the following.—Ed. Camb. Chronicle.

"SELLING WHITE MEN FOR DEBT."

There has been found among the enemies of Gen. Harrison men vile enough to charge him with "having voted for a bill to sell white men for debt." This old calumny, invented four years ago, has been revamped and again put into circulation by a renegade-abolition editor living in Tennessee. When this calumny first appeared, it was thus nailed to the counter, as false coin, by the Old Soldier himself:—

Letter from General Harrison.

SIR—In your paper of the 15th inst. I observed a most violent attack upon eleven other members of the late Senate and myself, for a supposed vote given by ourselves, for a passage of the law to "sell debtors in certain cases." If such had been our conduct, I acknowledge that we should not only deserve the censure which the writer has bestowed upon us, but the execration of every honest man in society. An act of that kind is not only opposed to the principles of justice and humanity, but would be a palpable violation of the Constitution of the State, which every legislator is sworn to support; and sanctioned by a House of Representatives and twelve Senators, it would indicate a state of depravity, which would fill every patriotic bosom with the most alarming anticipations. But the fact is, that no such proposition was ever made in the Legislature, or even thought of. The act to which the writer alludes has no more relation to the collection of "debts," than it has to the discovery of longitude. It was an act for the "punishment of offences" against the State; and that part of it which has so deeply wounded the feelings of your correspondent, was passed by the House of Representatives and voted for by the 12 Senators, under the impression that it was the most mild and humane mode of dealing with the offenders for whose cases it was intended. It was adopted by the House of Representatives as a part of the general system of the criminal law, which was then undergoing a complete revision and amendment. The necessity of this is evinced by the following facts. For years past, it had become apparent that the Penitentiary System was becoming more and more burdensome at every session. A large appropriation was called for to meet the excess of expenditures above the receipts of the establishment. In the commencement of the session of 1820, the deficit amounted to near $20.000.

This growing evil required the immediate interposition of some vigorous legislative measure. Two were recommended as being likely to produce the effect; first, placing the institution under better management; and, secondly, lessening the number of convicts who were sentenced for short periods, and whose labor was found of course to be most unproductive. In pursuance of the latter principle, thefts to the amount of $50 or upwards, were subjected to punishment in the Penitentiary, instead of $10, which was the former minimum sum; this was easily done. But the great difficulty remained to determine what should be the punishment of those numerous larcenies below the sum of 50. By some whipping was proposed; by others, punishment by hard labor in the country jails; and by others it was thought best to make them work on the highways. To all these appeared insuperable objections; fine and imprisonment were adopted by the House of Representatives as the only alternative; and as it is well known these vexatious pilferings were generally perpetrated by the more worthless vagabonds in society, it was added that when they could not pay the fines and costs, which are always part of the sentence and punishment, their services should be sold to any person who would pay their fines and costs for them. This was the clause that passed, as I believe by a unanimous vote of the House, and stricken out in Senate, in opposition to the twelve who have been denounced. A little further trouble in examining the Journals, would have shown your correspondent that this was considered as a substitute for whipping, which was lost only by a single vote in the Senate, and in the House by a small majority, after being once passed.

I think, Mr. Editor, I have said enough to show that this obnoxious law would not have applied to "unfortunate debtors of sixty-four years," but to infamous offenders who depredate upon the property of their fellow-citizens, and who, by the Constitution of the State, as well as the principle of existing laws, were subject to involuntary servitude. I must confess I had no very sanguine expectation of a beneficial effect from this measure, as it would apply to convicts who had attained the age of maturity; but I had supposed that a woman, or a youth, who, convicted of an offence, remained in jail for the payment of the fine and cost imposed, might with great advantage be transferred to the residence of some decent, virtuous private family, whose precept and example would gently lead them back to the paths of rectitude.

I would appeal to the candor of your correspondent to say whether, if there were an individual confined under the circumstances I have mentioned, for whose fate he was interested, he would not gladly see him transferred from the filthy enclosure of a jail, and their still more filthy inhabitants, to the comfortable mansion of some virtuous citizen, whose admonitions would check his vicious propensities, and his authority over him would be no more than is exercised over thousands of apprentices in our country, and those bound servants which are tolerated in our, as well as in every other State in the Union? Far from advocating the abominable principles attributed to me by your correspondent I think that imprisonment for debt, under any circumstances, but that where fraud is alledged, is at war with the best principles of our constitution, and ought to be abolished!

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

WM. H. HARRISON.

North Bend, Dec. 21, 1831.

From the Annapolis Republican.

LETTER FROM DAVID HOFFMAN, ESQ.

The selection of Messrs. HOFFMAN and KERR of Electors for the State at large, has received the unqualified approbation of the party.

We give below, the letter of the honorable RICHARD THOMAS, Chairman of the Whig meeting held in Annnapolis on the 27th ult. to Mr. Hoffmam, advising him of his appointment—and the letter of Mr. Hoffman, accepting the same.

We commend the letter of Mr. Hoffman to the attention of our friends. It is replete with sound Democratic Whig doctrines, and its length should deter none from reading it.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. HOFFMAN.

Annapolis, Feb 29, 1840.

SIR.—At a meeting of the Whig members of the General Assembly of Maryland, held at the seat of Government on the 28th inst. you were unanimously nominated as one of the Electors of President and Vice President for the State at large. In making this communication, in obedience to a resolution of the meeting, I avail myself of the occasion to express to you, personally and in behalf of the Whigs of the General Assembly, the high confidence which they entertain in your ability and zeal in the cause of the party, which is the cause of the country.

With great consideration, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

RICHARD THOMAS.

DAVID HOFFMAN, ESQ.

MR. HOFFMAN'S RELY.

BALTIMORE, March 3, 1840.

SIR—I have the pleasure to acknowledge your letter of the 29th, received yesterday, by which I am informed that, at a meeting of the Whig members of the General Assembly of Maryland, held at the the Seat of Government on the 28th February, I was unanimously nominated one of the Electors of President and Vice President of the United States, for the State at large.

This nomination, so flatteringly made by that body, and graciously communicated by you, I accept with pleasure—and yet with no little apprehension, lest the high confidence reposed in me by the enlightened meeting over which you presided as chairman, may not be as fully justified as I could wish, since my many pressing engagements, arising out of circumstances which need not be referred to, may possibly restrict my supposed usefulness within the limits of my actual zeal and earnest desires in the great cause of the approaching election of our Chief Magistrate.

The sentiment expressed by you at the close of your letter, "the cause of the party is the cause of the country," I heartily reciprocate; and, though my individual political opinions are now by no means at issue, and may indeed, be of little consequence to either of the great parties into which, unhappily, our country is divided, (since an Elector's duty is to state, enforce, and compare the doctrines of the candidates for the chief magistry, rather than to allude to those entertained by himself,) yet, I hope to be pardoned, if I avail myself of this occasion, briefly to state some of my views of the political condition of the country; in which, however, it is possible that neither the distinguished candidate of our choice, nor the Whig party, may, in all cases, entirely concur with me.

I have never had but one scheme of politics, and that is Republicanism; a scheme of government, raised by the founders of our Constitution, by which the civil liberties of the people are guarded by their political liberties—a government originating from, and based upon the power of the people, when truly and legitimately expressed, end which, when so expressed, clothes their representatives, for the time being, with all the constitutional powers, wholly exempt from the dictation, capricious withdrawals, and arbitrary instructions and qualifications imposed by crude and hasty meetings, so often assembled, and actuated by mere party excitements and purposes: a government, in fine, of fixed principles, of laws, of known measures; and of wholesome certainly.

It is, however, a lamentable fact, that this pure and well designed government, under which we have flourished for a time, has been greatly corrupted in theory, and yet more largely in practice, not by the people so much as by their confidants, and their treacherous leaders.—The people, as I truly believe, are generally wise enough, and virtuous enough, to judge and to act soundly; but no man, nor body of men, were ever yet found sufficiently stern in their virtue and wisdom to resist the artifices of intrigue; to subdue the poison of those passions which unprincipled demagogues so well know how to excite; to see clearly through the meshes of false facts, most artfully presented to them, with the fixed purpose of deceiving; and all this, as is well known, is constantly, and even systematically practised by that misshapen and wonderful party, that has dared to assume, and much to abuse, the venerable name of Democracy—a name, which, in our earliest government, was equivalent to, and co-ordinate with Republicanism, and nothing more; but, which, unhappily, has been rendered odious, only because thus vilely abused; a name that should never have been divorced from the interpretation given it by our Constitution; a name only to be venerated when brought back to its original import; a name wholly at variance with the reckless and lawless Locofocoism of our day; a name, in fine, essentially different from destructiveness, and which knows nothing of those odious distinctions between man and man, and classes of men, which these disorganizers are constantly making the people believe are favored by the Whigs, an accusation so grossly false, that the people are now beginning to perceive that the accusers, as is sometimes the case, are far more guilty than the accused.

But this much abused word Democracy must have had a definite meaning; and that meaning can import nothing more than that the people are all equally entitled, according to their respective abilities and virtues, to rise in life to any of those stations of honor, trust, profit, and influence, for which they respectively fit themselves; a name which means that we have no arbitrary and artificial impediments, no stations, classes, and degrees of man's making, but that all and every one may, by the blessing of God and his own good exertions, attain to every office of trust, of honour, or of profit; success in its pursuit being dependent upon no privileged or aristocratic contrivance, but solely upon the skill and virtue of the aspirant; and this is the genuine democracy of our forefathers, not that spurious, mongrel, and aristocratic democracy of the party which now rules the destinies of this once truly great, but now almost withered country. I truly believe, and most conscientiously assert that belief, that the dominant part have most artfully retained the name of democracy, without even the shadow of its genuine substance, and that the Whig party have much more of its vitality, though so ingeniously deprived of its talismanic name and influences. It is, then, for the people to say which of the two they prefer, the shadowy name of democracy, retained by the Tories, or the veritable substance of democracy, zealously enforced by the Whigs.

That the people may be theoretically sovereign, and yet practically slaves, is a truth that would not have been easily believed, had not the two last administrations established it beyond a doubt! A government, despotic in theory, but paternal in practice, is not a greater anomaly: both, indeed, are very rare; but the former baffles all comprehension, since nothing can be more wonderful than to see a people endowed with all the means of self-preservation, confidently entrusting to a few the most gigantic powers; and then calmly submitting to privations, and to ruin, which, if perpetrated by an avowed tyranny, could not fail to end in a total bouleversement, and even the condign punishment of their oppressors! How wonderful, then, is the influence of a mere name, how much may a nation be made to suffer by the artful expedients of a comparative few whose unholy vocation is to deceive the people, withhold the truth, pervert the clearest things, deal largely in faithless promises, corrupt by the most potent bribery, vilify by a systematic mendacity, excite men's passions into fury by the most wicked misresedtations, and wield the complicated machinery of government with as much recklessness as if all the losses were their individual gains, and all out of their party, and all posterity, too, were mere nonentities, in no wise to be consulted?

We are said to be the freest people on earth! and yet our government cannot be used, (as most foreign governments may,) but we must petition, cap in hand, for possibly, a series of years, till hope becomes lost in delay, and in vexatious expense, and until the sod of the valley reposes upon our bosom, leaving to our heirs the onerous duty of prosecuting what our fathers have failed to attain, but the justice of which is evidenced by a thousand proofs which heartless legislators have but little valued.

We are said to be the freest people on earth! & yet honest and unmixed truth is scarce any where to be found; and among the Locofocos especially, most sedulously, artfully, and methodically rejected; and a system is raised in its stead, of prodigious, pervading, and minute mendacity!

What has produced these sad results? Not Republicanism—not genuine Democracy; but that hyridous monster, which of late has been generated—a monster that retains the name of Democracy, but which is no more like its parent than is "Hyperion to a Satyr!"

The evils of which we have loudly to complain, and which threaten all our institutions, nay, even our very existence as a free people, flow from this false Democracy—this ultraism, by which demagogues deceive and inflame the minds of a generous, enlighted, and confiding people.—These evils often extend beyond public and strictly political limits. We find them clearly visible in the more retired scenes of individual life—nay, even of domestic life! There the blighting influences of this ultraism spoil the organization of the social ties, and, by reflection, again pervert the very genius of our government! We find these evils exemplified in the diminished respect of youth towards age; in the lessened control of parents over children; in the relaxed discipline of schools of every kind; in the declining estimation for worth, talents, learning, industry, sobriety; in the preponderance of ill-gotten wealth over that intellectual tone which exerted so salutary an influence in the outset of our Government; in the extreme superficialness (though universality) of knowledge; in the morbid excitements of the poor against the rich, (so mercilessly and wickedly inflamed even by the organs of our Government;) in the painful and disgusting adulation of political favorites, in the unmeasured and unprincipled abuse of all the great men of the nation, when in opposition, in the contempt shown towards our highest judicial tribunals; in the villifying, *en masse*, of the legal profession; in the jealousy against, and even hatred of, all universities and other eminent institutions of learning; in the power and growing corruption of the press; in the increasing severity of our sectional jealousies; in the diminished love of the Union; in the narrow hostility of counties to the interests of cities; in the intolerance sometimes manifested towards Catholics, Masons, societies for the suppression of intemperance, and for the diffusion of Gospel light! We further discover these evils of ultraism, or of Locofocoism, in the impoverished and unmanly character of nearly all the addresses (verbal or written) made to the "sovereign people" dealing with them as if corrupt and silly beings, instead of sober and honest men in pursuit of truth and of happiness! We find these evils in the less refined and meagre tone of conversation; in nearly all of our social intercourse; in the banishment of nearly all the salutary formalities and restraints that moderate and purify all assemblages of people. We find them in the neglect of the fine arts; in the declige of the higher drama; in a disregard of subordination in courts; in a reckless indifference to the sacredness of vested rights; in numerous wild experiments of political economy, destructive of commercial prosperity; in a disregard of the rights of foreign nations, in an over-weening and daily augmentation of national vanity; in a wild and unprincipled coveting of new territories; in new and merciless modes of warfare; in the fearful increase of self-revenge; in a reckless disregard of human life; in open and daring infidelity, and finally, in the almost total contempt of those elevated morals, honorable principles, and regulated manners, which characterized what is called the Old School, in the days of our Washington, Franklin, Madison, and others!

This is no fancy-sketch, but a fearful reality; one which threatens the well-being, and even the existence, of our people as one nation.

If we turn our eye from these general and pervading evils of a perverted and false democracy, we shall find in its particulars, the like evils.—There we find the glorious democracy of our forefathers most wickedly abandoned. The chief magistrate of this country should be the the nation's unbiassed choice—he odce was so, and we were happy, virtuous and prosperous.—When thus selected, he is truly an honored man; and lawfully wields an astonishing mass of constitutional power, generously and freely conferred by the deliberate judgment of a grateful people. But now, all this glory centents not the voracious maw of Locofocoism—our President must be yet more powerful—a democrat in name, he must now be a despot in fact? With a patronage unknown to any other government, he now seeks to extend it indefinitely, and yet still retains the felicitous name! Possessed of a power that endures but for four or eight years, he so exercises it as to influence the nation's miserable destiny, perhaps for as many centuties! With prescribed constitutional and legal duties, he and his minions do nearly as they plaase—with a tribunal for the interpretation of that constitution, ond of those laws, he takes that onus upon himself!—with a Senate, possessed of defined and co-ordinate powers, he assumes the control of some, the disregard of others, and spurns the dignity and weight of all, whenever that body is in the opposition; and even now, when the Senate, shorn of most of its halo, is with him, his minions dare to treat it with official insolence and the arrogance of self constructed independence! Our President finds a currency, the best in the world, the pride of all who were truly experienced, and yet persuades the people to annihilate the whole, and to substitute that, which, were it fully within his power, which it never can be,) must inevitably diminish all existing property to one third of its value, all commercial operations in a yet greater degree, and the wages of labor to a most starving pittance; and yet the people are called upon to believe that all this is democracy! With an overflowing treasury, these two Presidents would persuade the people to deal with it as a national calamity; and hence measures are soon adopted to impoverish not only the National Fisc, but the people at large and, the once retrenching administration spends forty millions of dollars in capturing a few Indians; and, in less than three years, expends more than forty millions of dollars, beyond what were expended during Mr. Adams' four years.—This same economical President in theory, but madman in practice, has a thousand offices to fill, more than are wisely filled,—and yet has a thousand more created, for sinister purposes; he has half-starving ambassadors at expensive courts whose compensation it is democratic not to increase, but which he (through the artifices of the appointing power) fully compensates!

But these are not a tithe of the evils of our much abused democracy, connected with the Presidency.—Our records are constitutionally established and to be most sacredly preserved—and yet these are *expunged*, with a cold indifference that baffles all comprehension. The high incumbent, after eighty years employment of the people's favor, knows that the constitutional appointment of a successor is neither hereditary nor nominative, but purely elective by the people—and yet he dares to nominate his successor, and would even control the succession to that succession! Where, then, are the people? They indeed cast in their ballots, but only as the Roman Senate, in Rome's degenerate days seconded the decree and roscripts of the Imperial despots! Where is the purity and independence of the elective franchise?—it hath become a faint penumbra, ambling on the borders of executive power—a power now the most wonderful combination of democracy and despotism, the world has ever exhibited! All this, I repeat, is not imagination's picture, but a stern and fearful reality.

My experience has been that the PEOPLE will bear to be told, these wholesome truths; I am quite sure there is honesty and virtue enough among us, to render such admonitions acceptable to the great body of the people—not, indeed, of the few, who are of the true locofoco grit—they are incurable—but to the very many mistaken and deceived persons of worth, who love their country, and have adhered to the administration through false pride, through idle and ruinous party zeal, through long deluded hopes, through many vaunting, but now broken promises. Now, then, that this respectable portion of our fellow citizens begin to open their eyes, I would hail them all as beloved brothers—as men true to their country's glory, and willing and anxious to repair, as far as in them lies, the evils inflicted upon the nation by ignorant, wicked, ambitious, & selfish leaders. The INCURABLE'S, as I trust, are comparatively few; and, if all the rest of the people will now rally, and form one great party, composed of all who respect law and the protection of every right—if all, whether poor or rich, who desire to prosper, will now unite with those of the sound faith, in genuine democracy, we shall then have a party composed of ninety-five per cent. of sterling democracy, and of five per cent. of thorough radicalism, of unalloyed destructiveness and locofocoism! Such poison cannot then hurt, and the nation will be safe and perpetual.

Under Providence, and with care, we may all prosper. We should have but two parties—the many, composed of all who respect law, be they with or without property, but who desire to obtain it—and the few, composed of the opposite materials, however rich they may be, or poor they may be. That small minority of the deluded and reckless may, if they please, retain the much abused name of democrats.—We, the large majority, will be content with the protent and vital substance of democracy, which, in time, like a great and wide-spreading forest of our sturdy oaks and pines, will rise to the very heavens; and, extending their ample limbs, far and wide, will, in due season, so stint the miserable undergrowth, (nourished by false democracy) that health and happiness, security and prosperity will every where abound!

Should the ensuing election effect a change in our national councils, (of which I entertain no shadow of doubt,) we may all, once more, set under our own vine and fig tree; the New School will vanish, and the Old School of the golden times of our young history, will come back, with "healing upon its wings." But, if, from any unforseen cause—which may Heaven avert!—the present incumbent should be again elected, I should lament for the people, as one without hope—generations yet unborn would feel the calamity, for we are now on a tremendous precipice! Before us is a wide gulph—behind we have left a rich and verdant valley—a Canaan of the richest promise! Let us not, then, cast ourselves into the pit beneath us—but retrace our foot-steps, and establish our abodes, forever, in that goodly land. We are now on Pisgah's heights—the Jordan is near us—the land of promise is in full view—let us avoid the gulph; and adhering to the God of our forefathers, let us forsake Dagon and Moloch, and all the false gods of heathenish and false democracy; and cleave to the true democracy of our progenitors—all will then be "paths of peace."

To no individual could the call with which your Honorable Body have honored me, be more unfortunate, than to myself. Circumstances, for two years past, have concentrated at this very time, a mass of engagements of the greatest possible interest to me; but these must, in a large degree yield to that bidding. Every man that hath a tongue, or that can use a pen, should now belong to his country: the stake in issue is an immense one: for weal, or for wo, the next election must fix the destiny of our beloved country. If the former be our happy lot, we shall have fought a good fight—if the latter, I am not rash in saying that I believe it will be the last ballot I shall ever cast—the game will then be no longer worth pursuing—the Vandals will have overrun the empire—the dark ages will ensue and the august office, already much sullied, will early meet the inevitable fate of that imperial diadem, which, when no longer worth having, was struck off to the highest bidding (and there were only two in all the Roman Empire!) of that rich merchant, DIDIUS JULIANUS. Soon after, the nabobs pursuing that contempt still further, will no longer chaffer for a dignity, once beyond price, because the free gift of a virtuous people, to the highest merit in the nation; but the then degraded people will give it to him alone who shall minister the most largely to their base passions! Such things have been, in other times, & among other people; history should admonish us that what has been, may be. But, if we now retrace our steps, if the people will but open their eyes, and least off their treacherous counsedors; if they will but see with their own eyes, the deplorable condition of a once most happy and thriving nation, they will not fail to summon to their aid, with shouting acclamations, WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, as the next Chief Magistrate; and, as in the Revolution, and since, we preserved our liberties by our "OWN FIGHTING"—so now, we must renew them by our "OWN VOTING."

I am sir, with high consideration,

Very respectfully, your most obd't serv't.

DAVID HOFFMAN.

To the Honorable RICHARD THOMAS, Chairman &c. &c. &c., Annapolis.

PEACHES.—The severe frost has annihilated the prospect of a good crop of early peaches in N. Jersey, this year.