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EASTON GAZETTE.

WHERE THE PRESS IS FREE—"Literature, well or ill-conducted, is the Great Engine by which all Popular States must ultimately be supported or overthrown:"
Religion purifies the Heart and teaches us our Duty—Morality refines the Manners—Agriculture makes us rich—and Politics provides for the enjoyment of all.

VOL. X. EASTON, (MARYLAND) SATURDAY EVENING, AUGUST 4, 1827. NO. 31.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED
EVERY SATURDAY EVENING BY
ALEXANDER GRAHAM,
At Two Dollars and Fifty Cents per annum payable half yearly in advance.
Advertisements not exceeding a square inserted three times for One Dollar, and twenty five cents for every subsequent insertion.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE FREEMEN OF MARYLAND,
From a Convention of Delegates *appointed by the* People *of the State, friendly to the re-election of JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, as President of the United States, and held in the City of Baltimore, on the 23d. day of July,* 1827.

An appeal to the people upon matters of great National concern, is a proceeding that accords with the highest sense of respect for public sentiment, and is in entire consonance with the principles of Representative Government. Happily living under a government of opinion, we must always expect that contests of opinion will arise, and it becomes us to enter into such conflicts with the fearlessness that marks freemen—with the just deference for the opinion of others that distinguishes those who are in quest of truth and with a decorum that belongs to the character of our country.

A meeting of our fellow citizens opposed to the existing Administration of the Federal Government, having been recently held in this city, for the purpose of diffusing among the people of the State, that spirit of discontent, which marks the manifesto they have issued, and of rousing them to eject the present President of the United States from office, and to substitute General Andrew Jackson in his place. It is from this decision, and from the opinions and motives which sustain it, that we now appeal; and we desire to lay before the dispassionate good sense of the freemen of Maryland, the reasons of our dissent.

Implicit obedience and non-resistance to a ruling power is no part of our political creed—We neither inherited such principles from our ancestors, nor imbibed them in any of our schools. The freedom of opinion and of action, is with us a cardinal maxim that we are zealous to maintain in its amplest vigor—yet we think it wise to repress unnecessary contests in our country, that can lead to no public good, and particularly such as are calculated to produce the greatest excitement throughout the Republic. If we could always be sure that these contests originated purely and exclusively from public views, and found no sustenance in the personal prejudices, private feelings, or in the hope of individual aggrandizement, there would be less danger—for the sense of public duty alone will seldom carry men beyond correct boundaries, unless coupled with an inflamatory fanaticism that defies restraint.

In the examination of the subject before us, we must be calm and sincere. The question is of too serious importance to permit our predelections and prejudices to be enlisted in its service; the passions are not agents to be trusted in so grave a matter. Neither the dazzling power of military exploit, nor the rich stores of intellectual learning, must be permitted to beguile us on this occasion. The welfare of the Republic is at stake, and if we undertake to act in that behalf, let us divest ourselves as far as possible, of all that may lead to error; and regardless of men, devote ourselves to the cause of the country with the strictest fidelity.

Necessarily led to take some view of the present Chief Magistrate of the country and of his measures, as also of the distinguished Soldier who is brought in opposition, and of his character, we are not disposed to indulge in fulsome eulogy or unmerited reproach. Called to lay our views of a great National question before the people, we shall treat these distinguished citizens with becoming respect, and discharge the duty confided to us with integrity and firmness.

In resisting the pretentions set up by the advocates of General Jackson to enable him to supplant the present Chief Magistrate, it would be the severest injustice to consider us wanting, either in respect for the services, or in admiration for the success of that celebrated Military Chieftain. In these points we are not less sensitive than his warmest supporters; and we are again ready, as we have always been, to celebrate the victory at New Orleans, and to do honor to the intrepid hero who directed it; and should our country unfortunately be placed in a state of war before his manly vigor and military taste shall decline, such is our confidence in his patriotism, that we should be happy to see him associated with the gallant defenders of our country, under the direction of an able and firm Administration.

In scrutinizing the life of General Jackson, we see nothing that would justify us in considering him qualified for the Chief Magistracy of this country; & we mean not to sully, or to withhold any just tribute to his merits by the declaration, that, but for the happy victory at New Orleans, he never would have been thought of as one of those from whom a selection is to be made to fill the Presidential chair. If a single brilliant victory is a sufficient claim upon us to elevate a mere military man to the highest civil office, over the heads of all others, be their qualifications what they may, then indeed the pretensions of the General are strong—but if, as we confidently believe, the sound, discriminating good sense of the American people will consider many other very important qualifications as essential to fit a man for the Chief Magistracy of this nation, we have yet to learn that the General possesses them. As a member of the Bar, of the Bench, of the State Convention, of the Congress, he has never exhibited himself above the level of ordinary men; and if in the civil stations to which he has been called, he has been in no manner distinguished by the plaudits of his country, it was because his country was unacquainted with any peculiar merit that he had displayed. His only talent lies in military life, and there he appears capable of rendering good services to the Republic, and of gathering fame for himself. But even in military life he has committed errors that should warn us against considering him *best qualified* for the highest civil station in the Government—errors at several times, emanating, no doubt, from constitutional hardihood, and an ardent zeal in his country's service, but which were all calculated to diminish the sanctity of the civil authority.

The adherents of the General, in their zeal to support him, have adventurously attempted to draw a parallel between him and the illustrious Founder of this Republic—stating, that if General Jackson's exhibitions of greatness have hitherto been only Military; those of Washington, before he was called to the Presidential chair, were no more—and that as the belief of Washington's competency to govern as Chief Magistrate, was founded upon his Military conduct, that of General Jackson rests upon similar grounds. Let us not yield to the feelings that this parallel is calculated to excite; we will treat it more gravely, and reason on it, and expose its fallacy.

General Jackson's renown is exclusively derived from the victory at New Orleans, and his rash energies in the wars with the Indians—his correspondence relates entirely to the limited duties of the Military service he was then engaged in, and is marked by no deficiency of talent—further than this, we know of no other pretentions of the General to extraordinary distinction. To compare this miniature, presented by his friends, with the grand historical painting of Washington's life, before his call to the Chief Magistracy, that covers the walls of all Christendom, is doing injustice to General Jackson by an extravagant attempt. Not stopping to compare one lucky victory that rescued a city, with a brilliant seven years' warfare, that redeemed a People, and gave birth to an Empire, through every day & every event of which, the most dispiriting privations, the most hazardous conflicts, the most appalling dangers & trying difficulties were encountered & surmounted by a perseverance as temperate as it was brave, and by a skill as well directed as it was masterly. Washington's Military campaigns are, from first to last, continually interspersed with the strongest evidences of his profound & statesmanlike mind, which now constitute some of the richest treasures in the American Archives.

It was not his successes at Trenton, at Princeton, at Monmouth, at Yorktown, or at any of his well fought fields, that called him to the Chief Magistracy--It was his long and arduously tried fidelity, his uniform temperance under trials, his "invariable regard to the rights of the civil power, through all disasters and changes," when he held supreme military command—It was the direction he constantly gave to the political councils of the country, by his wise and patriotic advice when he was guiding the armies.—It was those master pieces of political wisdom, his addresses to the Governors of the several States, that are now read almost with the admiration of inspired writings, that fixed every eye and every heart upon Washington, as Chief Magistrate of the United States.—And in looking back upon his life, anterior to the year 1789, it is hard to tell, whether his merits, as a soldier, were higher than those of a statesman—but of this the world are assured, that neither military power nor success ever made him arrogant, nor induced him even to a doubtful excess. His military life was the loftiest example, under all circumstances, of the most temperate exercise of power—of strictest subordination to civil authority—and whilst the heated passions or deep designs of others seduced them to attempt acts of insubordination, Washington allayed the rising storm, and calmly offered himself as a voluntary hostage for his country, that the wrongs of his brother soldiers should be redressed.

If General Jackson suffers in this contrast, it is owing to the imprudence of his friends—we have done no more than to perform a duty to the man who was chief in the hearts of all, whose fame must not be hewed down to reduce him to the dimensions of others, or to subserve the schemes of combinations that are daring, or of ambition that is aspiring.

From this view we will turn to offer the reasons and inducements which render us contented with the existing administration of the country—And here we will frankly declare, that neither favoritism on the one hand, nor antipathy on the other, have any influence over us—For we do not remember to have been called, on any occasion, to decide a great national question, more free from every bias that would be likely to lead us astray: No circumstance has ever occurred to give rise to a personal predilection that we could indulge, and surely we can have no prejudices against the Hero of New Orleans.

If it had fallen to our lot to have entertained personal attachment in this case, which we openly disavow, we know that we should find a great palliative in the universal concession, that such attachments are always venial, and therefore we should not disown it. But if we thought we were guided by unfavorable prejudices, we should distrust ourselves as led on by the most dangerous of all impulses.—For prejudice is either a volunteer that springs up without thought, and leads to error without examination, or it is the weed of the mind that overshadows the heart with its deleterious foliage and forbids the growth of every useful germ—it disqualifies those who wear it—it never fails to tyrannize over those against whom it may be directed. Our feelings are not enlisted on this occasion—we are guided by our soberest understanding, and we prefer Mr. Adams, as President, because he is confessedly, both from education and employment throughout his life, the most capable in all respects—and he therefore furnishes the best and safest grounds to expect the most able and beneficial discharge of the arduous duties of the exalted station.—Beyond this, we have neither wish, nor end, nor aim.

A magnanimous people will never withhold the meed of praise that is justly due to the accomplished qualifications or meritorious services of a fellow citizen—but a high minded people, who, in all their public acts, keep the national welfare steadily and singly in view, are a little scrupulous of wasting themselves in panegyrics upon those they design to lift to patronage and power. It is therefore we shall not dwell upon the widely known facts of Mr. Adams having received, in early life, the best and most extended education this country could afford—of his unvarying habits of reflection and study—of his being intimately and practically conversant with the public measures of this country for the last forty years—of his high rank among the men of learning of the world—or of the pledges which are given in his uniformly unexceptionable private character, throughout his whole life. But we shall maintain our opinions and preference upon public grounds alone, and upon reasons and views which exclusively appertain to the prosperity of the people and the glory of the country.

The work of man, however admirable, is necessarily imperfect; and there is no part of our excellent Federative system which the forecast of its authors and the reflecting wisdom of those who ratified it, thought would be so likely in time to endanger its existence, as the election of Chief Magistrate. Although our form of government was in some parts new, and in others an improvement upon things which had existed before, yet the principle of an elective Chief Magistrate was not new, and whilst we were to partake of the advantages of that feature, we were unavoidably exposed to some of the evils to which it had been found subject—among the greatest of which is the train of incidents inevitably flowing from the frequent recurrence of contests between rival candidates for that high station. Nor did the founders of the government expect to ward off these evils so much by the limitations and proportions with which they fashioned this part of the constitution relating to the appointment of President, although less objected to than any other part of that charter.—They had a stronger, and as they thought, a safer reliance upon the sober minded character of the people who were to carry it into effect—in their love of order, their sagacity to discriminate, and in their intelligence and firmness to resist every thing that had a tendency to impair the system.

Jealousy, strife and local feelings are the dangers against which we have been particularly counselled by our illustrious political Father, and these, unfortunately, are the probable attendants upon a contest for the Presidential Chair. So long as the selection for this exalted post was confined to Revolutionary worthies, there was much in the character of our admiration for those Patriots, as well as in the youthful purity of our institutions that forbade these incidental evils to arise. We have now exhausted that store of worth, and have come to men nearer to our times, who, whatever may be their merits can never experience the unwonted devotion that was paid to their predecessors.

Fertile as our country is in the growth of distinguished men, and propitious as our government is to display them, the expansion of empire, the progress of science, and the increase of population must necessarily augment the number of favorites, and meritorious favorites too, who will engross the affections and confidence of their respective sections of country. From the operation of this affection and confidence local attachments, and jealousies and contests will arise, and without a check, the nation will quadrennially be thrown into agitation that will become most alarming. To guard against this impending terror we have nothing to rely on but the salutary influence of established custom, which, being founded in wise precaution, in a nation of intelligence easily acquires force. The first President of the United States having voluntarily retired from office at the expiration of his second term, that voluntary retirement has been construed into an example that has been implicitly followed by every successor who had an opportunity of doing so and has been approved of by the People. Under the sanction of this usage will it not be wise and prudent to establish the system of re-electing a Chief Magistrate for a second term, except in cases, where the qualifications of the opponent are known to be greatly superior to those of the incumbent—or, where the course of administration is palpably and fatally prejudicial to the true interests of the country? In the last case, any change is to be sought, and any hazard will be worthily encountered to extinguish the existing evil.

But we demand with frankness and we expect to be answered with candor, if such a state of things, or if such a necessity now exists in our country? Is it even pretended that it does? Has the Opposition to Mr. Adams been undertaken by the friends of General Jackson, because it is known that General Jackson possesses all the necessary qualifications for the Presidential office, in a superior degree to what Mr. Adams does? Or because the measures of Administration are bad, and that they expect such defects will be remedied by a different course of administration likely to be pursued under General Jackson? Or was this Opposition determined on anterior to the development of any measure by this Administration? Or did it originate in a predetermined intent to eject a man from office, who, notwithstanding the generally mild, judicious and able course of his measures, has been so unfortunate as not to have propitiated those who were resolved never to be appeased?

This brings us fairly to the consideration of the objections urged by the Opposition, and to the exceptions taken to a few specified measures.

The first and chief objection urged against Mr. Adams as promulged through the presses, and reiterated by the late Jackson Convention is, 'that he was made President against the will of the people,' and they have attached to this point in their manifesto, as well as to others, the most copious notes and commentaries to illustrate and explain the meaning of so dark a position.

With all the aid of the phosphorick glare which a political chymistry has shed upon this matter, we are still at a loss to see under what pretext this objection is made, unless it is, that Mr. Adams had not the greatest number of votes when brought to the House of Representatives. But the constitution, by its unqualified and direct injunction, requiring the Representatives to choose a President 'from the persons having the highest numbers, not exceeding three,' without a shadow of reference either to the foremost or to any particular one of them—the three candidates with the highest numbers stand before the Representatives House as if tied, upon a perfect equality, to be judged of by them as by a new body of electors, who are to decide upon 'the man who, in their opinion, may be best qualified for the office." To require the Representatives to be governed by the will of the people in this case, is to require them to be governed by what they have no means of knowing—for when the electors of a state have not voted for one of the three highest candidates—or when the electors of a state are equally divided perhaps between two, neither having the highest numbers, how can the Representatives know the popular preference? The rule of obligation, if derived from the constitution, must be general or not at all—but a rule which requires a representative to do what he has no means of ascertaining and to ascertain which no means are furnished him, is a palpable inconsistency and must be disowned. Thus the Opposition, in obedience to the Constitution, would refer the election to the House of Representatives and at the same time deny to its members the right of making it—an absurdity too gross for commentary. The constitution presenting *three* candidates to their consideration, evidently meant to give the Representatives a right of choice; and we are taught by the contemporaneous exposition of that constitution* that that choice was intended to be guided by the respective qualifications of the candidates presented to the House of Representatives by the electoral colleges. To say that such an election, in strict conformity with the letter and the established meaning of the constitution, is made against the will of the people, is to betray, what we are far from ascribing to the Jackson Convention, an uncommon weakness or a total insensibility to shame.

Where there are four or more candidates before the electors of the People and the votes throughout the Union are pretty generally divided among them all, neither having a majority, it is utterly impossible to tell who is the favorite of a majority of the whole; and it was on account of this impossibility, that the Constitution pointed out the House of Representatives as another body of intelligent electors, who were immediately to select one from the three candidates that the electoral colleges had distinguished by the greatest number of votes—Considering it much less important which of the three should be elected, than that their choice should be confined immediately to one of them. Mr. Adams was second by the electoral college vote, and not far behind the foremost, and a portion of the votes given to Mr. Crawford, and Mr. Clay, would as well have elected him as General Jackson. It is impossible therefore to say, which of them would have been preferred if they alone had been before the people, unaccompanied either by Mr. Clay or Mr. Crawford.

How boldly this objection bears upon the conduct, or how ill it suits the mouths of those who ardently advocated Mr. Crawford's election by the House of Representatives, when he was much lower on the electoral poll than either Mr. Adams or Gen. Jackson, we forbear to expose.

Fearing lest the constitution and the reason of things should be against them in this objection, the Opposition then assert, that Mr. Adams was *corruptly* elected in the House by the intrigue of Mr. Clay; and to this accusation, as gross as it is unworthy, as hideous as it is unfounded, the Jackson Convention have lent themselves with all the positive force of their fame, and with all the artificial influence of their learned notes and commentaries.

That the first moments of mortified disappointment should have given rise, among some men, to a heated and irascible ebullition of this sort, was neither to have been wondered at nor regarded—but time and reflection ought to have induced a juster construction of things. It is easy to indulge in accusations against men, and in times of high political ferment, the disposition to yield a submissively credulous ear to imputations against those whom it is our purpose to oppose, is often the vice of men. Let us however judge by safer & more just laws of construction, and more becoming the high character of all.

In the absence of every thing like positive proof, which is admitted by the opposition in this case, they have recourse to circumstantial proof, in the construction of which we maintain that it is a violation of all rule of interpretation and of moral right to recur to supposed corrupt motives and views to explain that, which may be equally well explained by obvious and known fair ones. As a representative in Congress at the time of the late Presidential election, Mr. Clay was obliged to vote—he was in effect limited to a choice between Mr Adams and General Jackson, for the condition of Mr Crawford's health, at that time, put him out of the question with all who were not previously pledged. Between Mr. Adams and Gen. Jackson there was an entire good understanding; but between neither of them and Mr. Clay, did there exist any prepossession—indeed there was something more between General Jackson and Mr. Clay, than the ordinary feelings between rival candidates.

During the late canvass for electors of President and Vice President, exception was taken by Mr. Clay to the construction and facts given in a correspondence between Mr. Adams and Mr. Russel in relation to events that transpired on the Mission to Ghent; yet the contest which grew out of this between Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay, was not of a nature to interrupt their accustomed intercourse and association—But the stand taken by Mr. Clay in the year 1819 against General Jackson's conduct, just after the Seminole war, a time when no man on earth expected that the General would ever be held up as a candidate for the Presidential Chair, was of a much harsher and more serious character; and we have every reason to believe, produced from that day an entire alienation between them, and implanted in the General the most implacable resentment. Mr. Clay, on that occasion, arraigned the conduct of Gen. Jackson, in the strongest & most fearless terms, and with an ability rarely equalled by any man, seldom surpassed by himself. This he did in the discharge of his congressional duty, when the gems of Gen. Jackson's glory were fresh sparkling around his brow. Some years after this, when Mr. Clay is called upon by the Constitution with other members of the House of Representatives to "make a choice" between Mr. Adams and Gen. Jackson of a President of the United States, he prefers and votes for Mr. Adams. Mr. Clay's influence in the House was long known and had been considered greater than that of any other member—an influence derived from his splendid abilities, his long standing as a member, his engaging deportment towards every body, and his able and satisfactory discharge of the office of Speaker. It was doubtful who would be elected by the House—Mr. Clay being known to advocate Mr. Adams' election, & Mr. Adams being elected on the first ballot it was immediately imputed to Mr. Clay's influence, and it was then most unworthily and unwarrantably asserted by some, who

*Messrs. Jay, Hamilton, and Madison's Federalist.

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