G. P. Franklin

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"PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES, AND MEN BY THEIR PRINCIPLES."

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THE GREAT PRAIRIE.

After passing the Santaffy we came next to Alachua, on the middle ground between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic, a country finely variegated with alternate hammocks, prairies and lakes, but distinguished by what is called the Great Prairies. This Prairie is much admired by all who visit it. The admiration must be in some measure ascribable to the dense and dark forests by which it is surrounded, and the feeling of confinement impressed on the mind before entering the prairie. Be this as it may, I was gratified with the view of the Great Prairie. This immense green and level lawn seems stretched to the horizon, to show the beauty and effect of the promontories of woods that successively protude themselves from its margin.—If the diminutive copses of a nobleman's park can excite sensations of pleasure, you may imagine the feelings produced by the view of a park on a much more magnificent scale.

This prairie stretches from E. to W. about nine miles, and from N. to S. about four.—Upon this ocean of grass, it is said that eleven thousand head of cattle were pastured, within one sweep of the eye. This was during the peaceful times of King Payne, and before the Seminole was intruded upon by the white man. During seasons of severe raino the prairie is covered with water. For agricultural purposes this would be an inconvenience, but as the water can be passed off by artificial improvements, for which this Prairie is peculiarly situated, it must one day become as agricultural a scene, under the genius of civilization, as it was pastoral under the Indian.

To the N. E. of the Prairie, and on a higher level, is Pithlachucco lake, the most western tributary of the River St. Johns. This lake discharges its waters into the Prairie, whence they disappear under ground by a natural sink hole. To the S. E. of the Prairie, but on an interior level, is Orange lake, which never receives water from Lake Pithlachucco, except through the Prairies when the waters are abundant, and thus leaving the Prairie in the intermediate and favourable line of level, to admit or reject the waters of Lake Pithlachucco, a sluice being established for this purpose. The Great Prairie, and a great portion of the Lakes mentioned, being within the limits of a large Spanish concession called the Arredondo Grant, I am informed that the proprietors, being aware of these topographical advantages, intend to avail themselves of them, and to give these improvements effect.

It may give you a further idea of the opportunities afforded in new countries for enterprise and speculation, that Alachua, being midway between the nearest navigabble points of the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, it is also contemplated to connect these points, by a road across the Peninsula of about 65 miles in length, and thus open a steamboat communication between New York and New Orleans.

This is a great desideratum, and could be most advantageously effected between Savannah and Pensacola did the evil genius of Georgia not preside in her councils Whilst she sleeps over her true intesest, it would be somewhat amusing to see travellers go round her frontiers as the shortest way to get by!

In keeping with these improvements in Alachua, is the contemplated establishment of a town. Some of the prime lands roll 200 feet above the level of the sea. If amongst these the site be judiciously chosen, it cannot lack for health, whilst from its central situation, and at no distant day, it may become the capital of Florida, King Payne of the Seminoles had his seat of government here, and in honor of his successor, Micanopy, the name is preserved at the spot. It was here that the Seminoles made a resolute stand against the incursions of the whites, and had bloody engagements with the Patriot forces in 1812. Since then, succeeding events have changed their battle grounds to Withlaccochie and the South—of which more anon.

With oceans on either side and but a few miles distant, the climate of Alachua is much ameliorated; as compared with that of Georgia. It is here that a sign of a tropical climate is first to be seen, in the indigenous growth of the sour and bitter sweet orange trees. So congenial in deed is the climate, that Alachua has a well merited reputation for the luxuriance of her corpse—and as to the wants of men, houses and clothing seem to be matters of secondary consideration.

A Bold Push.—A letter under date of Natchitoches, Dec. 20, states that the 'Texians are talking very familiarly and positively of invading the Mexican Republic, and removing their seat of Government to the city of Mexico!'

The Cotton Crop of Mississippi is said to exceed that of last year by about 15,000 bales. This will prove an additional revenue of some six or seven hundred thousand dollars.

REMARKS OF MR. DUNCAN.

OF OHIO,

In the House of Representatives, Dec. 18 1837—On the resolution offered by Mr. Haynes of Georgia, which was as follows, viz:

Resolved, That so much of the President's Message as relates to the finances, and every thing connected therewith; to the safe-keeping of the public moneys, and every thing connected therewith; and so much as relates to the Bank of the United States; be referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. DUNCAN said it was not his wish to detain the committee; he merely wished to correct some errors which the gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Reed,) had fallen into, in point of fact, in relation to the political or party character of the standing committees of this House—statements which, if *true* or *uncorrected*, were calculated, coming from the source they did, to injure the character of the Speaker by whom they were appointed—to prejudice the Democratic party, and the Administration whom it is said (by the opposition) the committee favor, without regard to principle, or the sacred nature of their duties. The gentleman objects to referring the resolution in question to the Committee of Ways and Means. "It is an improper committee, because there is a majority of it that are in favor of the Administration." He says all the committees, or nearly so, are of the same character. He said the time had come when the two great contending parties of this nation were *nearly* equal, and he thought the character of the standing committees, with regard to party, ought also to be as *nearly* equal. Indeed, said Mr. D. the burthen of his song, and the volume of his speech, consisted in complaints and charges of the inequality of the committees in a party sense. His complaints have gone abroad, swift as the mail can carry them; they are now spread ovor the country; and while I am now correcting the errors, his political friends are weeping over the vast injustice which he represents to have been done to the opposition by the partial and unequal party character of the standing committees. How stands the matter? Let us disclose the facts as they are; and in doing so, I do not intend to charge the gentleman with wilful misrepresentation. I think him above doing any thing dishonorable to his age, his occupation, the office he holds, or the seat he occupies. But how are the facts in relation to the party character of the committees in question?

Mr. D. read from the list, which is as follows:

1. The committee of elections presents a majority in favor of the admanistration.
2. The committee of claims, for the opposition.
3. The committee of ways and means for the administration.
4. The committee on revolutionary claims, for the opposition.
5. The committee on commerce, for the administration.
6. The committee on public expenditures, for the opposition.
7. The committee on the public lands, for the administration.
8. The committee on public land claims, for the opposition.
9. The committee on the post office and post roads, for the administration.
10. The committee on manufactures, for the opposition.
11 The committee for the District of Columbia, for the administration.
12. The committee on Agriculture, for the opposition.
13. The committee on the judiciary, for the administration.
14. The committee on the militia, for the opposition.
15. The committee on Indian affairs, for the administration.
16. The committee on territories, for the opposition.
17. The committee on military affairs, for the administration.
18. The committee on invalid pensions, for the opposition.
19. The committee on naval affairs, for the administration.
20. The committee on roads and canals, for the opposition.
21. The committee on foreign affairs, for the administration.
22. The committee on revisal and unfinished business, for the opposition.
23. The committee on revolutionary pensions, for the administration.
24. The committee on expenditure in the War Department, for the opposition.
25. The committee on patents, for the administration.
26. The committee on expenditures for the Navy, for the opposition.
27. The committee on the public buildings and public grounds, for the administration.
28. The committee on the expenditures in the department of the Post Office, for the opposition.
29. The committee on accounts for administration.
30. The committee on mileage, for the administration.
31. The committee on the expenditures of the Department of State, for the administration.
32. The committee on the expenditures of the Department of the Treasury, for the administration.
33. The committee on the expenditure on the public buildings, for the opposition.

This last is an entire whole-hog *modern* whig committee. Thus, with the exception of the three next preceding the last, we see that the committees run *pari passu* so far as party is concerned. Now, sir, what has become of the gentleman's lamentations about injustice to the *minority* in the appointment of committees. They have gone abroad like other Federal howlings, to have their effect on subsequent elections. I would not have been so minute in presenting the errors contained in the member's remarks, but for the daily efforts used to send abroad such misrepresentations for the purpose of destroying the influence of the Administration and bringing it into disrepute with the people. Here are letters and figures, which show to the understanding of all who may see them, that the whole groundwork of an hour's labor to bring the honorable Speaker and the Administration into disrepute, is without existence. I say daily are such misrepresentations sent to every part of the country—to the fireside of the rich and the poor; and that, too, at the expense of the people, for no other than the unhallowed purposes of political delusion.

A word of and to the gentleman from Indiana, (Mr Ewing.) He objects to the reference in question. He denounces the Committee of Ways and Means as a party committee, unworthy the confidence of the House or the people. "They have administered to the people, and their doses have been found wanting." "We have had to swallow their doses; they are bitter doses; they nauseate without relieving. The people have rejected them as inapplicable to the complaint. To the dogs with their medicine." Sir, it is not my business, said Mr. D. to defend the committee from abuse and detraction. Each of them is more able to defend himself than I am; nor does such abuse require defence or answer; it carries with it its own antidote with all intelligent, honorable, and high minded people. I only think it necessary here to say that the Committee of Ways and Means is a finance committee, and the committee to which all financial matters ought to be and always have been referred. This is the regular channel through which regular financial business flows to the House or Senate; whether presented for the consideration of Congress by the President of the United States, the Heads of Departments, members of either branch of Congress, or by private individuals; and Mr. D. saw no necessity now for crossing the usual channels of legislative business merely to gratify party hostility and vindictive whims. Mr. D. said he had some professional advice to give his friend from Indiana; and Mr. D. hoped he would receive it in a kind spirit, as that was the spirit in which it was offered, and no charge or fee should be made. He would recommend to his friend the political doses prepared and prescribed by the Committee of Ways and Means. The gentleman would eventually find them to be well calculated to improve his political health True, they would be nauseous for a while. It was proper that they should be so. It was a wise order of Providence that all valuable medicines, such as were intended for the cure of obstinate diseases, were nauseous and sickening, disagreeable to the taste and offensive to the smell. If it were otherwise, their constant and daily use for trifling causes would render them useless for the purposes for which they were made; for it was a principle in the animal economy to adopt itself to the use of almost any application to the destruction of the effect of that application. Hence the obvious necessity for those peculiar qualities of the most valuable medicines. Political matters were so arranged that the gentleman was compelled to take the committee's doses, let the quality and quantity be what they might, *nolens volens*. There was no let up in the matter; the people had so ordered it, and the gentleman ought to be satisfied.

Mr. D. said he was bound to notice some hard things that fell from the mouth of the member from Virginia, (Mr. Wise,) who immediately preceded the two gentlemen that he (Mr. D.) had in part, but imperfectly, responded to. The member commenced his speech on the President's Message, by uniting with the President in *prayer and thanksgiving* (I hope he is not ironical) for the happy, healthy and prosperous condition our country is in at this time. The gentleman may be sincere, but this recognition on his part of happiness and prosperity for which he professes so devoutly to thank his God, does not correspond with the Federal howling, weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth with which our ears have been greeted or rather grated for the last six months by him and his party, for the *misfortunes* and *ruin* of our *poor country*, by a profligate and worthless Administration as *they* say, and in which *howling* the member has always been foremost and loudest. I think there is a Divine declaration that the prayers of the *wicked* availeth not; how far this declaration may apply to the gentleman's case I know not; it is sufficient for me to know that we are enjoying temporal happiness beyond any people on the face of the earth, and that there never was a greater abundance of all the comforts of life in our country, at any one time, than we now enjoy; for which, I trust, we all feel that thankfulness and gratitude which become the people of a civilized and christian nation, to the Giver of all Good. But the member no sooner finishes his devotional exercises than he deserts the President, and denounces his message as "a poor thing," a "poor neglected thing," a *Loco Foco* document, and the author of it a *vile* demagogue. In relation to the quality of the message, Mr. D. had come to a different conclusion; and he was happy to say he was not alone in that opinion. He had that morning received several letters from his friends that he had the honor to represent, whose talents and whose capacity to judge in these matters would at least compare with the member's, who united in their commendations as well of the measures recommended in it as the true Republican principles it contains; he had also received several respectable newspapers from various sections of the State he had the honor in part to represent, all of which concurred in the same high opinion of the message. "But it was a poor *neglected* thing." How neglected? Not by the people. Every hour furnished intelligence that it was hailed by the friends of equal rights, and the supporters of the Constitution. When, then, or how, has it been neglected? Not by the House, for it had its attention as soon as its business would admit—as soon as the committees were formed and reported, the appropriate references were commenced to be made, and that would be continued as fast as the vindictiveness and hostility of the Opposition would permit, who so far seem determined, at all hazard, and at any expense, to cripple the administration, and obstruct the regular course of business in this House. The member, after denouncing the whole Message in these general terms, takes it up by parts and denounces it. From page ninth, he reads: "On that occasion (meaning and referring to the extra session) three modes of performing this branch of the public service (meaning the safe-keeping and transfer of the public moneys) were proposed!" Here the member stopped short, gave us one of his wondrous *wise* looks, in which he manifested great astonishment and surprise; denounced the statement of the President as fale, and asked emphatically, and with an air of apparent triumph and defiance, "who will or dare say there were three propositions for such a purpose presented to Congress at the extra session?" "Who in this House," he repeated, "dare assert such a thing." I *dare* assert it, (said Mr. D.) and I *dare* assert it without the fear of successful contradiction from any man from any quarter. He said he had heard members before use the word *dare* in a wrong and improper manner. To say a member dare not do a thing, was using language that could not be carried out. It was too strong an expression. There were members here who *dare* say any thing that truth, justice, and moral principle did not prohibit. Mr. D. said he had surveyed most of the members of the House; i.e, with his eye, measured their length, their breadth, their circumference, & their diameter; and, more particularly, the eye, whic was the index to the heart; and he had seen nothing in the shape of a *modern Whig* that ought, for a moment, to deter a *man* from saying any thing He repeated, that he *dare* say there were *three* propositions before Congress at the extra session, for the safe-keeping and the transfer of the public moneys, all of which received the attention and the action of Congress; and this, too, he *dare* say on his own responsibility, without even turning to the journals. The first proposition he would name was the Sub-Treasury system, (usually so called,) recommended by the President in his message. The second was a proposition made by a small party here, called the *Conservatives*, which was, in the language of the President's Message, "the revival, with modifications, of the deposite system established by the act of the 23d of June, 1836," etc. and the third proposition was a National Bank; none of which can be said to have received the definite action of Congress except the last named proposition; and that, it is hoped, got its last and final sentence, and everlasting doom, by a large majority of both branches; so I throw back the charge of falsehood upon the member from Virginia.

When the member furnished his daring and bantering tirade, he amused himself and his friends awhile by singing glory and hallelujahs to the recent *Whig* victories. This he and his party had a right to do when there was any thing that would do for an apology for a *Whig victory*' for they were

"Like angels' visits; few, and far between.'

They came about as often as the locusts, but were not quite so destructive as that insect when sent upon the Egyptians as a divine curse.

Here, Mr D. said, as he was about to trace up and present the genealogy of the *Whig* victories, it was necessary for him to explain what he meant by the term, as applied to the party opposed to the Administration. He wished it distinctly understood, that when *he* used the term *Whig*, it was not because there was any applicability in the *term*, to the principles of the Opposition; it was merely to accommodate them. The Opposition were in the habit of taking to themselves a new name as often, at least, as the return of each Presidential election. They had nearly exhausted the political vocabulary. They take a name for political effect. They ask to be known by it so long as it will answer that purpose, or until it is degraded. The last name by which they ask to be known, is 'Whig:' not that they possess any of the political principles of the patriots of '76 who were known by that name, and which was at that time, and really is now, synonymous with 'Democrat.'

The term *Whig* in the United States at this time is significant of Federalist in '96, a term that the self-named *Whigs* of this day were then proud of, but their principles are still the same. Of this truth we have some practical demonstrations. We are all aware of a sanguinary war now raging on our borders in the Canadas. The patriots of Canada have snuffed the breeze from our continent, and caught the spirit of liberty which we enjoy. They have, in the language of our gallant ancestors, pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, in the cause of freedom, and are now battling for independence.

The citizens of the United States have taken sides, (in feeling and spirit.) You find the Democracy on the side of the patriots, who are there called Whigs; & the modern Whigs you find on the side of the tools of aristocracy and the minions of *royalty*, there called *Tories*. I hold in my hand one of the most respectable bank organs and Federal sheets perhaps in the United States, bearing no less title at its head than National Intelligencer, which contains a long article (and favourably received too) denouncing the patriots of Canada as radicals, disturbers of the peace, agrarians, etc and in character with the Fanny Wrights and the *Loco Focos* of the United States. Then, sir, we find that the *Whigs* of this country are the Tories of Canada, and the Whigs of Canada are the Democracy of this country. This is as it always has been, and as it will continue to be. I hope now that I am understood that, when I speak of the modern *Whigs* as a party, I mean the same party governed by the same principles that characterized the Federal party in '96, and who were known by that name.

But to return to *Whig* victoris and *Whig* glory I would advise the *Whigs* to use their glory sparingly. I fear they are too prodigal of it. They ought to use it that may last until next fall; for then the people will make them sing glory to the tune of 'Burn's Advice.' I think the experience and history of our country furnishes us with but three *Whig* victories. One of these was in the year 1796, a triumph over the principles of Democracy that will be long remembered, and can only be lost with the history of our country; a triumph that let loose the foul waters of Federalism to the inundation of the best prospects of productive liberty. This *Whig* victory gave birth to the *alien* and *sedition* laws, that constitute, to this day, and ever will, a foul and black spot upon the American statute book; which, though they tarnish the proud character of our free institutions, serve as an imperishable dixit that, great and good as is our political fabric, and great as were the sacrifices of life, blood, and property by which it was purchased, it is but a human institution; and to preserve it requires nothing short of the vigilance and patriotism that wrested it from the hand of tyranny.

I think the next *Whig* victory is to be found in the chronicles of 1824. This was a most glorious victory, inasmuch as it was a victory over popular suffrage. It was worth all the other victories put together. It was a victory of the aristocracy of wealth over the democracy of numbers. True, it was obtained in direct violation of the spirit and meaning of our Constitution, in the abuse of our free institutions, and in the face and name, and nature of our Government; but this did not make the victory the less glorious with those who can stretch the Constitution to the extent of their own wishes. The glory of this victory lasted four years, and was not unlike a Bacchanalian feast for that length of time, but the people, true to their common country when it is in danger, rallied in their magesty to the polls, and swept from the chessboard the political workers of iniquity of that day and with them their glory.

We now came to the victories of 1837, to which the gentleman has been so long and so loud singing glory, assisted by those of his friends who could join in the chorus, & those who could not, done their part by *looking effect* to the best advantage. Sir, if justice to the subject would permit, I would not for a moment disturb the member and his friends in the enjoyments of their supposed victories, but I feel bound to make some expositions in relation to the recent elections. The member, in his extacies, makes some assertions that the true results of the recent elections will not bear him out in. He tells us in his shouts of joy that the people have risen in their strength from Maine to Mississippi, and denounced the President and his Loco Foco Sub-Treasury scheme. I suppose he has reference to the result of the elections in Maine, New York, and Mississippi. As all this display of victory and glory is for home consumption and party effect, it is a duty I owe to the cause, and the party I support to give some statistics that will present these elections in a different light. Maine has not polled her strength since 1834; there has been no excitement in that State since, sufficient to draw her voters out; at that time her Democratic vote was 38,000, and her Whig vote 34,000, the aggregate 72,000. In 1837, the two candidates for Governor had about 34,000 each, it is not known which is elected. The Senate of Maine is decidedly Democratic. It is evident that the Democratic strength was not at the polls by between four and five thousand, while the entire *Whig* strength was: their vote being the same that it was in 1834. The absence of the Democratic vote can be accounted for from the fact that the Democracy of Maine, as well as of every other State in the Union, are the laboring classes of society, and never all turn out to elections, unless there is an exciting question.

How is it with New York? By the returns of 1834, (a year of excitement, and the only since that time,) compared with the returns of 1837, there is an aggregate deficiency of near 54,000 votes; there is a Democratic deficiency of 41,000, and a Whig deficit of 13,000. How, then, let me ask, can New York be said to have denounced the President and his Loco Foco Sub-Treasury scheme? Does the result of the elections in New York either show a change of political principle in that State, or does it denounce the President in the unmeasured terms represented by the member? But how stands Mississippi?—gallant Democratic Mississippi must be lugged into the jubilee; she must be dragged forward to swell the Federal triumph, for which this day seems to be set apart. It would seem that policy would have dictated a different course with regard to Mississippi, lest the whole object of all the bacchanalian feasts would be disclosed to the people in whose eyes it is intended to throw dust.

It is well known that Mississippi has just elected a Democratic Governor by a large majority; nearly all her cabinet officers and a large majority of both branches of the legislature are Democratic. The *Whigs* have indeed returned two members to Congress, but the election was entirely a one-sided business. The present worthy and talented members (Messrs. Claiborne and Gholson) were elected in July. When they presented themselves to be qualified as members, the Opposition number on this floor objected on the ground that the election had been ordered for the extra session only, and was, therefore, null and void.

The objection was overruled, but the whole case was referred to the Committee of Elections. The Committee reported in favor of the sitting members; and after a protracted, careful and deliberate examination of the whole case and the circumstances connected with it, of both a legal and constitutional character, this House sustained the report, and adopted these gentlemen members for the entire twenty fifth Congress. These gentlemen were not candidates at the fall elections. The democracy of Mississippi held no election for Congressmen, except where they were unapprised of the decision of this House. But the modern *Whigs* of Mississippi, in character with their party elsewhere, regardless of law and the solemn decision of this body, assuming that Congress had not the constitutional right to decide upon the competency of its own members, (a right which is as palpable and as express as any other power on the face of that instrument, and until now has never been denied,) went on to vote for candidates, and having no opposition, of course elected them. If this be a *Whig* victory, the member and his party are welcome to it, with all the other victories over which they are now glorifying. But when the free people of this Union look at the result, they will say that the Democracy of Mississippi have gloriously triumphed,