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ADDRESS

OF THE

REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE

OF

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

PHILADELPHIA,

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.



PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM STAVELEY,

No. 99, South Second Street.

1828.

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PENNSYLVANIA.



July 22, 1828.

AT a meeting of the committee of correspondence, for the city of Philadelphia, appointed by the republican convention which assembled at Harrisburg, on the 8th of January last, the following resolution was adopted:—

“Resolved, That a letter be addressed to James Ronaldson, Esq. requesting him to favour this committee with copies of any letters, addressed to him by the late presidents, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, in which their opinions of gen. Andrew Jackson were expressed—it being understood that no part of those letters is of a private character.”



To James Ronaldson, Esq. Hillsburgh Mills, Delaware Co.

“PHILADELPHIA, July 22, 1828.

“DEAR SIR:—You and I remember, that the feelings and fame of Mr. Jefferson were as ruthlessly assailed, as those of general Jackson now are; and yet, when Mr. Jefferson passed from amongst us, his traducers joined in the public homage to his virtue:—I trust and believe, that the fame of general Jackson will be rescued, in like manner, from the gripe of calumny.

“You and I remember, that the people were told, that, if they elected Mr. Jefferson, he would introduce a French army, demolish the churches, &c. just as we hear it now said, that, if they elect general Jackson, he will raise an army, and establish a military despotism: but we saw Mr. Jefferson elected, and the people, after his election, in a more free enjoyment of happiness, including an increase of churches, than they had been before it: I trust and believe, that we shall see general Jackson also elected, and that he will retire from office, as Mr. Jefferson did, with the blessings of his countrymen.

“Nevertheless, although such has been our experience, and such are our expectations, we should do all that we can do, to protect him, who protected his country: under this impression, I mentioned to our committee of correspondence, that you had two units to add to the testimony, in favour of general Jackson, already before the public—a letter from Mr. Jefferson, and another from Mr. Adams, father of the present President of the United States, complimentary to general Jackson: the committee have authorized me to ask you for copies for publication: I scarcely need say, that there is not a member of

the committee, who would make such a request, if the letters were of a private nature; but that is not the case; you must consider them, as the committee does, in the true sense of the term, public property, especially at a crisis like the present.

“Yours, truly and respectfully,

“W. J. DUANE.”

To W. J. Duane, Esq. &c.

“CEDAR, NEAR NINTH STREET, July 25, 1836.

“DEAR SIR:—Having on hand undertakings of considerable importance, which required my personal attention in Philadelphia, I have soon received your letter directed to me at Hillsburgh Mills. Your object is to procure copies of letters I received from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, about eight years since, which, if I did not then show them to you, I mentioned the circumstance of receiving.

“I express a doubt of having at that time shown to you those letters—it has been a practice with me, rarely to show to others, letters that have been addressed to me by men, whose characters, actions, and acquirements, have gained them particular pre-eminence: it was enough for a plain citizen, like me, to have received those marks of their politeness and respect: and so strongly are my feelings attached to past habits, that it will be with reluctance, that, on the present occasion, I shall depart from it, in the case of the letters to which you allude.

“I have not forgotten the misrepresented facts, the gross falsehoods and calumnies, that were published against the author of the Declaration of Independence: and I am astonished at the same style of abuse against Andrew Jackson: we have not yet forgotten the events of the last war; even in the old states, cannon were spiked whilst in the course of transportation to the frontier—pilotboats were in the service of the enemy, carrying intelligence—nay, American vessels sailed from our own ports, freighted with provisions, to supply and refresh the enemy’s war-ships, whilst cruising on our own coast. At New Orleans, when a powerful fleet and a well organized army were close to that city, matters were just as bad: men are only men—our good form of government has not made them all patriots: The general, to whom was confided the defence of New Orleans, has now imputed to him as crimes, the very acts that were essential to the preservation of the lives of the men, and the honour of the women; as to the property, it also was saved, but is not worth mentioning where the two others were at stake.

“The misrepresented facts and caricatured biography of Andrew Jackson, that have been given to the public, recal to memory a lively recollection of the cruelty and injustice done to Thomas Jefferson: and all this against general Jackson, because the PEOPLE have thought proper to vote for him to be President. It is the injustice of abusing general Jackson, because the *people* will vote for him to be President of the United States, and the great and general respect his person, his character, and his conduct were held in, until it was proposed to make him President, that influence my conduct on the present occasion: I think this system of abuse renders it necessary to bring forth proofs of what was said, and thought, of Andrew Jackson, at a period when his acts were well known, and his motives understood, by men like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, and when his virtues and actions neither excited envy, nor alarmed ambition.

“You shall have the letters you ask for, and you have my reason for giving them to the public.

“It is not, on the present occasion, requisite to mention the circumstances, which gave rise to the correspondence, further than to state, that Mr. William Rush had made for me a bust of general Jackson, and that meeting with an Italian, who was an expert worker in Plaister of Paris, he was employed to make some casts from the bust, and I took the liberty of sending them to different gentlemen, and public institutions; amongst the former were Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams: in every case, a due regard was paid to the feelings of those they were sent to, and the act was performed under the impression, that the present would receive a welcome.

“That you, and all, who are employed in rescuing character from calumny, may have the satisfaction of seeing your labours crowned with success, is the earnest desire of

“Your friend,

“JAMES RONALDSON.”

At a meeting of the committee of correspondence, July 25, 1828, the following resolution was adopted:—

Resolved, That the thanks of the committee be tendered to Mr. Ronaldson, for his prompt compliance with their request in relation to the letters of the late presidents Jefferson and Adams: that the letter addressed to Mr. Ronaldson, and his reply, be published: and that the letters of the late Presidents be published, with an appropriate address to the people.

To “Mr. James Ronaldson, Philadelphiu.

“MONTICELLO, Feb. 7, '20.

“I thank you, dear sir, for the present of the bust of general Jackson: he holds a high place in my esteem, as an undeviating patriot, and a military character, who has deserved well of his country. I shall give his bust a place in my most honourable suite, with those of Washington, Franklin, Fayette, &c. Its value is moreover heightened, as from the hand of an artist, of whom our country has a high and just estimation.

“To the political part of your letter, I cannot answer; my health is so entirely gone, with little prospect of its return, that I am obliged to withdraw my attention from every thing beyond the walls of my chamber, and particularly from politics: I leave these to the generation now on the stage, who will, I am sure, govern as wisely as their predecessors: I feel safe under their wing, and able now to contribute nothing but my prayers for my country, which comprehends them, you, and every thing else dear to

me. Unable to write but with pain and difficulty, I must here conclude with my friendly and respectful salutations.

“TH: JEFFERSON.”

To “James Ronaldson, Esq. Philadelphia.

“MONTEZILLO, February 23d, 1820.

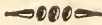
“SIR:—

“I have received your favour of the 16th, and lose not a moment to acknowledge my obligations for it. I have been attentive to the actions and character of General Jackson, and have read the volume of his biography, and have no hesitation in giving my opinion, that he is one of the greatest military characters that North America has produced. No present of the kind could have been more acceptable to me, than a bust of this great man, to whom we are all so deeply indebted. It is the more pleasing as it is the work of Mr. Rush, a native American, and a name very dear to me. I have not had time, as yet, to send for the precious monument, which I shall preserve with great care for the contemplation of my posterity.

“I am, sir, with many thanks, for your kindness, and politeness, your obliged friend, and humble servant,

“JOHN ADAMS.”

TO THE PEOPLE.



FELLOW CITIZENS:—

ALTHOUGH our own happiness is naturally the primary object of our solicitude, there are few of the American people, we presume, who are not anxious, that mankind at large should profit by our example, and become as free as ourselves. We may, indeed, under the influence of self-esteem, which is inherent in nations as well as individuals, fix a higher estimate upon our condition than reason justifies; but we may be excused, if we regard our republic, in several respects, a model for other states, when we find it so designated by many great and enlightened persons in Europe, who have spoken or written upon the condition of the new world.

Raising ourselves, then, above the influences of unworthy passions, is it not our duty to act, seeing that we are objects of scrutiny and example, as if we were not merely under the eyes of men of the present day, but within the observation of posterity?

If such is our position, and if such should be our duty, what a spectacle is at present presented in our republic! Instead of cherishing the purity, becoming infant institutions, we seem desirous to descend to the degradation of Athens and Rome, in the days of their decline! We behold a man, whom the whole people would go forth to see and honour, as a public benefactor, if he were not a candidate for their suffrages, proscribed and traduced in every way, that the basest passions can devise—because a portion of his countrymen have resolved to confer upon him the highest mark of their gratitude and confidence!

Yes, if Andrew Jackson had not been called, by his countrymen, upon the political stage, every one would apply to him the eulogium of the poet upon Cincinnatus—

“Of old, the farmer left his field,
Called by the voice of Rome;
To be his country’s guardian shield
He left his rural home:
Her foes subdued, her wrongs redrest,
No lust of power his soul possest,
He chose a glorious doom;
Again he grasped the plough, and fame
Still sheds a radiance o’er his name.”

But, when, not only without the aid or privity, but against the wishes of those, who may be called trading politicians, the

voice of the yeomanry of the country calls upon him to leave his plough, and to receive civic honours at their hands, Andrew Jackson is denounced, as if he had intrigued and trafficked for a nomination; nay, as if he had betrayed his country, or sought to trample upon its liberties!

Is this a spectacle, worthy of a free people, in an enlightened age? Is it not a signal, at the sight of which men should arouse, as if their liberties were assailed? Are they not, in fact, threatened? If it shall be in the power of selfish and ambitious men, to proscribe and prostrate those, who have rendered the highest services, who will be left to stem the torrent of corruption, which is at all times gathering to overwhelm public liberty?

Let it not be supposed, that this proscribing spirit comes alone, or that it is peculiar to the present day: it is the same monster that deprived Socrates of life and Aristides of his country; it is the same spirit, which, actuating the patricians of Rome, paved the way for its partition between a Cæsar, an Antony and a Lepidus; it is the same spirit, which, thirty years ago, sought to blast the fame of Franklin, and to wrest from Jefferson the gratitude of his country!

FRANKLIN, alike the glory of this nation and of humanity, was persecuted, not only during the revolution, but long after the enjoyment of those liberties, which he had so powerfully laboured to establish; even when death had closed his splendid career, calumny dared to assail his fame with the weapons of ridicule; and Mr. Benjamin Russel, of Boston, who was then, and is now again, "printer by authority," and who of course is a slanderer of Jackson, excused such atrocities in this language—"If dead villains," said he, "were spared by historians and biographers, where would be the lessons of instruction, which we get from the records of former times."*

JEFFERSON, too, was denounced by every epithet, and accused of almost every crime, that can degrade a human being—as a traitor to his country; and a pensioner of France; as a violator of the most sacred private obligations, and an open contemner of all the decencies of private life: nay, to such an extent did the spirit of proscription prevail, that there is no calamity that can befall a people, which was not blasphemously imprecated upon the republic, if it should place him in the presidential chair?

If the enemies of human liberty shall quote such abuses as these, as proofs of imperfection in our institutions, or ignorance in the people, the reply is as obvious as it is emphatic: the contemporaries of Franklin and Jefferson exclaim, "True, indeed, it

* See Boston Sentinel, Sept. 20, 1798.

is, that ignorance is the nurse of calumny; and true it is, that, thirty years ago, the people were not all equally well informed; but, behold the fate of Franklin and of Jefferson, and see in it the proud evidence of the virtue, as well as of the intelligence, of the American people! Where, now, are their revilers? What history or biography transmits the record of their libels? Far from being degraded in the eyes of their countrymen, or of the world, the fame of the republic itself is preserved in purity, by the honours conferred upon Franklin and Jefferson in life, and which await them from an admiring posterity?"

Such is the picture of the past; it is for the freemen of the present day to fill up their own portrait. If such a reply is worthy of an enlightened people; if it is honourable to the American character, that slander has not yet blasted the wreaths of civic virtue or military renown, in this republic; if the discomfiture of calumny is a prognostic of political health and durability; the day approaches, when the virtue and intelligence of the people are again to be tested: the same atrocious proscription, which was directed against Jefferson, is now employed to rob Jackson of his country's gratitude and honours: the same maledictions, which were impiously invoked as a punishment, if the people elected Jefferson, are now as shamefully pronounced as preferable to the election of Jackson: but it was a signal proof of the devotion and courage of the people, to trust in the mercy of Providence and the exercise of their own virtue; and it was a high mark of Providential approbation, that the election of Jefferson opened to the republic its happiest days. Do we seek such a triumph now? If we do, it is at our disposal!

Who, at the present day, believes the slanders upon Jefferson? Yet those slanders were as boldly uttered, and as laboriously vouched, as any that are now circulated against Jackson: who, in 1818, four years after he late war, said or surmised that Jackson was unworthy of honour or gratitude? wherever he went, he was then hailed with shouts of joy, and by all parties caressed as a patriot, who had added largely to his country's reputation; but, as soon as his countrymen evinced a desire to give him a distinctive mark of gratitude—as soon as his laurels cast a shade upon the pretensions of men, who had intrigued and trafficked, and who had already in fancy the presidency in their grasp—the vials of wrath were emptied upon him, with an unsparing hand; and he, who, if not a candidate, would have passed through life with undisputed fame, is assailed with every weapon that envy and malice can wield, because he is emphatically the candidate of the people, and not the creature of a faction, or coalition of factions!

Is it not so? Can any man of truth deny the fairness of this representation?

Who, indeed, thirty years hence, will credit the tales now told of Jackson, any more than we now believe the falsehoods, told thirty years ago, of Jefferson? Who will, *then*, believe, that the man, who never wore a sword except when his country was assailed, or held it longer than it was necessary for its defence, would draw it to enslave his countrymen? Who will, *then*, believe, that the people of the present age were so debased as to make military usurpation possible? Who will, *then*, believe, that he, who encountered death in every shape, to protect the defenceless widow and orphan, matron and maid, sought to sacrifice human beings wantonly? Who will, *then*, believe, that Jackson, whom *all the presidents* of the republic, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and John Q. Adams, had honoured with confidence or applause, as a patriot, and a great man, was a mere "military chieftain?" Who will, *then*, believe that Jackson had no talents or civil qualifications, when it is known that he held and was offered high civil trusts, under Washington, Madison and Monroe, with the full concurrence, in the last instance, of John Q. Adams himself? Who will, *then*, believe, that Andrew Jackson was a man governed by passion, and anxious for commotion, when it is known, that, when his election was defeated by a cabal, February 9, 1825, a moment at which the best men would naturally feel, if not utter, indignation, Andrew Jackson besought his friends to abstain from any manifestation of feeling for him, or discontent at what was done? Who, in 1858, will look back upon the incorruptible integrity and magnanimity of Andrew Jackson, during the events of the winter of 1824—5, without avowing, that he then gathered a wreath of glory, which will bloom and flourish, even after the laurels won upon the plain of Orleans shall cease to dazzle or adorn?

If, then, fellow citizens, such will be the sentiments of our successors, thirty years hence, as to Andrew Jackson, is there no solicitude amongst us, as to their sentence upon ourselves? Shall we emulate the virtue of our predecessors, as to Jefferson, or basely consent that Jackson shall be the first victim of a heartless proscription? Shall the people, who asked him to be their candidate, and made him a mark for every ruffian hand to strike at, slumber when he is assailed? Are we willing to tell the world, that like the Athenians in their ingratitude to the victor of Marathon, we have lost all sense of national obligation and personal feeling?

Do not suppose that we doubt your virtue, or under-rate your

intelligence; let it not be thought, that we apprehend discomfiture: no! you have expressed your sense of the bargains of 1825, in tones not loud but deep; you have stript the party of Mr. Adams, of all the powers, which time and the constitution enabled you to take away; you have presented to the world an administration at variance with yourselves and the councils of the republic; you have chastised at the polls the blow aimed at your liberties in the capitol; and you will reduce the slanderers of Jackson, to the doom which befel the traducers of Jefferson!

But, it is not enough, that this should be done; the purity of our institutions, reverence for their founders, tenderness for our descendants, and our own honour and pride, all demand, that the example should be signal: else, what must be our shame and our fate! If we barely frighten the vampyre from one victim, it will seek, and glut itself with the blood of others; one ferocious faction will succeed another, sacrificing, as in Rome, the most public-spirited citizens, and leaving to the people the mere dregs of liberty!

We have told you, fellow citizens, that Andrew Jackson had received the confidence of Washington, Madison and Monroe, and the applause and encomiums of Jefferson and the elder Mr. Adams: it must also, be known to you, that the present president himself, when secretary of state, was the able and successful defender of Andrew Jackson, against all the accusations, in relation to the Seminole war and the occupation of Florida, which are now revived by Mr. Adams' partizans; nay, even after Mr. J. Q. Adams was chosen president, and of course foresaw another struggle with general Jackson, he extolled him—not, fellow citizens, as a mere soldier, but as a man “of whose *worth, talents, and services*, no one entertained a higher or more respectful sense, than” Mr. Adams himself—as a man “whose name was closely associated with the glory of his country.” Great encomiums, indeed, pronounced by a rival, and strongly contrasted with the calumnious aspersions now flung at general Jackson by Mr. Adams' partizans! encomiums, which we could gladly attribute to a generous and noble spirit, did we not know that present proscription is guided by the intimate associates of Mr. Adams himself.

We will not now, however, contrast the deliberate declarations of Mr. J. Q. Adams with the intemperate language of his partizans, in relation to the character and conduct of General Jackson; at another moment we shall execute that duty: but we now lay before you the dispassionate opinions of the late presidents Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, expressed when the conduct and capacity of general Jackson were the objects of their scrutiny as well as of public fame.

As to the sentiments of Thomas Jefferson, respecting general Jackson, they have been long known to his countrymen: Mr. Jefferson considered him the most fit person to be put in nomination by the republican party, after the restoration of the dynasty of 1798: he declared "General Jackson is a clear-headed, strong-minded man, and has more of the Roman in him than any man now living:" in the letter which we now lay before you, he calls general Jackson "an undeviating patriot" as well as a "high military character," holding a high place in his esteem, with Washington, Franklin, Fayette, &c.

To the letter of Mr. John Adams, however, as the sentiments of that gentleman are now for the first time made known to the people, we ask particular regard: Mr. Adams says not only that he had read the biography of general Jackson, but that he had been "attentive to his actions and character;" that he considered him "one of the greatest military characters that North America had produced;" that "no present of the kind could be more acceptable, than the bust of this GREAT MAN, TO WHOM WE ARE ALL SO DEEPLY INDEBTED;" and that he would "preserve the PRECIOUS MONUMENT with care, FOR THE CONTEMPLATION OF HIS POSTERITY."

.....Such, fellow-citizens, is the emphatic language of the father of the present president: could any eulogium be more honourable? Could Mr. Adams have had any motive to pronounce such an encomium, but his own regard for merit? Would Mr. Adams have pronounced it unless he considered the applause fully deserved? Was he not a man, who rarely eulogized, and who closely scanned the acts and motives of public characters?

.....Such are the portraits of Gen. Jackson, which, in 1820, were drawn from the life, with the pencil of truth, by the two distinguished individuals, who, although long separated on earth, soon after departed in company to heaven!

.....Contemplate those portraits closely; compare them with the vile caricatures, which a consciousness of their own depravity enables so many to paint in colours characteristic only of themselves; and say, whether the reputation of the republic, in the eyes of the world, does not demand a signal demonstration of your sense of the beauty of the one, and the infamy of the other.

JOSEPH WORRELL,
WM. DUNCAN,
WM. BOYD,
HENRY TOLAND,
JOHN WURTS,
WM. J. DUANE,
WM. J. LEIPER,
CH. S. COXE,
TH. M. PETTIT.

Committee of Correspondence.

SEP 25 1845

July 26, 1828.

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