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PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

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HISTORY, CHARACTER, AND POSITION.

WITH A PORTRAIT.

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JOHN TYLER.

THE primary object of this publication is to repel the calumny which has been heaped upon John Tyler, and to disabuse the public mind in reference to his character, history, and position—his aims, and the purposes of his administration. Up to the period when Mr. Clay arrayed the majority of the twenty-seventh Congress against President Tyler, the public career of no eminent man in the nation had commanded respect more universal, or admiration more uniform and sincere. Consistent in every act of his life, devoted to those sound republican doctrines which have ever been cherished by the democracy of Virginia, unambitious except to promote the good of his country, he has illustrated all the virtues which can dignify and adorn the character of an American statesman. When called by an act of Providence to the executive chair, he carried with him those principles which had been the guide of his life, and an unalterable purpose to administer the government in strict conformity with their spirit and tendency.

But how were his patriotic intentions met by the party which had placed him in power?

Sustaining cordially every principle which he avowed before the election, he has, in return, received no support from that party since that event. Unchanged in a single sentiment, he has been treated as a traitor. Animated by the most sincere devotion to the welfare of his country, he has been thwarted in every measure for that object. Anxious to relieve the public distress, his plans have been consigned to the undisturbed dust of committee-rooms. Ready to co-operate with the co-ordinate branches of the government in making laws required for the public service, he has had those laws thrust upon him in unnecessary connexion with provisions that contravene his sense of duty. Earnestly pressing upon Congress for action upon the great subjects that interest the people, he was met either by a spirit of indifference, or a fixed determination to exert that action in such a way only as to leave no alternative but disapprobation, or an open departure from the known principles of his conduct through life. Vetoes have been courted by clauses and provisos not required by the object of the measure in hand, and not demanded by the people; and bills were studiously framed in known hostility to opinions avowed both by himself and General Harrison before their election to office, and passed under all the solemnities of legislation, in order that, if approved, he might be accused of inconsistency, or, if disapproved, he might be charged with defeating a favourite measure of the people. Congress was first

trained into a general burst of indignation, decide which way he would; and an affiliated press was ready to take up the cry, and sound its fiendish yells from one end of the Union to the other. The political annals of the country furnish no parallel to the abuse heaped upon President Tyler, in point of coarseness, malignity, and habitual disregard of decency, and the ordinary courtesies and proprieties of society, both in Congress and by a large portion of the Whig press. Every opprobrious epithet in the copious vocabulary of the ribald orators and writers has been applied to him in the most unsparing manner. There has been, especially, a mingled coarseness and cordiality in the vituperation of Congress, that betoken the earnestness of the assailants, and the depth from which such muddy waters were drawn. He has been ruthlessly charged with hypocrisy, treachery, feebleness, imbecility—with abandoning his party and betraying his friends. This avalanche of abuse has been cast upon President Tyler merely because he has refused his sanction to bills ostensibly introduced for popular and desirable objects, but into which clauses have been purposely thrust which are not required by their spirit, but which directly violate the avowed opinions upon which both he and President Harrison came into office; and the history of these transactions resting almost solely with a venal press interested to give them a false colouring, and the distinguished object of these base slanders being himself excluded, by his

position, from the privilege of self-defence, the people of the United States, ever generous to the persecuted, and ever true to the right when fully understood, have been generally misled by the grossest misrepresentations.

Upon this statement of facts, the question naturally arises, What adequate motive could exist for such flagrant injustice? Why should the chief magistrate, fresh from the hands of the people that made him, the very form and pressure of the time, the direct concentrated expression of the popular will, ere he had scarcely doffed the candidate's robes, be thus badgered upon questions concerning which he had a right to consider that the people had decided by electing him, and forced into an attitude of hostility to measures which he, as well as their projectors, wished to be carried for the good of the country, for the evident purpose of casting upon him the odium of their defeat? Why, after entreating them all frankly on the score of old friendship, and some of them pointedly on the score of past favours, not to embody in the Bank Bill any of the objectionable features which he could not approve without inconsistency with the whole tenour of his past life, and which, having been so recently submitted to the people, he had a right to consider, by his election, had been repudiated by them—why, after the most indefatigable efforts to conciliate the conflicting views of different individuals on this subject, and suggesting a plan of a Bank which would have answer-

ed confessedly every important purpose, and which, being within the limits of the strictest construction of the Constitution, would have inspired public confidence, by its permanence, its unquestioned privileges, and its adaptation to the exigencies of the times—why, after all this, and many more proposals and concessions were made, evincing the most benevolent and conciliatory spirit, and the most sincere and fervent devotion to the public good on the part of President Tyler, did the majority in Congress uniformly and pertinaciously refuse to present for his approval any Bank Bill that did not contain provisions that they knew he could not consistently sanction? Why thus stab the measures they professed to love? Why thus insist on powers being conferred by that bill which they knew that President Tyler and President Harrison both had declared to be unconstitutional before their election, and which the people, by electing them, had declared to be unconstitutional also! The answer to these startling questions is found *in the new and unexpected relations created among the aspirants to the presidency, by the constitutional succession of Mr. Tyler to that exalted position.* General Harrison was pledged to but one term of service, and, during his administration, Mr. Clay had relied upon the official patronage of the government being devoted to the promotion of his election. Whether the ambitious views of Mr. Clay would have been favoured by General Harrison, if he had lived, to the injury of

other equally eminent and meritorious competitors, need not now be discussed ; suffice it to say, that President Tyler, upon his accession to the office, did not deem it his duty to show any such partiality, nor did he consider it becoming in him, being under no pledges on the subject, and occupying his position only as a substitute to another, to forestall the popular will by consenting or declining to be a candidate hereafter, and for the first time, in reality, for the Presidency of the United States. The moment this aspect of things was exhibited, and Mr. Clay discovered that President Tyler would not select him, as he would not any one, from the several distinguished aspirants, as his favourite candidate for the Presidential chair, the senator from Kentucky, possessing the personal devotion of a large portion of the majority in Congress, and frightening the rest into his projects by his control over measures deemed for the public interest, assumed an absolute dictatorship in that body ; forced into the Bank Bill, in every form in which it was presented, the objectionable features alluded to ; instilled with his own hand the fatal poison that he knew must kill what he professed to love, and ruthlessly prolonged the agonies of public distress, rather than that President Tyler should be honourably and consistently placed in a situation to participate in the slightest degree in the credit of relieving it.

These facts we propose to demonstrate ; but we will, in the first place, inquire who and what is Presi-

dent Tyler, against whom such a bitter malignity has been manifested, and such a foul conspiracy formed.

JOHN TYLER, President of the United States, was born March 29, 1790, in the county of Charles City, and State of Virginia; was educated at William and Mary College; finished his study of law under the direction of the celebrated Edmund Randolph; was admitted to the bar in 1809, in the nineteenth year of his age, and was elected to the Legislature, by the almost unanimous vote of his native county, in 1811, when he attained his twenty-first year. He was successively elected, with equal equanimity, to the Legislature until the winter of 1815-16, when, by joint-ballot of the Legislature, and with the loss of only fifteen votes in the two houses, consisting of two hundred and forty-two members, he was chosen a member of the Privy Council of State. In the fall of 1816 he was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the United States, from the Richmond district, and continued to serve in that house until the year 1821, when, by reason of ill health, he declined a re-election. In 1823 he was again elected to the Legislature of Virginia by the citizens of his native county, and served till the winter of 1825, when he was chosen Governor of Virginia for one year, and in 1826 he was re-elected to the same office by a unanimous vote. Early in the year 1827 he was chosen a senator in Congress, and was re-elected to that elevated station in 1833, and continued to serve until 1836; during

which time he was elected President pro tem. of the Senate, when, in consequence of his being unable to reconcile certain instructions of the Legislature then given to his sense of constitutional obligation, he resigned three unexpired years of his term, and went into retirement, in which he remained until elected Vice-president of the United States in 1840, with the exception of one session's service in the Legislature in 1838, from the county of James City. He was run as Vice-president on the Harrison ticket in 1836, and also on that of Judge White. He was inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1841, into the Vice-presidency, and upon the death of General Harrison, on the 4th of April following, he succeeded to the Presidency, by virtue of the provisions of the Constitution. Thus it will be seen that he has enjoyed the singular honour of having had conferred upon him every political office in the gift of the people of his native state, and, what is quite as much to his credit, he never sought any of the stations to which he has been so honourably elevated. It is also to be observed, that he has never owed his stations to executive appointments, but uniformly to the people direct.

Having thus given a brief sketch of his life, let us take a cursory review of his character, conduct, and opinions.

Kindness of heart, gentleness of disposition, and nobleness of nature have been his distinguishing characteristics throughout his whole life. As a boy at school, he was the favourite of his playmates; as a young lawyer in practice, he was proverbially the

friend of the unfortunate, and choosing always the side of the friendless and the accused, he was universally recognised as their standing advocate ; possessing, as a speaker, great power over the emotions of the heart, he was almost universally successful in his philanthropic exertions. As a legislator, he was the enemy of oppression, and was always foremost in demanding that most difficult of all things to get at the hands of government, private justice ; and, as in the case of Douthat, he was uniformly first in zeal, and unrivalled in eloquence, in the cause of suffering humanity. Indeed, most gentle, blameless, and amiable has been his private character through a well-spent life ; and until he fell under the displeasure of Mr. Clay, no one dared to hint that it was otherwise.

As a politician, he has always been of the Democratic school, but inclined to moderate measures. Knowing that our system of government is based upon compromises, he is not willing to sap its foundation by tearing one stone out after another. Faithful to party so long as party is faithful to the country, he possesses the moral courage to abandon it when wrong, in the face of the bitterest slander ; recognising his obligations to the popular will, he does not hesitate, when it violates his sense of duty, between that duty and the sacrifice of place, power, and every consideration of self-interest. When called upon and instructed by the Legislature of Virginia, in 1836, to vote for the celebrated expunging resolutions, which he considered as violating that

clause in the Constitution which requires the Senate "to *keep* a journal of its proceedings, and to *publish it from time to time*," he respectfully refused to comply, and resigned three unexpired years of his term, in a letter to that Legislature full of indignant eloquence. He says :

"I should be afraid, after performing such a deed, if Virginia is as she once was (and I do not doubt it), to return within her limits. The execrations of her people would be thundered in my ears ; the soil which had been trod by her heroes and statesmen would furnish me no resting-place. I should feel myself guilty, most guilty ; and however I might succeed in concealing myself from the sight of men, I could not, in my view of the subject, save myself from the upbraidings of my own perjured conscience. How could I return to mix among her people, to share their hospitality and kindness, with the declaration on my lips, 'I have violated my oath of office, and, sooner than surrender my place in the Senate, have struck down the Constitution?'"

Does this show a fondness for office at the expense of his conscience, or a lack of firmness to do his duty under the most trying circumstances ?

Firm, faithful, and consistent as a party politician, he has never wanted independence to differ from that party, when the good of his country and the dictates of his conscience required it. Upon the occasion of the assumption of power by President Jackson to appoint a minister to the Sublime Porte without consulting the Senate, Mr. Tyler, who was then a friend of the administration, was not, like the rest, whipped in to acquiesce in this dangerous stretch of presidential prerogative, but solemnly protested against it in a speech before the Senate, in which he says :

“ Shall I displease the President by doing so? If I do, I cannot help it. But I claim to follow in the footsteps of his example, and bright and glorious is that example. When he exercised his veto over certain bills during the last session of Congress, he had my most unqualified applause. I have seen much in his career to applaud. The patriot who has shed his blood on the embattled plain in behalf of his country, will not hesitate to approve the effort which is made to save the Constitution from the effect of an error into which he may have fallen. He ratifies no error of ours. The two houses of Congress, no doubt, with solemn convictions of both its expediency and constitutionality, pass a bill which, in his estimation, infringes on the Constitution: with Roman firmness, he forbids its becoming a law. Shall we rival this example, or shall we be less faithful to the trust confided to us?”

* * * * *

“ It is our duty, Mr. President, under all circumstances, and howsoever situated, to be faithful to the Constitution. *Esto perpetua* should be the motto of all in regard to that instrument, and more emphatically those into whose hands it is committed by the parties to the compact of union. Sir, parties may succeed, and will succeed each other; stars that shine with brilliancy to-day may be struck from their spheres to-morrow; convulsion may follow convulsion; the battlements may rock about us, and the storm rage in its wildest fury, but while the Constitution is preserved inviolate, the liberties of the country will be secure. When we are asked to lay down the Constitution upon the shrine of party, our answer is, the price demanded is too great. If required to pass over its violation in silence, we reply, that to do so would be infidelity to our trust, and treason to those who sent us here.”

Mr. Tyler has on all occasions shown himself the friend of liberty, and of a just balance of all the ruling powers of government; he has unflinchingly opposed every assumption of power not recognised by the Constitution, and resisted the natural ten-

dency of one co-ordinate department of the government to trench upon another, and of each to make points with the rest. When President Jackson assumed to control the public purse, by forcing the removal of the public deposits from the United States Bank, and displaced a Secretary of the Treasury in order to procure its accomplishment, Mr. Tyler was among the first to raise his voice, in the Senate, against this abuse of power. Though opposed on constitutional grounds, to that institution as it was then organized, and put upon a committee of investigation into its affairs, he possessed the candour and magnanimity to render it full justice in his able report; and when, a short time after, the subject above alluded to came before the Senate, he was not blinded, as men of narrow minds would be, by his objections to the Bank, to the error of the President, but nobly vindicated its rights, and clearly seeing that error, boldly and indignantly reprovod it. On the subject of the Bank, the following are his sentiments, delivered on that occasion :

“Is the presidential power only to be considered dangerous when he is at the head of an army? Patronage is the sword and the cannon by which war may be made on the liberty of the human race. Is power won only by armies? money is more powerful than armed men. So long as the spirit of liberty exists, there is no danger from the last. If driven from the plains, she has still a retreat in the mountains. In their gorges and fastnesses she may still make good her cause; and not until those gorges and fastnesses shall be filled with the bodies of the dead, will her glorious flag be struck. But what can brave men do to guard against the effects of money and patronage?

They work silently, and almost unseen; they make sure their advances by corruption; they gradually undermine the public virtue; the match is then applied, and the mine is then safely sprung, and the edifice of human liberty scattered into atoms.

“I am against the Bank, not because it deals in exchanges to the amount of \$250,000,000. No, sir: I should as soon complain of the ocean for furnishing facilities of intercommunication between distant nations, or of the ships which bear the rich freights of industry from our own to distant lands, as to complain of any other agent employed in furnishing similar facilities to the exchanges of the country. Nor am I insensible to the beneficial influences it has had over the currency of the country; but I oppose it because it is unconstitutional, and that is reason enough. If the Constitution authorized its creation, no man, with the experience of the past, could well doubt the propriety of a well-regulated and well-guarded bank, due reference being had to the condition of the banking system; but no benefit, however great, should lead us to make an inroad on the Constitution, except by amendment, in the manner pointed out by that instrument; although no system resting on the state banks for its execution can be as well executed as through the agency of the United States Bank, yet, sir, I would prefer to rest on them to acting without constitutional sanction. If my opinion could have any influence over the country, my advice would be, restore the deposits and amend the Constitution. Such amendment is called for by numerous considerations. This contest has continued long enough: its agitation has never failed to produce disastrous results; whatever affects the currency affects every interest of society. Why shall this dispute be periodically continued? Let it be settled in the one way or other by the states, and settled permanently. The question of bank or no bank has been always made a political stepping-stone—ambition seeks to vault into the presidential saddle through its influence. Sir, it is the last subject which ought to be handed over to politicians: there is too much of distress produced by its agitation; the interests of the country are too nearly connected with the currency to be eternally made the subject of political speculations.”

No fact in the life of Mr. Tyler is susceptible of clearer proof than his uniform hostility to a Bank of the United States. During the first session that he served in the Legislature of Virginia, he introduced a resolution censuring Mr. Brant for having disobeyed the instructions of a previous legislature in voting in the Senate for the Bank charter in 1811; and Mr. Giles for having denied the obligations of instructions. The resolution was passed with some modifications, and those distinguished senators never recovered from the blow.

He was a member of a committee of the House of Representatives appointed to examine the concerns of the Bank, in 1818. A resolution was introduced into the house to repeal its charter; and the following extracts from Mr. Tyler's speech on that resolution evince not only his firmness, his conscientiousness, and his integrity, but also a most remarkable forecast in regard to the subsequent conduct and ultimate fate of that corrupt and unfortunate institution :

“From the moment,” said Mr. Tyler, “that the speaker thought proper to confer on me the honour of an appointment on the committee whose report is now under consideration, up to this time, I have felt the responsibility of my situation. It is known to you, Mr. Chairman, that I represent a district deeply interested in the decision of the question now pending. It is known to this committee that it became my duty to present a petition, signed by many of my most respected constituents, the other day, to the house, adverse to the course which I shall pursue. I can, however, sir, look neither to the right nor the left. *My own personal popularity can have no influence over me when the dictates of my best judgment, and the obligations of an oath, re-*

quire of me a particular course. Under such circumstances, whether I sink or swim on the tide of popular favour, is to me a matter of inferior consideration. It is my misfortune, also, to follow in this debate the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Lowndes), whose views are, in the general, most luminous and correct. Upon this question I am forced to differ from him. Sir, the gentleman has dwelt upon the benefits arising from the Bank. He has presented you alone the fair side of the painting. In many of his views I concur with him, but it becomes us to examine both sides of the painting. He has represented this institution as vitally connected with the prosperity of the country. Its destruction is to be attended with the most fatal consequences. And are we come to this? Shall we be forced to countenance speculation and fraud for fear of encountering the evils of putting down this system? Is it so completely interwoven with our interests as to endanger those interests by its destruction? Does this government, indeed, rest on this corporation for stability and support? I cannot believe it. We are not reduced to such a state of degradation. Sir, if the gentleman from South Carolina had exerted his talents for the purpose of devising a scheme by which we could have successfully extricated ourselves from our present embarrassing situation, I cannot but think, with all due respect to that gentleman, that he would have much more beneficially employed those talents than by the course he has thought proper to pursue. If the evils of this system, as disclosed in the report and testimony, be not sufficient to induce us to direct a *scire facias*, in the name of Heaven, I demand to know what would be considered an inducement?"

Having disposed of these things, Mr. Tyler proceeded to the subject more immediately under consideration, "Whether it be proper to issue a *scire facias* against the bank;" which divided itself into two heads: namely, whether the charter had been so violated as to ensure a forfeiture? and, if so, were it expedient to exact the penalty? "The decision of the first," said Mr. Tyler, "would preclude me from an inquiry into the second. For, sir, *inasmuch AS I BELIEVE THE CREATION OF*

THIS CORPORATION TO BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL, I cannot, without a violation of my oath, hesitate to repair a breach in the Constitution, when an opportunity presents itself of doing so without violating the public faith."

"There remains now but one branch of inquiry with those who do not think the creation of this bank an unconstitutional act, viz., Is it expedient to direct a *scire facias*, or, in other words, to put down this corporation? I contend that it is. *For one, I enter my protest against the banking system as conducted in this country: a system not to be supported by any correct principle of political economy. A gross delusion, the dream of a visionary: a system which has done more to corrupt the morals of society than anything else; which has introduced a struggle for wealth, instead of that honourable struggle which governs the actions of a patriot, and makes ambition virtue; which has made the husbandman spurn his cottage, and introduced a spirit of luxury at variance with the spirit of our institutions. I call upon the warm advocates of banking now to surrender their errors. Shall I take them by the hand and lead them through the cities? Bankruptcy meets us at every step, ruin stares us everywhere in the face. Shall I be told of the benefits arising to commerce from the concentration of capital? Away with the delusion: experience has exposed its fallacy. True, for a moment it has operated as a stimulus; but, like ardent spirit, it has produced activity and energy but for a moment; relaxation has followed, and the torpor of death has ensued. When you first open your bank, much bustle ensues: a fictitious goddess, pretending to be wealth, stands at the door, inviting all to enter and receive accommodation. Splendid palaces arise—the ocean is covered with sails—but some alteration in the state of the country takes place, and when the thoughtless adventurer, seated in the midst of his family in the imaginary enjoyment of permanent security, sketches out to himself long and halcyon days, his prospects are overshadowed, and misery, ruin, and bankruptcy make their appearance in the shape of bank curtailments. If this be true, and I appeal to the knowledge of all men for its truth, I demand to know if you can put down this system too soon?"*

“I entreat gentlemen to arrest the evil now that they can. Sir, I was astonished at the argument of the honourable gentleman from South Carolina. He contended that the great object of the charter had been answered; that every facility had been afforded to the operations of the treasury; and, therefore, that no forfeiture had ensued. What is this but to say to the Bank, Take care to be only the glove to the hand of the treasury, facilitate its schemes and operations, and do whatever else you please, you shall not be arrested? Swindle and cheat, deceive the unthinking people of this country, without mercy and without end; only take care to secure the smiles of the treasury, and all shall be smooth and well. Is it not actually granting the Bank a patent to offend? It is only necessary that it should apply at the patent-office, and receive its license under the sign-manual of Dr. Thornton. I cannot listen to such a position. I call upon the warmest advocates of this system, although I am satisfied that that call is in vain, to unite with me in this measure. You have been disappointed in your wishes—in our expectations. Instead of a system abounding in blessings, it has been converted into an instrument of corruption. Cold, unfeeling speculation has usurped the place of honest dealing. Are we not too young to encourage such a state of things? Our republic can only be preserved by a strict adherence to virtue. *It is our duty, if we consult our eternal good, to put down this first instance of detected corruption, and thereby preserve ourselves from its contamination. This Bank is already interwoven with the affections of many: its influence will become every day more and more extensive. If we suffer this opportunity to escape, we may sigh over our unhappy condition, but that will be the only privilege which will be left us. Let my fate be what it may, I have discharged my duty, and am regardless of the consequences.*”

Having thus given a brief exposition of his conduct and sentiments on the Bank question, let us glance at his course on the other great topic of the times, the Tariff.

In forming the Compromise Act of 1833, all the great, patriotic, and leading minds in political life

were zealously engaged, and happily succeeded in "dissipating the gloom that hung upon the country." It is well known that, before this fortunate idea was hit upon, the friends of an ultra-protective system were urging matters to a great extremity, and forcing the Southern States, and particularly South Carolina, into an attitude of almost open resistance to the Union. Mr. Tyler, distressed to see his country distracted by such dissensions, and feeling the most intense anxiety for its restoration to peace and harmony, made an eloquent speech in the Senate, in which he gave a most able exposition of the nature of our government, the basis of its organization, the provisions of its Constitution, and the spirit of its institutions, and was, in fact, *the first to suggest the very plan of Compromise* which was afterward so happily adopted. Opposed to a Tariff merely for protection of domestic industry, but in favour of a Tariff for revenue which may incidentally afford such protection, he appealed to the South for the necessity of the latter, and to the North for the relinquishment of the former, saying:

"His (Mr. Tyler's) mode of preserving the Union was by restoring mutual confidence and affection among the members; by doing justice, and obeying the dictates of policy. The President has pointed out the mode in his opening message. We had been informed that there was an excess of \$6,000,000 in the treasury. I would destroy that excess, yet I would not rashly and rudely lay hands on the manufacturer, if I had the power to do so. While giving peace to one section, I would not produce discord in another. It would be to accomplish nothing, to appease discord in one section and produce it in another.

'The manufacturers desire time—give them time—ample time. If they would come down to the revenue standard, and abandon the protective policy, I would allow them full time. I present these suggestions, for I am anxious to see this vexed question adjusted.'

Here we find the basis of the Compromise Act first suggested by Mr. Tyler, and afterward so happily matured by the Senate.

It has been usual to ascribe to Mr. Clay the chief merit of accomplishing this great conciliatory measure, so happily hit upon at that critical juncture; but though he is entitled to the praise of having aided it with all his influence, the credit of originating it belongs to Mr. Tyler; and it is believed that his brilliant, and eloquent, and patriotic speech in the debate in the Senate on that occasion produced more effect upon that distinguished body than any other of the speeches, and led, more than anything else, to the glorious results whose benign influences are felt to this day.

The delicate position in which the proposed enactments would have placed South Carolina, and the fatal influence they would have had upon the sovereignty of the states, as guaranteed by the Constitution, aroused all Mr. Tyler's chivalrous and generous emotions, and called forth all the resources of his vigorous mind to defend that great palladium of our liberty. We have not room for his logical argument and sound exposition of this important subject, but can only make a few extracts. Speaking comparatively of the two systems of government, he says:

“Mr. President,” said he, “if any man would run a comparison between a federal system, such as we have, and a consolidated system, he could not fail to express his warmest admiration at the beauty of the first. When I contemplate the difference between them, it has struck me with astonishment that any portion of this Union should desire to see a consolidated government established on the ruins of a federal republic—that beautiful system, which, if truly carried out, was calculated to render us the happiest and most powerful people on the face of the earth. He could compare it to nothing so properly as the solar system. It was the sun (the Federal Government), giving light, heat, and attraction to the planets revolving round it in their proper orbits. No two could come in contact with each other; they rolled on in ceaseless splendour so long as they preserved the course pointed out by the Constitution. It was impossible for them to come into collision either with the government or with each other so long as they were confined within their proper orbits. The people of the states were attached to the state governments, to whom they looked for protection, and to the Federal Government, which guaranteed the safety of the whole. The state governments exercise a paternal sway: they regulate the domestic concerns, prescribe the rules of property, the punishment of crimes, the internal police, and throw the ægis of protection over the family circle. To this are confided the great powers of peace and war: the sword and the purse are here. Power, however, often forgets right. The states act as sentinels upon the watchtower, to give the alarm on the approach of tyranny; and, being organized into governments, stand ready, after all other measures shall fail, and the only alternative is slavery or resistance.”

Alluding, in his peroration, to South Carolina, he says:

“But regard it as exclusively a South Carolina question, what prevents you from yielding to her wishes? Pride alone stands in the way—false pride. It is the worst, the

most pernicious of counsellors. Against its influence Lord Chatham and Edmund Burke raised their voices in the British Parliament; but the reply was, that it would not do to make terms with revolted colonies; and a besotted ministry lost to the English crown its brightest jewel. It is idle to talk of degrading government by yielding terms. This government is strong—South Carolina weak. The strong man may grant terms to the weak, and, by so doing, give the highest evidence of magnanimity. All history teems with instances of the evils springing from false pride in governments. Bruised thrones, dismembered empires, crushed republics—these are its bitter fruits. Let us throw it from us, and try the efficacy of that engine which tyrants never use: that great engine which would save Poland to Russia, Ireland to England, and South Carolina, not as a province, with her palmetto trailing in the dust, but as a free, sovereign, and independent state, to this confederacy—the engine of redress. This is my advice.

“But my advice is disregarded: you rush on to the contest; you subdue South Carolina; you drive her citizens into the morasses, where Marion and Sumter found refuge; you level her towns and cities in the dust; you clothe her daughters in mourning, and make helpless orphans of her rising sons—where, then, is your glory? Glory comes not from the blood of slaughtered brethren. Gracious God! is it necessary to urge such considerations on an American Senate? Whither has the genius of America fled? We have had darker days than the present, and that genius has saved us. Are we to satisfy the discontents of the people by force; by shooting some and bayoneting others? Force may convert freemen into slaves; but, after you have made them slaves, will they look with complacency on their chains? When you have subdued South Carolina, lowered her proud flag, and trampled her freedom in the dust, will she love you for the kindness you have shown her? No: she will despise and hate you. Poland will hate Russia un-

til she is again free ; and so would it be with South Carolina. I would that I had but moral influence enough to save my country in this hour of peril. If I know myself, I would peril all, everything that I hold most dear, if I could be the means of stilling the agitated billows. I have no such power : I stand here manacled in a minority whose efforts can avail but little. You who are the majority have the destinies of the country in your hands. If war shall grow out of this measure, you are alone responsible. I will wash my hands of the business. Rather than give my aid I would surrender my station here, for I aspire not to imitate the rash boy who set fire to the Ephesian dome. No, sir : I will lend no aid to the passage of this bill. I had almost said that 'I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon, than such a Roman.' I will not yet despair : Rome had her Curtius, Sparta her Leonidas, and Athens her band of devoted patriots ; and shall it be said that the American Senate contains not one man who will step forward to rescue his country in this her moment of peril ? Although that man may never wear an earthly crown or sway an earthly sceptre, eternal fame shall wreath an evergreen around his brow, and his name shall rank with those of the proudest patriots of the proudest climes."

Having thus exhibited the conduct and opinions of Mr. Tyler while he was a representative of the people in their various deliberative bodies, let us examine the sentiments that he avowed and the pledges that he gave while a candidate for the Vice-presidency.

The two most prominent subjects that agitated the country during that canvass, and continue still to shake it from one end to the other, are the currency and the revenue, with their collateral dependances, a National Bank or Exchequer, and a Pro-

pective Tariff. We have seen that Mr. Tyler had been uniformly opposed to the charter of a National Bank on constitutional grounds, but admitted its great utility, and his desire that the Constitution should be amended so as to meet the exigencies of the country in this respect. He voted against a re-charter of the Bank in 1832, and never, in the course of his whole life, had he said or done anything that could be tortured into a doubt in his mind of the total inability of Congress, under the Constitution, to charter a bank to act within the limits of the states without their consent. When called upon by the Henrico Committee, in the fall of 1840, during the presidential canvass, for his opinions on this subject, he frankly replied, "There is not in the Constitution any express grant of power for such purpose, and it could never be constitutional to exercise that power, save in the event the powers granted to Congress could not be carried into effect without resorting to such an institution;" and referred them, for a more full exposition of his views, to his speeches and vote above alluded to. Now we put it to every candid mind to say, whether an issue could be more fairly put before the people than this? Through his whole life, repeatedly, in public and in private, in his speeches and conversation, up to the very moment when the votes were cast for him as Vice-president, he had invariably declared that no power was granted to Congress to charter a bank to act in the states without their

consent; and in this opinion he was sustained by General Harrison, for he used the very words of that lamented patriot in his reply to the Henrico Committee; yet they were both elected to their respective offices by a vast majority of the people of the United States, and thus had the very best evidence which could be given of the expectation and wish of that people, that, as magistrates, they would be governed by the same principles which they had avowed as candidates.

Yet one of the gravest charges in the long catalogue of allegations against President Tyler is that of treachery to the party which elected him, founded upon his veto of the two wretchedly inefficient Bank Bills at the extra session. Now we have shown, in the preceding pages, that, throughout his whole political life, Mr. Tyler has been an unwavering opponent of a National Bank. Upon this point there can be no dispute. His sentiments, often avowed, were known to the convention which nominated, and to the people who elected him. Nay, his hostility to such an institution, on constitutional grounds, was urged upon the people as a reason for his support. In an address made to the people by a State Whig Convention of Virginia, it was stated, in language the most emphatic, that his uncompromising hostility to a bank was one of the strongest inducements for the South to sustain his nomination.

We have shown that, up to the period of his accession to the presidency, Mr. Tyler was a known

and uniform opponent of a National Bank. Congress convened on the last day of May, less than two months after the death of General Harrison. In his message at the opening of the session, Mr. Tyler avowed his readiness to co-operate with Congress in all measures necessary for the country, and declared his determination to conform his action to that of the Legislature in all cases where he could reconcile it to his sense of constitutional obligation.

Mr. Clay foresaw that the establishment of a bank, and the passage of the other measures which constituted the entire policy of the Whig party, with the co-operation of the President, would not only disarm him of weapons to contend with the Democrats, but very possibly place Mr. Tyler in such a position at the head of the Whigs as to make him a dangerous rival in the contest of 1844. He determined, therefore, to extort a veto on a Bank Bill, and thus separate the President from the Whig party. At an early day of the session, he procured the adoption of a resolution by the Senate, calling upon Mr. Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury, and his devoted friend, for a plan of a bank. The plan was presented: it was Mr. Ewing's own, with the exception of the main feature, the assent of the states for the establishment of branches, which was incorporated, as known to be indispensable to the executive sanction. The call being directly upon the secretary, President Tyler did not interfere with the details of the scheme, or

attempt to dictate in any manner, except merely to insist upon the principle of assent of the states.

The treasury plan was contumeliously spurned by Mr. Clay, and he reported to the Senate a bill for an oldfashioned bank—a bill which *he knew* the President could never sign, and which he did not wish or expect to become a law. After several weeks of discussion and management, Mr. Clay discovered that his bill could not pass the Senate in the form reported. A senator from South Carolina, and another from Maryland, both friendly to a bank, refused to vote for Mr. Clay's bill. He was greatly incensed at this contumacy, for he apprehended that such a modification as was necessary to its passage might secure the executive sanction. Determined, however, to carry the bill without yielding one inch of substantial ground, without conceding one iota of principle, he set about devising a plan which should obviate the objections of the senators above alluded to, and, at the same time, ensure the negative of the President. Mr. Rives had offered an amendment providing, as a condition precedent to the establishment of a branch in any state, that the consent of the Legislature should first be obtained. This was rejected through the influence of Mr. Clay. An amendment was then prepared by Mr. Clay, authorizing the directors of the Bank to establish branches in such states as did not express their dissent at the then next session of the Legislature; and, in case the Legislature did re-

fuse, then Congress might authorize the establishment of branches wherever the public interest seemed to require them. This proposition was exhibited to the President by a friend of Mr. Clay before it was offered in the Senate. Its insidious character was manifest to Mr. Tyler, and he repelled it at once as unsatisfactory and unfair, and as evading the true question at issue; and he avowed his preference for the original bill, as bold, direct, and manly, while this professed compromise was jesuitical and inexplicit. Having ascertained that this proposition could not remove the President's objections, and affecting to consider it as a liberal and generous concession, Mr. Clay procured its adoption. The bill was passed, and sent to the President. It was returned, with the objections of the executive, and so far Mr. Clay's plans were successful. His wish, as avowed in the Senate, was to adjourn without any farther effort to obtain a bank, and go before the people on the question. But his friends overruled him in this instance. Another bank was planned with a view to another veto, and Mr. Clay concurred in its passage with a knowledge that such would be its fate, and in the expectation that it would render the breach between Mr. Tyler and the Whig party final and fatal. The veto came, and the cabinet was dissolved at the dictation of Mr. Clay, and in the hope that the President would be unable to constitute another, and would thus be without the means of carrying

on the government, and, perhaps, be forced to resign. But the scheme failed. President Tyler found men honest, patriotic, and able to supply the places of the retiring members, and the machinery of the government was not impeded for an hour. Certainly, with these facts before them, a generous and intelligent people, even differing in sentiment from President Tyler, will cease to blame him for not suffering himself to be entrapped in the "heading" snares that were so insidiously laid in the path, and refusing to sign bank bills into which clauses and provisions were purposely and unnecessarily thrust, that, in his estimation, not only violated the Constitution, but expressly contravened the pledges upon which he came into power.

It is apparent, then, to every reflecting mind, that there must have been *some secret reason*, independent of the merits of the bank measure itself, which induced the Whig majority in Congress to persist so pertinaciously upon encumbering it with a provision authorizing the establishment of branches in the states without their consent, when no one was ignorant that such provision rendered it, in the opinion of the President, unconstitutional. Whence, upon any other supposition, the extraordinary infatuation which led the leaders of the Whig party to break with the President upon a point so trivial, and sacrifice, for so futile a purpose, all the fruits of their great victory? Why, with the fact staring them in the face, that not a single subscriber would

have been found for the stock of the new bank with the most propitious charter, and with the carcass of the old bank festering in its corruption before them, and tainting the very air they breathed, did they press upon the President the cruel alternative of being unrighteously denounced as a traitor for defeating a party measure, or signing, against his convictions of duty, a provision in that measure forcing the Bank upon the states, while, if it really was desired by the people, or even the party, that provision was entirely unnecessary, since consent could be granted by a simple vote? A rational explanation for conduct so singular, for sacrifices both of party and public interests so enormous, is to be found only in the view we have taken. It is only in the poisonous shade of personal ambition that such vast interests wither and perish. It is only at the shrine of personal aggrandizement that such hecatombs are sacrificed. It is the same spirit that has kept the leaders of the Whig party in Congress aloof from the President from the beginning, and led them to treat him with coldness and distrust. From the moment of his succession to office, and especially from the time when the bank vetoes gave them some pretext for such conduct, the whole body of Whig members of Congress, almost without exception, have repelled all his advances of kindness, withheld themselves studiously from his presence, heaped upon him all sorts of contumely in public debate, vilified him through their obsequious presses,

treated all his measures for the public good with contempt, and absolutely refused to give his administration any sort of countenance or support. How long will he be required to bear such indignities? and how long could he be expected to close his mind against suspicion, when a leader in the conspiracy even avowed the express intention of "heading" him, by forcing the Bank Bill before him with this obnoxious provision? Is this the kind of treatment he had a right to expect from them, not only as citizens and gentlemen, but partisans and prudent tacticians? Surely, if a party were bent on destruction, they could not have resorted to surer means, though, doubtless, they are blinded to that result by the infatuation of their personal idolatry for Mr. Clay.

It was reasonable to have anticipated that, during the recess after the extra session, the Whig members of Congress, having had time for reflection, would have retraced their steps, repaired the errors of the past, and manifested a wiser forecast for the future. An opportunity for reconciliation was offered by the President, with the utmost singleness and sincerity of purpose, in his opening message at the regular session, in his proposition for an Exchequer, and in the general tone and sentiments of that able paper. But how was it treated? Though the Exchequer plan was admitted by all sound business men to be just what the country wanted, it was contumeliously smothered in the

committee-rooms; its author was treated with the same studious coldness and distrust as before in private life, and vilified with the same violent abuse in public debate, and the quarrel was aggravated into an irreparable breach. The supply bills, demanded by the exigencies of the public service, were delayed, carped at, and reduced to the most parsimonious basis; and, to crown all, the Revenue Bill, which was to be the fountain of these niggardly supplies, was poisoned by the introduction of an incongruous and fatal ingredient, which it was well known would render it unfit for use, and force the President to its rejection. The distribution of the proceeds of the public lands was a measure which met the approbation of the President at a time when the treasury was full and unembarrassed, and no necessity existed of raising for its supply the tariff of duties above twenty per cent. Circumstances make a measure expedient at one time, when a change of circumstances render it inexpedient at another; and such a change had been so far foreseen and provided for in the distribution law itself, that it was made to declare that distribution should cease as soon as it should become necessary to raise the duties above the rate heretofore mentioned. Besides, the Compromise Act of 1833, which all the patriotic statesmen of the time united to send, with healing on its wings, over this great empire of vastly-diversified interests and conflicting sentiments, contemplates a permanent reduction of

the duties to twenty per cent., and an increase would be justified only by the sternest necessity, after all the available resources of the government had been found insufficient for its support. The very Congress that sent this bill to the President, requiring distribution, although they raised the duties above twenty per cent., is the same one that but a short time before sent him the Distribution Bill, with a clause requiring that distribution should cease if the duties were raised above that rate; and because he dared to maintain his consistency of opinion, while they had no respect for their own, they loaded him with reproaches, and endeavoured to make him odious with the people for adhering to the very sentiments they themselves were the first to adopt, as they were the first to abandon. Other serious objections existed to this bill, strangely compounded of revenue and appropriation. It united subjects that had no affinity, and, if allowed to grow into a precedent, would introduce into our national legislation the system of *log-rolling* which has brought many of the states to the brink of ruin in its connexion with their system of internal improvements, and, as the President well observes, cannot fail to prove "destructive of all wise and conscientious legislation." Indeed, the reason openly avowed for introducing the distribution clause into the Revenue Bill was, that the measure could not be carried without the aid of the friends of distribution; and who does not see that this is the same

principle which, blending wise and foolish projects into the same category, started railroads and canals in regions where they never will be wanted, in order to carry forward those that are unquestionably useful, leaving all of them unfinished, impoverishing the treasury, and destroying the public credit?

We have thus shown conclusively the truth of the propositions with which we set out, and developed the foul conspiracy of which it has been attempted to make President Tyler the victim. Whatever may have been his claims heretofore to popular favour; whatever predilections may have been felt for other distinguished individuals, or whatever pretensions they may possess to the highest office in the gift of the people, surely, if we know anything of that people, we can confidently say that the claims of President Tyler will not be regarded by them as having been diminished by these extraordinary transactions

The events of the late session of Congress are too fresh in the minds of the people to require recapitulation. The studious and continued indignity heaped upon President Tyler by the National Legislature has already awakened the popular reprobation, notwithstanding that almost every avenue to the public mind was preoccupied by his unrelenting enemies. But the progress of truth, though slow, is certain, and the scores of presses that have spontaneously sprung up in behalf of the administration in every section of the country will soon dissi-

pate the foul slanders that have been circulated against him.

The pure and unflinching *democracy* of Mr. Tyler is the distinguishing characteristic of his political life. His democracy is not that of party, but of principle: not wavering with the whim of the day, but stable as the rock of ages; not subservient to popular clamour, but firm to the public good; self-sacrificing, conscientious, unfaltering, devoted, hearty, and consistent. It is a democracy which will protect the people against the consequences of sudden popular ebullitions; and around which they may safely rally in cases of doubt and distress, in periods of darkness and error, and in times of tumult and confusion. It is a democracy to which the people may look with safety in the midst of distractions occasioned by sectional jealousies, and conflicts resulting from selfish aims of personal aggrandizement; and it is a temple of refuge to which they may fly and be protected, when those dissensions threaten the peace of the country by the mad spirit of partisan warfare. It is a democracy which stands immovable while popular feeling is swaying to and fro, but to which that feeling, sooner or later, will finally come as sure as the needle must, ultimately, point to the pole. By the standard of that democracy he has always stood firm: undaunted by the attacks of its enemies, and undismayed by the desertion of its friends; chosen always to bear it at the head of their ranks as their favourite

leader, when the people shake off their delusion, and return again to their duty with their accustomed cheerfulness and vigour. That time is now at hand. The people, distracted by ambitious and designing demagogues; tired of selfish leaders, who, by *ignus fatuus* lights of false democracy, have betrayed them into the swamp of error and the slough of despond, and beholding with mingled admiration and regret the statesman and patriot who, on high and lofty ground, is watching the beacon-lights of liberty and grasping the banner of pure democracy, are hastening rapidly to his side, and will soon exhibit an array that will daunt the hearts of his enemies, restore the failing confidence of the country, and re-establish its prosperity and happiness upon a firm and immutable basis.

Mr. Tyler's literary efforts evince genius, attainments, and accomplishments of the highest order. To purity of taste, elegance of diction, and strength of reasoning, he superadds the ornaments of a lively fancy, and a copious command of impressive and striking images. His eulogy on Jefferson is decidedly the best that was pronounced on the death of that illustrious man; and his address at the Randolph Macon College exhibits to great advantage his high classical attainments, his refined taste, and his superior talents as a chaste and elegant writer. It is rare to find such accomplishments surviving the rough ordeal of political strife; and when they are

seen, they never fail to command admiration and attract regard.

Not only is Mr. Tyler one of the most elegant writers in the country, but he is also one of its most fluent, eloquent, and brilliant orators. In happy, off-hand, extemporaneous speaking, he has seldom been equalled, and in more laboured and extended efforts he has but few rivals. While a senator in Congress, he took an active and prominent part in all the debates, and was uniformly listened to with great attention and profound respect. His manner is impressive on all occasions: affable in social intercourse, forcible in forensic efforts, and eloquent in public debate.

Having presented, briefly and imperfectly, some of the most prominent events and most striking peculiarities in the history and character of John Tyler, we appeal to you, the people of the United States, to say whether you will sustain your public servants in maintaining consistency of character, integrity of heart, and firmness of purpose, when assailed under the most trying circumstances; whether you will sanction the attempt to reduce your chief magistrate to the mere tool of a dictator in the Senate; whether you will justify a few party leaders, under the control of such a dictator, to prolong your sufferings merely to spite a rival for your favour, and to sport with your great interests as mere pawns in the game for the presidency! Will you suffer those leaders, if determined, in their idolatrous zeal, upon self-im-

molation under the Juggernaut car of party, to drag with them under its crushing wheels all those interests, and even the glorious Constitution itself? Will you see the ruthless tyranny of an inexorable majority, not of the people, but of their representatives merely, trample down the rights of all who may differ from them in opinion, and sacrifice the welfare of all parties to the trickery of maintaining their ascendancy and furthering the ambitious projects of their favourite; and thus succeed in reducing this great North American Republic to the condition of its South American neighbours, with whom the majority of to-day is the minority of to-morrow, and both alike are reckless of the general good, and stained alike with the best blood of their country? Are you prepared to submit to an oppression more fatal than the despotism of the autocrat of Russia—a despotism which affects masses rather than individuals, and which, if it does not send the offender to the deserts of Siberia, converts the whole country it misgoverns into a waste far more desolate and far more deplorable! If parties in this country go on much longer as they have done for the last few years, you will soon have occasion to regret even your independence: under the lash of present evils, you will sigh for even those of the past; under the sway of ignorant and heartless demagogues, you will pray for the more quiet rule of barons and of kings; with industry paralyzed, and the product of your fields rendered worthless by selfish party legislation

and party broils, you will have little to boast of over those despotic countries, whose territories are laid waste by the private feuds and ambitious projects of contending princes!

THE END

