

# The National Intelligencer,

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## WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

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FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

No. I.

### ON THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

The result of the votes of the Electors for a President and Vice-President have been so far ascertained as to render it certain that both Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr will have a majority of all the votes. At present, excluding the states of Kentucky and Tennessee, they stand thus:

For Thomas Jefferson	66
Aaron Burr	66
John Adams	65
C. C. Pinckney	64

There is no doubt that Mr. Jefferson will obtain all the votes in Kentucky and Tennessee, which will give him in the whole 73 votes; and it seems most probable that Mr. Burr will have the same number.

In this event, the choice of a President from the two will devolve upon the House of Representatives.

The Constitution Art. II. Sect. I. directs that

"The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority, and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose, by ballot, one of them for President; and if no person have a majority, then, from the five highest on the list, the said House shall, in like manner, choose the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote: a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. In every case, after the choice of the President, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the Vice-President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them, by ballot, the Vice-President."

And the act of Congress passed March 1, 1792, directs.

"That Congress shall be in session on the second Wednesday in February, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, and on the second Wednesday in February succeeding every meeting of the electors; and the said certificates, or so many of them as shall have been received, shall then be opened, the votes counted, and the persons who shall fill the offices of President and Vice-President ascertained and declared, agreeably to the constitution."

From these provisions of the constitution and the act of Congress it results that on the second Wednesday in February the votes of the Electors are to be counted, and that in case there be two candidates possessed of the same number of votes, both having a majority of all the electoral votes, the House of Representatives shall elect one of them as President. In this act the house is to vote by states, and the concurrence of a majority of all the states, that is of nine states, is required to constitute the Election.

If the voice of the people of America be at all regarded, Mr. Jefferson will be preferred to Mr. Burr; for it is a fact not questioned by any man, that the people and legislatures who chose the electors, as well as the electors themselves, that voted for Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr, without the least variance in opinion, voted either mediately or directly for Mr. Jefferson as President; and for Mr. Burr as Vice-President. Their voting for both arose, not from any desire to place them on the same footing, but from the necessity, arising from the constitution, of voting for two persons indiscriminately, without avowing a preference for either.

But, unfortunately, our councils as well

as our citizens are divided in political opinions; and this division, not confined to the calm and rational expression of varying sentiments and honest efforts to effect certain desirable objects, strikes deep into personal feeling, producing an attachment to one man, which no change of circumstances can shake, and a hatred of another which no occurrences can soften.

Hence we find some men even in our federal councils, if their professions be sincere, disposed to elevate Mr. Burr to the presidency to the depression or exclusion of Mr. Jefferson.

I can scarcely believe that a single member of the House of Representatives sincerely means, in the contemplated event, to give his vote in this way. My respect for the official character of a representative of the people, which ought to unite dignity with wisdom, and constantly to be impressed with the importance of consulting the public wishes, when clearly expressed, induce me to reject a belief, which I cannot entertain, but at the expence of his personal honor and political integrity.

I hope that the suggestion is merely the playful ebullition of a sportive fancy, and not the effect of deliberate design.

The subject, however, is so interesting in itself, and may be attended with consequences so very important, that, considering the preference of Mr. Burr to Mr. Jefferson as barely possible, it becomes an object well worthy of consideration, inasmuch as there may be some individuals, who, amidst the inbred paroxysms of party, are not disposed to go those gloomy lengths which nothing but a desperate spirit can lead to; men, who if informed of the views that prompt, and the consequences likely to follow such a step, would at once refuse an unworthy participation with those with whom they have usually co-operated.

For the illustration of the subject I will in the first place assign the motives which may be presumed to dictate such a measure; and in the second place enumerate the effects likely to flow from it.

1. It cannot be supposed, however unlimited our candour, that a preference of Mr. Burr can arise from any sincere conviction of the superiority either of his talents or virtues to those of Mr. Jefferson.

Without drawing any invidious distinction between the intellectual and moral qualities of these two gentlemen, which truth could not justify, it may be affirmed that the private as well as public integrity of Mr. Jefferson are as untarnished as those of Mr. Burr, while the superior age, and the more extended field of political observation and action of the former justify an entire reliance in the general sentiment that ascribes to Mr. Jefferson the larger portion of information and experience.

If this be not the true motive, is it to be discovered, 2. In the belief that Mr. Burr will more effectually than Mr. Jefferson conciliate the varying views of all descriptions of men.

This belief presupposes two descriptions of men, republican and federal. Now, the whole succession of political events shews that Mr. Jefferson is pre-eminently the favourite of the former. His popularity with them has remained undiminished from the period when he penned the declaration of independence to the present day; and has accompanied him through all the successive offices of dignity and usefulness which he has intermediately filled.

It would, then, be monstrously absurd to pretend that the rejection of Mr. Jefferson from the Presidency would tend to conciliate the republicans of the United States, whom the late election has demonstrated to be the major part of America.

Can such a preference conciliate the federalists? I can discern but two ways in which such an effect can be produced. In the first way the effect would be produced by the conscious triumph of the federalists over their opponents, which in reality would be over the people themselves, by the satisfaction they felt in rendering abortive a decided expression of the public will, and by losing all previous resentment in the joy of their success.

But does not such a supposition amount

to a libel upon the federalists? Does it not imply a total disregard to principle (for the argument does not suppose that Mr. Burr is less a republican than Mr. Jefferson) does it not extend still farther, and consider the federalists, not as transported from the sober convictions of reason by a lively, however mistaken, enthusiasm for some great man, but as carried from their settled purpose by a vindictive personal hatred?

The second way in which such an effect could be produced would be by the expected direktion by Mr. Burr of his republican sentiments; of those very sentiments which had placed him in a situation that enabled his opponents to elevate him to unexpected power.

If such an expectation is entertained, I do not hesitate to affirm it no less visionary than immoral. The integrity and nice sense of honor, which have been the inviolable attendants on Mr. Burr, are to those who know him evidences, that require no additional proof, of his immutable adherence to principle.

But, if such an expectation does exist, is it one that, if realized, would tend to conciliate the great body of the federalists?

Let it be granted that some men of that description have so lively a regard for certain political ends, that they are totally indifferent as to the means, can it be believed that this is the case with the mass of those that support them? Would not such an immoral act open the eyes of their constituents, and portray in vivid colours the depravity of their representatives? Could a rational confidence be continued to be reposed in them? Would not every honest man of the party, however he might be pleased with the end, despise the means and those who used them?—Undoubtedly this would be the case; and so far from producing conciliation, it would strengthen and extend division.

If then these motives cannot be ascribed to the leaders of the federal party, if they deserve, on the contrary, to be attributed only to men at once deprived of their reason and their virtue, where can we find any adequate motives, such as we can suppose rational men likely to feel, for such a procedure?

3. There are but two remaining reasons, which bear the least semblance of plausibility; the one is a personal dislike to Mr. Jefferson amounting to frenzy, which is calculated to precipitate its unfortunate victim by every act of despair into greater embarrassment. If this motive actuate any man, I can discern no cure for it. The patient must be considered as diseased beyond the power of moral remedy. For as the hatred entertained by him has arisen without even a shadow of cause furnished by Mr. Jefferson, it will be impossible to change, I will not say the state of his mind, but the state of his feelings by any train of reasoning.

Such an individual may derive some anticipated gratification from the hope that a preference of Mr. Burr would be a source of mortification to Mr. Jefferson. But the hope would be delusive. It is not to rank or power that Mr. Jefferson owes either his reputation or his happiness. The first is secured by the services he has rendered his country, and the last is confirmed by a heart rich in the purity of its intentions, and a mind always engaged in the cultivation and extension of its powers.

4. The genuine motive of such an act, if it be designed, is probably this: The republicans have triumphed. The people are on their side. While this remains the case, the federal party, hitherto the sole depositaries of power, must give way to their rivals. Though compelled to surrender their power for a time, their unceasing effort will be to regain it. The greatest obstacle, perhaps that could be opposed to such a hope, would be the elevation of Mr. Jefferson to the Presidency. They know that there is not a man in America so highly respected and so affectionately beloved by the people. They know that no man, from the simplicity of his manners, the genuine republicanism of his principles, the mildness of his disposition, and the universal philanthropy of his heart, is to be found among us, more likely to strengthen the attachment of the people to

the pure principles of liberty and peace. These traits of character present dreadful barriers either to seduction or opposition. Directed against such a character, what can they do? They can only brighten his integrity, strengthen his firmness, and endear him still more to the people. He, then above all other men, is to be feared. Let us then, they exclaim, at every hazard, keep him from the Presidency. This being resolved on, there remains but one alternative. Mr. Burr must be our man. Perhaps through inexperience he may take some imprudent step. We will dart upon him; and the dagger of political assassination shall put an end to his official existence. At all events whatever his talents and his virtue, we will call them follies and vices. The people will be more likely to believe what we affirm of him, not being so well acquainted with his talents, as with those of Mr. Jefferson.

Short sighted policy! visionary dream! my next number, in exhibiting the consequences of such an attempt, will shew that even the profound statesman becomes a child in intellect, when he abandons the paths of truth.

ARISTIDES.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

### CONSIDERATIONS

On the Government of the TERRITORY of COLUMBIA.

No. I.

The report of the committee of the House of Representatives on this subject must give alarm and distress to every person interested in the fate of the city of Washington; and the district of territory in which it is situated. This report does not appear to meet the spirit of the constitution; nor is it calculated to satisfy the mind of the general politician, or the expectations of those who are locally affected.

The member of the house who took a lead in this transaction, and who called it into public notice during the last session; who was then appointed on the committee to whom it was referred; whose attention was devoted to it during the recess, and who was again appointed on the committee to whom it was referred at this session; might have been expected to have digested something more consonant to the public wishes. After all this labor and parade, what has been the result? A plan, by which the Territory of Columbia is to be governed by two different systems of legislation and jurisprudence; by which the seat of local government for one half of it is to be on the Chesapeake, and the other on James river; by which its taxation, productive at present, and incalculable in future, is to be diverted from its own bosom, and placed at the disposal of strangers of different interests; by which the metropolis of the United States is to be an obscure village, in the corner of Prince George's county, in the state of Maryland; by which the administration of justice for its citizens is transfused at Upper Marlborough and Annapolis; and its industrious and time-saving artizans are compelled to waste their time & substance in serving as jurors, & attending as witnesses, at places most remote from their residence, and difficult and expensive to travel to.

If it is expected that any City could thrive in these circumstances, then it is proper to abandon in our transactions all calculations of human wisdom and foresight; and to trust every thing to supernatural agency. The City of Washington possesses immense advantages; but its advantages are not great enough to flourish under so absurd an administration of government.

What is still more singular, the bill reported by the committee contains a provision not only for two different systems of government in the same territory, but provides also that those two systems shall be different in each part of the Territory from the rest of the state to which it is annexed. The legislatures of Virginia and Maryland