

SUPPLEMENT TO THE Gazette and Sentinel.



GAZETTE & SENTINEL.

WILLIAM P. BRADBURN,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

PLAQUEMINE:

Saturday, September 3, 1860.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
John C. Breckinridge,
OF KENTUCKY.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.]

"Heretofore the money expended upon our ocean mail system has been paid on the principle of contract, and the Government was supposed to receive a valuable consideration. The two objects avowed were to obtain for a fair price the transportation of the mails and the germ of an economical marine. But the question now presented is wholly different. We are urged to open the Federal Treasury for the purpose of sustaining certain commercial lines 'in a national competition.' We are told they must go down in the rude contests of commerce unless they are sustained by the public money. The true question, when stripped of all disguises, is, shall the Government become the partner of individuals and companies in commercial operations, thus inflicting a double wrong, by giving peculiar advantages to a small fraction of the community, and at the same time collecting the capital it subscribes by taxation from those who are to be oppressed by the monopoly?"

"If, by the adoption of this amendment, the principle is established that Government money shall be expended to support private commerce, what limit shall be assigned to the application of this principle? The precedent, if adopted for the benefit of the Collins line, like every other bad precedent, will be the fruitful parent of a pernicious brood of laws, and will engrave a radically false policy upon the legislation of the country."

"Sir, in my judgment, the proposition before the committee involves the highest interests of trade and the true policy of America. As we shall decide it, so will we determine whether commerce shall be free or fettered; whether the carrying trade of the country shall be fastened upon the public treasury; whether the free ocean shall be covered with the hulls of commercial monopolies, wielded by the power of the Government, and levelled against the enterprise of its own citizens."

Having exhibited elaborate tables to show the present character and cost of the ocean postal service, and of the additional expense of similar propositions pending before Congress, he says: "The lines will involve a yearly expenditure to the Government above the present contracts of at least four and a half millions of dollars. This estimate is sufficiently low, though not, perhaps, strictly accurate, because all the applicants have not specified the compensation. If to this amount be added the present appropriations, we have a total annual expenditure for this single branch of the public service of about six millions of dollars, and after these are established we shall, doubtless, as heretofore, have numerous applications for new lines, pressed with great industry and ability, as well as for increased pay to those already in operation."

Besides, however, exposing the vast expenditures which the proposed system involved—a system exceeding, "both in the number of lines and amount of appropriations to them, the whole net work of navigation with which, we are told, England has compassed the globe"—in continuing his speech, Mr. Breckinridge showed how the steam interest had escaped the responsibility of their first engagement to furnish an auxiliary steam navy, and he proved, by official data, that the vessels built by Collins & Sloo, and others, for naval service, were unfit for that purpose.

In the course of his able argument, which exposed the unconstitutionality, extravagance, and inexpediency of granting this gratuity, he paid a beautiful compliment to our navy and commercial marine. He said:

"I am a friend to our commerce, and favorable to all proper facilities for extending our communications with foreign countries; I am a friend, also, of the navy. The history of my country presents too many pages adorned by its achievements to allow me to speak aught in its disparagement. I never can be false to the memories that connect it with the crisis of 1776 and 1812, nor never forget that when the commerce of America retired from all the seas, and hid itself under embargoes and acts of non-intercourse, our gallant navy contended, not ingloriously, with the first powers in Christendom, and avenged the wrongs we had long suffered from England."

"I am by no means insensible to the national honor and commercial renown which the Collins steamers have con-

ferred upon our country. In common with others I have exulted over the victory in steam navigation won by them for America, and should regret to learn that the enterprising capitalists to whom they owe their existence had sustained losses for their princely adventure. My sympathies are warmly enlisted for those who have contended so nobly with the first naval power on earth for the mastery of the seas. But are sympathies a proper basis for legislation, when, too, that legislation must impose still greater burdens upon the people? Admit the plea in one case; legislate away five hundred thousand dollars upon it from an almost exhausted treasury in one instance, and where are you to stop? Where is the builder, and where the owners of the yacht America? With what consistency could Congress deny financial aid and protection to them, when demanded upon the ground that they, too, had conferred national honor and naval glory upon our country? The pride of Britain, boasting that she holds the trident of the seas, was not more humbled by our triumph in steam navigation than it was in August last by the success of the little American craft built in New York by American shipwrights, and manned in England by American freemen. The British people have spent centuries in perfecting their sailing vessels, and English supremacy on the ocean has been the cherished object of national desire. One of her poets sang, in exulting strains,

"Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
Her home is on the deep?"

"But such a boast is now idle; Albion no longer rules the waves. The last plank to which she clung was wrested from her by an American shipwright and by American individual enterprise."

Having shown that all such payments from the public treasury as contemplated by the ocean mail service were made "to private individuals, for the construction of private ships for private gains," he continued: "If any reference to the Constitution of the United States may be made in these days of magnificent monopolies and wholesale plunder, without calling up a spirit of derision, I would inquire where that instrument confers the power to give such gratuities? And I desire to be pointed to the clause empowering us to tax an interest for the purpose of building up another. I put the question to Republicans everywhere, and especially do I commend it to gentlemen of the Democratic party—a party whose cardinal principles have ever been in direct conflict with such abuses."

Heroically resisting the influences around him, with an eye single to his country's weal and renown, the impassioned orator closed his powerful speech on this occasion in the following manner:

Mr. Chairman, this amendment may pass this House, as it has passed the Senate. I know the powers of the influences at work in its favor; personal friendships, local interests, continued solicitations—all these are actively exerted, and are hard to resist. You may succeed in giving to the Collins line alone nearly one million of dollars a year; you may succeed in maintaining a little longer this ocean aristocracy, supported, like the British nobility, by the sweat of the people, but the day of its destruction will come. Every step taken in continuation of this system increases the number to be retraced, because a principle which is both false to our destiny, and unjust, cannot find a permanent resting place in the American statute-book. When the country comes to understand and realize the effects of this legislation, it will demand its instant and final repeal.

"Mr. Chairman, the time will not allow me to pursue this subject further, nor to speak of other abuses now weighing down the Government. The universal tendency among those who hold delegated power in a country whose resources are ample, is to extravagance. It is time again to inscribe on our banners Economy, Retrenchment, Reform; and for one, I will labor faithfully with those who, instead of constantly seeking for new sources of expenditure, shall strive to curtail the already enormous cost of the Government."

The President sustained the grounds taken by Mr. Breckinridge, in his veto message, from which the following extract was made:

"The bill will, in effect, confer a gratuity, whilst nominally making provision for the transportation of the mails of the United States."

"To provide for making a donation of such magnitude, and to give to the arrangement the character of permanence which this bill proposes, would be to deprive commercial enterprise of the benefits of free competition, and to establish a monopoly in violation of the soundest principles of public policy, and of doubtful compatibility with the Constitution."

Not receiving the requisite two-thirds on the taking the vote on the receipt of the veto message, the bill failed to become a law.

The little opportunity afforded Mr. Breckinridge, owing to the universal acquiescence of the Democratic party in the tariff of 1846, to participate in any Congressional discussion upon that subject, accounts for the absence from his record of anything with reference thereto, except in a single and important instance.

In 1854 an immense lot by congregated at Washington, in the pay of the vast interests desiring the repeal of the duty on railroad iron, with the selfish purpose of enriching themselves out of the immense amount of the depletion in the revenues of the country which would follow their success.

Mr. Breckinridge being opposed to special legislation in all its forms, he more particularly where it proposed to disturb a well composed system of acquiring revenue, at the demand of rich capitalists, and always opposing a firm resistance to the march of the lobbyists against the integrity of legislation, took an active part in defeating the bill for that purpose, and succeeded by his untiring energy and great influence in the House in killing it.

His tribute to the character and services of Henry Clay, upon introducing resolutions of respect to his memory, the day after his death in Washington, was the most beautiful, touching and eloquent ever delivered in the halls of Congress. When the tall, manly and dignified form of the young orator arose to offer the resolutions, every eye was turned upon him; a breathless silence pervaded the hall and the crowded auditory in the galleries, and, as he portrayed, "in thoughts that breathe and words that burn," the virtue and talents of the illustrious orator and statesman of Kentucky, and mourned the nation's loss of this great man, many an eye was bathed in tears, and many a bosom heaved with emotion in response to his glowing eulogy upon the departed statesman, orator and patriot.

The hand of no master ever painted a more faithful, life-like portrait than is to be found in that vivid delineation of the unrivaled orator and statesman, Henry Clay, when Mr. Breckinridge said:

"As a leader in a deliberative body, Mr. Clay had no equal in America. In him, intellect, person, eloquence and courage united to form a character fit to command. He fired with his own enthusiasm, and controlled by his amazing will, individuals and masses. No reverse could crush his spirit, no defeat reduce him to despair. Equally erect and dauntless in prosperity and adversity—when successful, he moved to the accomplishment of his purposes with more resolution; when defeated, he rallied his broken bands around him, and from his eagle eye shot along their ranks the contagion of his own courage. Destined for a leader, he everywhere asserted his destiny. In his long and eventful life he came in contact with men of all ranks and professions, but he never felt that he was in the presence of a man superior to himself. In the assemblies of the people, at the bar, in the Senate, everywhere within the circle of his personal presence, he assumed and maintained a position of pre-eminence."

"But the supremacy of Mr. Clay as a party leader was not his only nor his highest title to renown. That title is to be found in the purely patriotic spirit which, on great occasions, always signalized his conduct. We have had no statesman who, in periods of real and imminent public peril, has exhibited a more genuine and enlarged patriotism than Henry Clay. Whenever a question presented itself actually threatening the existence of the Union, Mr. Clay, rising above the passions of the hour, always exerted his powers to solve it peacefully and honorably. Although more liable than most men, from his impetuous and ardent nature, to feel strongly the passions common to us all, it was his rare faculty to be able to subdue them in a great crisis, and to hold towards all the sections of the Confederacy the language of concord and brotherhood."

"Sir, it will be a proud pleasure to every true American heart to remember the great occasions when Mr. Clay has displayed a sublime patriotism—when the ill temper engendered by the times and the miserable jealousies of the day seemed to have been driven from his bosom by the repulsive power of nobler feelings—when every throb of his heart was given to his country, every effort of his intellect dedicated to her service. Who does not remember the three periods when the American system of government was exposed to its severest trials; and who does not know that when history shall relate the struggles which preceded and the dangers that were averted by the Missouri Compromise, the Tariff Compromise of 1832, and the Adjustment of 1859, the same pages will record the genius, the eloquence, and the patriotism of Henry Clay?"

"The life of Mr. Clay, sir, is a striking example of the abiding fame which surely awaits the direct and candid

[TURN OVER.]

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DONOVAN & NEUTZ,
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APPLES—Green, Dried, Preserved, and Apple Jelly.
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HAMS—Sage, Cured, Green and Mutton.
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LARD.
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State of Louisiana—Parish of Iberville—
6th Judicial District Court.
In the Estate of Lemuel J. Beck, dec'd,
WHEREAS: Zulma Marionneaux, in her capacity of natural tutrix of her minor child, has this day filed in the Clerk's office of this court her tableaux of administration and distribution of the estate of Lemuel J. Beck, dec'd.
Notice is hereby given to all whom it may concern to show cause within thirty days from the date of the publication hereof, why the said tableaux of administration should not be homologated and made the judgment of this court.
Clerk's office, Aug. 4, 1860.
aug11 M. A. ESTEVAN, Clerk.

Etat de la Louisiane—Paroisse d'Iberville—
Cour du 6eme District Judiciaire.
Dans la Succession de feu Lemuel J. Beck.
ATTENDU, que Zulma Marionneaux, en sa capacite de tutrice naturelle de son enfant mineur, a ce jour deposes dans le bureau du Greffier de cette cour, son tableau d'administration et distribution de la succession de feu Lemuel J. Beck.
Avis est par le present donne a tous ceux que cela concerne de deduire sous trente jours de la date de ce present les raisons pour lesquelles le dit tableau d'administration ne serait pas homologue et fait le jugement de cette cour.
Bureau du Greffier, Aug. 4, 1860.
aug11 M. A. ESTEVAN, Greffier.

TO THE PUBLIC.
THE UNDERSIGNED has appointed Mr. ALEXANDER ROTH his Agent, to receive or to be made acquainted with all descriptions of valuable, much of which, sunk with his hatboat near "Devil's Elbow," in Bayou Plaquemine, some weeks since, still remain in the Bayou, consisting of Carls, Waggons, Nails, &c. &c. All persons, therefore, who may find any of his articles, are directed and requested to deliver them, or give information to the above named gentleman.
JOSHUA BODLEY.
je17-4