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CIRCULAR.

To the Citizens resident within the Congressional District composed of *Mason, Jackson, Wood, Lewis, Braxton, Harrison, Randolph, and Pocahontas.*

FELLOW CITIZENS.—The undersigned, for fifteen years past a resident of the County of Wood, and for a number of years preceding of the County of Harrison, in the exercise of a privilege which appertains to the most humble Citizen of the Country, avails himself of this method to announce to the citizens of this Congressional District generally, and to the voters more especially, that he is a candidate to represent them in the next Congress of the United States. In announcing this determination I shall not preface it by what is very customary, an assurance "that I have reluctantly yielded to the solicitations & importunities of friends." For although like other men, I have some friends who have for several years past urged me to present myself before the people as a candidate for Congress—friends for whom I have always entertained the most cordial esteem—yet I offer no such apology. I do not regard it as a breach of modesty to come before you voluntarily. I regard it as the birth-right of an American Citizen. Nay, it is the duty of every person, who has a deep stake in the institutions of the country, when he thinks, or his friends think, that he may be useful in perpetuating the blessings left to us as a heritage by our fathers, to make a tender of his services, unless some more competent person shall be a candidate for the same station. And, even without this motive, it is a commendable ambition, to aspire to be useful, to be ambitious of the distinction of being elevated to a seat in Congress, by the suffrages of the freemen of this or any other district. Nor do I conceive, Fellow Citizens, that I am departing from the strictest adherence to the foregoing principles, in entering the lists with Col. Johnson, your present Representative: there being no other candidate before the district. Rotation in office is not only a corollary from the republican maxim that "perpetual vigilance is the price of liberty;" but the principle extends farther than the change of the agent. The principle when carried out, not only looks to a change of the agent, but also regards a distribution amongst the various classes and sections of the community. To illustrate; the Representative should not only be taken from the varied pursuits of civilised life; but also from the different quarters of the district. Our friends in the old and much respected County of Harrison, are, not only too republican, but too generous, too just, to take umbrage at this view of the subject.

We all remember with pride & satisfaction, the days when Harrison presented for our suffrages, the distinguished names of J. G. Jackson and James Pindall; and when with undivided front, we rallied to their standard. And it may not be amiss further to remark, that from the foundation of our Government, the County of Harrison has had, with a very few exceptions, the representation in Congress, Senate, member of board of Public works, member of Convention, and generally, all and every office which appertained to the district of which she was a part. So long as she had distinguished men to fill these stations—men whose talents, services and fitness commanded the homage of the community we all cheerfully cooperated in their support. But these men have passed off the stage. No distinguished men being now presented by her to supply their place, I 'much mistake, in the estimate I have formed of the views of republican' equality, magnanimity, and justice of the people of that County, if now for the first time in 37 years, the County of Wood offers a candidate for the support of the voters of Harrison, if they will not feel themselves called on to reciprocate the confidence heretofore accorded to the candidates from that County.

In view of these considerations, I have determined to become a candidate. I regret that the pressure of professional business, and the necessary attention to a sick family, will constrain me to some extent, to forego the pleasure of cultivating a personal acquaintance with the citizens of the district generally, by visiting the various counties, in accordance with ancient usage, and affording opportunities for mutual interchange of sentiments, the discussing of such topics; and the giving of such explanations, as would fully enable those, whose business it is, to decide on the qualification and fitness, and come to an intelligible choice, amongst the candidates for their suffrages. This opportunity, however desirable, the lateness of the season, and the great extent of the district, will measurably prevent. To obviate to some extent this inconvenience, and to present succinctly my views in reference to some leading topics, connected with the prosperity of the country, is the principal object of this address.

And first: I may premise, that having been educated under the eye of one of the most orthodox republicans of the day—nay, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel—my earliest political thoughts were moulded in that school. What was then but political speculation has become deep political interest. It was then part of my education, it has since been part of my profession, thoroughly to comprehend the institutions of our Country. He who has to any extent studied history, will be struck with the fact, that while all governments emanating from man, like him have had their periods of infancy, vigorous manhood and tottering age, till they became extinct, and gave place to others occupying in this process a period of many centuries; yet the U. States, so unlike any thing we find in history, even now, little more than half a century, in the morning of its day, at a period in her history when other governments have scarcely become organized, such has been her precocious growth, that she has attained to a degree of vigour, a state of maturity & manhood, as to have no parallel in history, to be a wonder to the world, and a source of amazement to the sober thinking among ourselves. It is obvious that our Confederacy in reference to all purposes of Government, whether of war or of peace, or the development of the social, civil and intellectual qualities of our people, is on a perfect equality with that of any other government on earth, no matter what its antiquity. If this then be our condition, the reflection is forced upon us, that having attained to a state of manhood, how long shall we flourish? How long shall we retain this vigour? How long till we, too, begin to go the way of all the earth—to decline, to decay, to totter to the fall?

This, fellow Citizens, is the great question that should engage the heads, and the hearts of the American People, and especially their Statesmen. We have liberty regulated by law, we have ample resources whether for war or for peace, we have nothing to fear from without; we must look within for the seeds of decay and dissolution. All we should ask is to leave us where we are; More of national prosperity we ought not to desire. We should ever remember that prosperity lulls us into security and apathy in reference to the approach of danger—Nay, more—the season of prosperity is that when some insidious canker may unnoticed make its approach, and prey undiscovered on the very vitals of the Commonwealth. Our institutions having become fully matured, to perpetuate them, I take it, should be the great aim of American Statesmen. What measures, what legislation, is best calculated to give them stability, to hedge them around against the assaults of time, to guard against the approach of danger, should occupy the anxious con-

sideration of the people, and especially of their representatives.

I will briefly notice a few of the more prominent of the questions which may be supposed to engage the attention of Congress referable to those objects.

Ist. As to our intercourse with foreign nations. During the administration of the father of his country, the government was administered on the principle that we should render equal and exact justice to all foreign Governments, whether great or small, and form entangling alliances with none; while, at the same time, we would exact a reciprocal observance of this rule. This maxim, founded in wisdom, has received the sanction of experience, is approved by all, and may be regarded as the settled policy of the country. Among the domestic questions, which our varied interests, and civil polity, give rise to, there is one, always of peculiar delicacy, and, at this moment, of the most commanding importance. I allude to the question of Slavery. To those who are familiar with the history of the Colonies now composing the United States, it is well known, that a large majority of the original stock of African Slaves, was introduced into the Colonies by the people of New England and New York. From the first settlements, they have had, to great extent, the control of the foreign commerce and shipping; thro' which agency Slavery was introduced. Originally, Slavery was tolerated in all the Eastern States; & I think it may be fairly inferred, that Slavery was abolished in New York, Pennsylvania, and New England, for the simple reason, that owing to the rigor of the climate and the character of their products, they did not find it profitable longer to employ Slave labor: whereas, in the south, the climate being more congenial to the constitution of the negro race, and their products giving more profitable employment to slave labor, it yet exists. It is therefore apparent, that in reference to this question, the colonies were governed by their local interests; & in the compact of Government which was formed under the constitution of the United States, the eastern people sought to treat slaves as property alone; to deny to them any of the immunities of persons; and in the distribution of the powers of government, to disregard them altogether; while on the other hand, the Southern people, prompted by more just views and generous impulses, contended, although the master had a proprietary right or interest in the person of the slave, yet that they did not thereby become a thing, but were still persons; and, as such, should be regarded in the constitution. This controversy, threatening the most serious results, was finally adjusted by a compromise regarding the slave as a compound, viz: three fifths a person and two fifths a thing; and the question of power was arranged accordingly, by the 3d clause of the 2d section of the 1st article of the constitution. The great solicitude the framers of the constitution felt on this subject, is further particularly manifested in the 1st clause 9th section of the 1st article, 3d clause 2d section 4th article, and in the 5th article of that instrument. The framers of the constitution by those several provisions, no doubt supposed that they had forever put this question to rest, so far as the action of the General Government was concerned. They regarded it as a domestic question of municipal policy of the several States. In this light has it ever since been received, until a few religious fanatics, within a year or two, have taken it upon themselves to denounce domestic slavery; to fulminate their wrath against all the South; and indeed all others, who do not come into their views and measures. So long as this was confined to themselves there seemed to be no great apprehension on the subject, but during the two last sessions of Congress, they have made a vigorous assault on that body and altho they have been thus far repulsed, from the indications of the times, there is just reason to fear, that this is likely to become a question of

the most fearful import. Not only is it contended that Congress have power over the subject within the District of Columbia, but, even now the distant mutter is heard, that under that clause of the constitution providing that Congress may regulate commerce with foreign nations and amongst the States it can, and should prohibit the migration and transfer of Slaves from one state to another. When this shall be established, as there is reason to fear it may, it requires no forecast to see the end of this Union. On this question there can be but one feeling amongst all true Virginians, The question is exclusively a domestic one; and we should present an undivided front in repelling any external interference with it, no matter from what source. We should regard all these movements as tending to dangerous infractions of the Constitution.

The question next in importance, in my view, is that in reference to the finances. On this question I think there can be but little doubt. The government of the United States cannot constitutionally collect one dollar more than is necessary, economically, to conduct the operations of the government, in reference to our external intercourse. I am clearly of opinion that a tariff of duties, or, in other words, a tax levied on importations, for any other purpose than revenue, was never contemplated by the framers of the constitution. But I have as little doubt, that congress may & should, in laying a tax for such purpose, so discriminate as to give protection to such interests as stood in need. As the public lands seem now to supply all our pecuniary wants it follows that the tariff of duties should be repealed unless controlled by causes other than those adverted to. Such a cause, I think, is to be found in the compromise act—the act which quelled the insurrectionary spirit of South Carolina; adjusted the difficult and vexed question out of which it grew; gave peace and prosperity to the country; and received the approbation of the President and all political parties. That act should be adhered to, because the public faith is pledged to it; because the immense manufacturing interests of the country are dependent on it; and because by its expiration, all the evil consequences will be removed on the one hand; while on the other, the interests involved will have soon become so matured and stable as to sustain themselves, to the great prosperity, nay indispensable to the independence of the country.

In connection with the fiscal operations of the country, the public domain has a most prominent position. On this subject my views are somewhat peculiar. The period has now certainly passed by, when it can, by any means, be desirable to have an accession to our population, especially from abroad. During the revolution we wanted population to fight our battles; to aid in giving protection against every external force; to ameliorate society; to contribute towards defraying the charges of government; and to promote all the ends of social and civilised life. We were then three millions, we are now fifteen millions. It cannot, it will not be denied, that, as a nation, we are in the enjoyment of all that liberty regulated by law can give; and, that our population is adequate to reach all the ends above enumerated, or any others connected with our prosperity. Is it not obvious then, that in a great measure to remain as we are (I speak politically) is all that we can expect or wish. To what end, then, is it that we want more people? History shows us that the greatest possible evil that can befall society is a redundancy of population; that it brings in its train crime of every hue, starvation, and pestilence in all its forms. Such, for instance, is the condition of Ireland, where there are millions that live and die on potatoes; in Norway the government has taken measures long since to restrain the redundancy of its population; and this question is now being discussed by some of the most eminent Philanthro-

pists, of the age. I ask the question, then, what is it that we would accomplish by using hot bed measures and stimulants to increase the population of the nation, and, especially, by emigration from abroad? The peace and quiet of a country greatly depend on the homogeneity of its people; or identity of interest, pursuits and thoughts, especially on the question of Government. But this is effectually destroyed by the motley group sent to us from the poor-houses and prisons of Europe. They do not think or feel with us upon any question. Taking this view of our population I ask the question is Virginia too densely populated? No. Has she population enough? No. Why? Because we are by our public land system offering a premium to our citizens to desert their mother, and go in search of the premium and prize offered by the federal government in the west. Does not every one feel that Virginia lands have been for years greatly depressed in the market? Is not the reason obvious? Virginia is an agricultural State. Can any man suppose that he can sell his farm for agricultural purposes, for a fair price, when his neighbor has one that he offers to the purchaser for nothing? Such is our condition; we have prodigally given the United States what is now four, and soon to become five States; and that government is seducing our citizens, by bribing them to desert their homes, by the offer for nothing, or next to nothing, of the very lands which we gave them in trust for the benefit of ourselves, and the other members of the confederacy. What can be more suicidal to Virginia, especially West Virginia? Is not this the true solution that the East is drained and the West is stationary in population. This, to my mind, is inflicting on us a double injury. 1st. We gave the lands to the United States, in trust that they were to be for the common benefit of all the States; now, if they are given away there is no benefit, and if sold for less than their value we do not get the full benefit contracted for. But 2nd. We never intended they should constitute a reward or inducement for our people to desert the state, depreciate our lands, and otherwise retard our prosperity. But, aside from this, why encourage emigration west? why build up more states? why stimulate the increase of population? Why not leave it to its ordinary and regular laws? It will be conceded that we as a nation, have population adequate to all the purposes of peace or war. What more is it that we desire, unless, therefore, our population be too dense to obtain with ease the comforts and necessaries of life. The territory already occupied is sufficient for their accommodation; and it is bad policy, nay to us it is ruin, to give a premium to our people to expatriate themselves, when our population, in this district especially, is too sparse to afford the comforts of social life to our inhabitants. Inasmuch, therefore, as there is no motive to stimulate beyond natural means, the growth of our population as a confederacy; inasmuch as the Revenue from imports greatly exceeds the wants of the Government, and will continue to do so until the compromise act expires; inasmuch as the land system is beggaring the Old States, especially Virginia; and inasmuch as the selling them for a nominal sum is a breach of trust and an injury to the States, I am of opinion that further sales of the public lands should be arrested until after the tariff of duties shall expire, under the compromise act. Then, such sales might be made as should be demanded by sound policy, and at a fair price, and this I the more confidently believe to be the true policy, from the fact, that during the last year, more lands were sold than had been during the existence of the government, and principally to speculators.

This communication becoming already too lengthy, I omit several points, deemed important, viz: our monetary system generally, naturalization laws &c. On

these points, and perhaps on others. I hope to have an opportunity at most, if not all the Court Houses, of offering my views.

But, I remark, that always a friend to State Rights, recent events have impressed me more sensibly than formerly that the sanitary principle of our system is to be found in the separate existence and independence of the States; and that the government of the United States should be confined, strictly, to the exercise of the granted powers. And now, fellow citizens, a word on party politics and I have done. And here I confess I feel a sense of personal degradation, in being constrained to enter into an explanation of my opinions of men, as contradistinguished from measures. "*Principia non homines*"—principles not men, was the motto of our fathers; but men and not principles, is the striking characteristic of these degenerate times. It will doubtless be asked, under the banner of what political Chief I am arranged? For whom did I vote at the last Presidential election? Such questions I feel to be self abasing; and, although I raise my protest against being held accountable for the exercise of the highest prerogative that belongs to man in his conventional relations, yet, on this particular occasion, I feel it to be due to myself, to explain my past & future course.

Had I been at home I should have voted for Gen Harrison, although I differed with him in several particulars, because in my judgment, all things considered, I anticipated the greatest amount of public good from his administration. But, in claiming the right to exercise my own judgment in the disposition of my franchise, I disclaim any right to challenge any person for a difference of opinion. This is the substratum of our political fabric; & he who would question it, would not only be warring against the spirit of our institutions, but warring against the Ruler of the Universe. God never created any two men that exactly resembled each other. Men not only differ in size, strength and physiognomy, but also in the formation of their minds. They see things in different lights, through different mediums, they put a different construction on the same fact, and come to different results. This is but an exemplification of our imperfect nature. If, therefore, we at all times see "as through a glass, darkly," when we look at political objects, through political bias and prejudice, we must necessarily see falsely. To what man then is it permitted, to condemn his fellow men for a difference of opinion? Such are the allowances, fellow citizens, that I make in reference to those who differ from me, and I invoke the same charity for myself. I, therefore, disclaim any party designation. I repudiate every thing like party shackles. I will, if elected, to the best of my ability give to the administration of Mr. Van Buren, so far as I conscientiously can, a frank, manly and candid support. This is due from every citizen of the United States to the first magistrate of the nation. It is due to the deliberate and expressed will of the people. It is due from every man, who can so far lay aside the predilections of party as to aid in carrying out those measures tending to promote the best interests of the Country. On the other hand, if occasion should occur, as in the diversity of human views is more than probable, when I should feel myself constrained from a sense of duty to my country and her institutions, to differ with the administration; although I should do it with diffidence and caution, I should, nevertheless, do it with a manly and fearless independence.

Having thus, fellow citizens, imperfectly expressed some of my opinions to the extent of the limits prescribed to myself, I have but one further remark to make. I think the time an auspicious one, to lay aside, to rise superior to all party trammels; for, if I mistake not, the period is rapidly approaching when there will be a reorganization of parties, founded on great principles, in which I hope we shall all become one people, one brotherhood, rallying around the standard of our institutions. Be this as it may: whether my prediction be verified or not, should I be so fortunate as to become your representative, you may expect my best exertions in behalf of whatsoever in my judgment, is calculated to promote the prosperity of our beloved country, in subordination to its constitution and the will of my constituents; for, as your representative, I hold myself implicitly bound to execute your will, or resign to you my trust.

With great respect, I subscribe myself your friend and fellow citizen.

FEBRUARY 17, 1837.

JOHN J. JACKSON.

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