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SOME LETTERS OF
ANDREW JACKSON

BY
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SOME LETTERS OF ANDREW JACKSON

THE correspondence which forms the major part of this paper covers the presidential campaign of 1824 and ends with a letter written after Jackson's return to Tennessee from Washington in May, 1825. So far as I know only one of these letters has ever been published. The letter of Jackson dated at Washington, February 22, 1825 is known as "the Swartwout letter" and was printed in the "National Advocate" in March 1825, and from that paper it was copied by Parton in his biography of Jackson. In all probability it was copied by many other newspapers of the period. Two other letters contain an invitation to Jackson from some of his sympathizers to attend a dinner, and Jackson's declination. This dinner invitation was known at the time, and is referred to by Parton, but I doubt if the letters themselves have ever before been printed.

The originals of these letters are now in the possession of the writer.

Even by his best biographers Jackson has often been described as illiterate, and for that reason the attempt has been made to make these letters as nearly exact copies of the originals as it is possible to secure with type. Every error of grammar, spelling, and the use of capitals has been faithfully copied, and even his peculiar punctuation is given. The proofs have been carefully compared with the original letters, to make sure that the proof-reader or compositor had not taken it upon himself to correct apparent errors. The reader will therefore be able to judge for himself just how illiterate "Old Hickory" really was.

Of the thirty-four presidential elections that have been held under the Constitution only three have been in doubt when the Electoral Colleges have voted:—those of 1800, 1824, and 1876. The second of these was from a variety of reasons the most interesting. It was the second time the election had been thrown into the House of Representatives; but in 1800 Jefferson and Burr had received a large majority of the electoral votes, and only because they had received the same number was Congress required to decide which should be the President. In the election of 1824, four candidates received electoral votes and no one had a majority of all. By the provision of the Constitution it became the duty of the House of Representatives to choose a President from the three who had received the highest number of electoral votes. Jackson had ninety-nine votes, Adams had eighty-four, Crawford forty-one, and Clay thirty-seven. Clay who was Speaker of the House of Representatives was out of the race, but on account of his position had a controlling influence on the result.

The natural result of such a situation was to bring the partisans of the candidates to the Capital at the meeting of Congress. Washington, then but a small city, must have fairly boiled with excitement and wire-pulling. It is beyond the purpose of this paper to give an account of the intrigues of that time. Clay gave his influence to Adams who was elected, and Adams appointed Clay, Secretary of State. Jackson believed that the appointment was the price Clay received for his influence, and his many friends said bitter things about it. To make matters worse as concerned Jackson, Clay on the twenty-eighth of February wrote to Judge Francis J. Brooke of Virginia a letter in which he gave as a reason for not supporting Jackson, the Western candidate, that he feared to trust the execution of the laws in the hands of a "Military Chieftain." Knowing full well that this would sting Jackson, and fearing that he might in

reply say or do something that would injure his political prospects, Swartwout wrote to him the letter of February 18, 1825. It was so worded, as Swartwout says in the note on his fair copy, as to persuade Jackson not to take any notice of Clay's excuse. Jackson's reply was evidently better than Swartwout and his friends expected, for although the letter was written in Washington on February 22, it went to New York and was sent back to Washington to appear in the "National Advocate" in March. It is unlikely that Jackson consulted with any one in replying to Swartwout, and if anyone doubts that he knew how to express himself in good vigorous English, one reading of this letter ought to dispel the doubt.

The only other of these letters that may call for comment, is the one written from "The Hermitage" May 16, 1825, when the Adams administration was fairly under way. From what we know of Swartwout's former attempt to check Jackson's impetuosity, it is not improbable that he had again written with the same intent. At any rate Jackson agrees with him that it is not the proper time to reply to Clay's "Address to his Constituents," but he admits that "Mr. Clay had left himself in his address so open to a severe scourging that it has been with difficulty I could withhold my pen." His reference in this letter to a Representative from Pennsylvania is most likely to James Buchanan, afterward President. Later on, when the quarrel with Clay had become more acute, Jackson openly stated that Buchanan had come to him with a proposal to secure Clay's influence in the House of Representatives by promising to make him Secretary of State. Buchanan admitted the interview but denied that he had made the proposal as Jackson understood it. Martin Van Buren in his recently published Autobiography says "Buchanan dodged the subject." Benton, at one time Jackson's enemy, but then and to the end of his career his staunch friend, said that Clay had told him as early as December, 1824, that he intended to

support Adams. But nothing ever changed Jackson's belief that Buchanan was sent to him by Clay or some of Clay's close friends with an authorized proposal.

In several of these letters Jackson makes statements to the effect that he has never sought an office and never refused one when he believed he could serve well his country. Such professions from many politicians are neither unusual nor sincere. But in this case it should be remembered that, like Roosevelt, Jackson's honesty, sincerity, and patriotism, have never been questioned.

Samuel Swartwout to whom these letters of Jackson were addressed was a son of Abraham Swartwout of Poughkeepsie, N. Y. He was born in that city in 1783, and died in New York, November 21, 1856. He had a rather checkered career. He was a disciple of Aaron Burr and took part in his expedition down the Ohio in 1805; he served in the war of 1812, and was Captain of the famous New York City Troop "The Iron Grays"; he wrote a pamphlet, "A Concise Narrative of General Jackson's First Invasion of Florida" etc., "By Aristides," N. Y. 1827, of which five editions were printed. In April, 1829, Jackson appointed him Collector of the Port of New York, against the strong protest of Martin Van Buren, then Secretary of State, who wrote the President, "I feel it my duty to add that his selection would in my judgment be a measure that would in the end be deeply lamented by every sincere and intelligent friend of your administration throughout the Union." His prophesy was fulfilled when Swartwout became a defaulter to the Government. With his brothers he owned a large portion of the salt meadows between Newark and Hoboken. Fitz Greene Halleck in the "Croakers" says:

"Sam Swartwout, where are now thy Grays?
Oh bid again their banner blaze
O'er hearts and ranks unbroken.

Let drum and fife your slumbers break,
 And bid the devil freely take
 Your meadows at Hoboken."

CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Letter from Jackson, dated Washington, Dec. 16, 1823.
- B. Letter from Jackson, dated Washington, March 4, 1824.
- C. Letter from Jackson, dated Hermitage near Nashville, Sept. 27, 1824.
- D. Letter from Jackson, dated Washington, Dec. 14, 1824.
- E. Letter from Swartwout, *et al.*, dated Washington, Feb. 10, 1825.
- F. Letter from Jackson, dated Washington, Feb. 10, 1825.
- G. Letter from Swartwout, dated New York, Feb. 18, 1825.
- H. Letter from Jackson, dated Washington, Feb. 22, 1825.
- I. Letter from Jackson, dated Hermitage near Nashville, May 16, 1825.

— A —

WASHINGTON CITY 16th Dec'br 1823

DR SIR

I have rec'd your very friendly letter and thank you for the kind expressions you have indulged towards me. I have avoided writing on the subject of which your letter treats from an apprehension that sometimes my letters might incautiously be thrown into the papers, and that it might be inferred that I was seeking after my own advancement. It was on this account that I forebore oftentimes to reply to letters on the subject of the Presidential election, content for those results to take place which my country might be satisfied with. I assure you in the same candor which you have spoken, that with whatever decision the nation may pronounce I shall be satisfied. My name has been presented to the public, and that presentation, as you, I am sure will believe, was without any procurement of mine. I have never declined any call of the constituted authorities of my country where it was believed by me that any beneficial results would accrue, & never shall; during the little time I have to live, my mind and opinion is made up to stand in any situation where by possibility it may be in my power to do aught calculated to give efficiency to the

principles which she has established, & which I trust may be perpetual; yet if in any contest to occur, some other should be preferred, that preference will bring to me no other feeling than joy that another is found in whom the Nation can repose in greater confidence. I thank you for the good opinion you are pleased to express, & should I be called to discharge the high trust for which many have thought me qualified & worthy, my anxious care will be to act as efficiently as I can; declaring to you at the same time that the preference of another will bring with it no unpleasant sensation whatever. Present me respectfully to your Lady, Mr Colden, Lady, & family. be pleased to say to your brother Genl Swartwout, with what sincere regret I learned when I called at Genl Browns to pay my respects to him (having the day before thro misapprehension called at Browns Hotel where I thought he put up) I was informed that on that morning he had left for New York. Present me respectfully to him & believe me to be very respectfully your friend.

ANDREW JACKSON

COLO SAMUEL SWARTWOUT

— B —

WASHINGTON
March 4th 1824

DEAR SIR

Accept my thanks for your friendly letter of the 1st Instant which has just reached me. You are right in supposing me pretty much engaged, not in attending however to Legislative matters, for indeed, there are so many, who by their itch for *discoursing*, seem desirous to enlighten and inform the community and their brethren associates, that I am content rather to be a listener, than an actor: I have however a numerous list of correspondents to attend to, inasmuch as many of my old soldiers in arms, hearing that I have turned politician, prefer sending their long standing & almost obsolete claims to me, in the hope that I may be able to do something for them. An old soldier you know, should not in time of peace forget his old associates, nor do they permit it, of course I have many inquiries to reply to, for outstanding and unremunerated services.

But notwithstanding this, I have some little leisure time on my hand, when it is a pleasure to me, to hear from, & to answer my friends. It will allways afford me pleasure I assure you, to hear from you; & should I prove in default at any time, you will at once attribute it to the true account.

Regarding the *particular* subject of your letter, you are sufficiently acquainted with me, & with my principles to accord with this remark, that of all men in the country I can know least about matters going on. The world calls me, & the world believes me, a wonderfully ambitious man, bent upon my own purposes, & regardless of all else besides. If I know anything of myself, I can at least venture to say, that they are greatly mistaken, & that they do not know me.

I have seen & enjoyed much of the honor, the confidence, and the regard of my country, and it is gratefull to me, because that it has been extended without any covert solicitation on my part; yet had it never dreamed of me for any higher future part, than that of a private citizen, & suffered me on my own farm, to have been a spectator, rather than an actor, *in events to come*, I should have been contented & happy. Mankind may, or may not, believe it; & surely what I say will not convince them to the contrary; yet with truth can I, & do I say, that in nothing in which I have been engaged, did I ever look to myself. I never yet have been, & hope never to be placed in any situation where fear & trembling shall overtake me, in discharge of my duty; & where that is discovered, with a conviction arising that my country may be benefitted by my acts, I shall proceed regardless of censure. I am getting my dear Sir rather too far advanced in life now, to be goaded by feelings of improper ambition. The alone wish of my heart, is that the country in which I live, & of which I am truly proud, may for all time to come continue free, prosperous, & happy as she is, & has been. A man of fifty-seven, should be without any feelings of ambition, except what duty to the interest of his country & a regard for his own honor & character may dictate.

I am Sir with great respect & esteem, your most obdt servt

ANDREW JACKSON

SAM'L SWARTWOUT
New York

— C —

HERMITAGE near NASHVILLE

Sept'br 27th 1824

MY DEAR SIR

Your letter of the 4th instant, is this moment received, for which, & the information by it, accept my thanks.

Be assured that the friends of Mr. ADAMS when they assert that I have "abandoned the field in his favour", not only are guilty of the grossest misrepresentation, but practice an unpardonable outrage upon the principles which I have uniformly carried with me in all my public service: viz. never to seek or decline office, but to leave the selection of all incumbents to the free will of the people, untrameled by any exercise of influence inconsistent with the perfect right to judge the qualifications. As therefore the people have taken up my name in opposition to others, the idea of my being withdrawn has been very properly scouted by yourself. This was hardly to have been looked for by Mr. A's friends, nor indeed from any who love the freedom, & sovereignty of the people; or who profess to do so.

Be pleased to present my kind salutations to your Lady, & believe me to be very respectfully

Your friend

ANDREW JACKSON

MAJOR SAM'L SWARTWOUT

— D —

CITY OF WASHINGTON

Dec'br 14th 1824

DR SIR

But for the little leisure I have had since my arrival at this place your letter of the 10th would have been earlier replied to.

I assure you my dear Sir that so far as my feelings stand staked on the late contest before the American people, I feel myself much gratified, and amply remunerated against everything of unpleasantness which abuse and slander has heaped upon me, in the recollection and hope that my friends have been actuated by the purest principles & motives. I recollect with pride & pleasure that in no one instance have I sought by

promise or management to draw to myself the good opinion of a single individual in society; and that so many should have preferred me to take charge & administer the affairs of our great & growing country, is to me a matter of the highest consolation, let the result now be as it may. There are doubtless many, who might discredit the assertion, tho you I hope will believe it, that upon this subject I am without any deep concern. I should be doing injustice to the feelings of those who with such a zeal & friendship have sustained me in this trial, were I to assert entire disregard about the matter, nor do I feel a disregard, particularly when I consider that so many of my fellow citizens have evinced a preference towards me. My thanks are due to them, and the[y] are most cheerfully extended; yet I declare to you, that if any favorable result could be secured thro any intrigue, management, or promises to be made on my part, I would at once unhesitatingly & without reserve spurn anything of success. You must not understand me with any other meaning than that which is my object to convey, it is this; that the choice of a President is a matter for the people:—to be installed against their will no man could calculate upon a happy or beneficial administration; neither credit to himself, or advantage to his country could be the result of his success; & therefore do I repeat, & assure you that I should feel myself an unhappy, perhaps degraded man, should anything of management or arrangement contrary to that consent place me in the Executive chair: a turbulent time will be the lot of that man who may come in thro any channel save that of a preference by the people; & god grant it may always be so. To say I have nothing of concern about the office would be doing injustice to the kind feelings of those who have sustained me, and would wear the appearance of affectation; it is my design merely to say, that I should prefer to remain a plain cultivator of the soil as I am, than occupy that which is truly the first office in the world, if the voice of the nation was against it. With these sentiments I have lived, and with them I hope to die.

I have toiled for my country, and the advantages she has derived, I hope, from my services are to me a pleasing reflection; and to me it is of higher importance, that our happiness & plain republican institutions should be well maintained, than

that this or that man shall take charge of our destinies. I have risked much for the liberties of our country, and my anxious & sincere prayer is, that they may long endure.

Who shall rule is of less importance, than how he may claim to rule or Govern when in power.

The person of whom you speak is well known to me, & has been for a long time. with you I agree that he is a timid undecided man; for his own sake I could wish it otherwise, for the caution you have given receive my thanks & I will profit by the suggestion.

Mrs. J respects you will please present to Mrs Swartwout, and accept for yourself the assurance of my great regard

I am yr most ob'dt serv't

ANDREW JACKSON

MAJOR SAM'L SWARTWOUT

— E —

WASHINGTON CITY Feb'y 1825

SIR.

A number of your fellow citizens who are assembled in this City from different States of the Union, with the confident expectation of seeing the universal wishes of the Nation fulfilled by your elevation to the Chief Magistracy thereof; Being disappointed in this respect however, they are desirous of testifying their attachment and regard for you by soliciting the pleasure of your company at a public entertainment to be given at Williamson's Hotel tomorrow afternoon at 5 o'clock. We are very respectfully your fellow citizens.

SAM'L SWARTWOUT of N. Jersey

JOHN CONRAD, of Pennsylvania

WM. ROBINSON, of Virginia

J. O. HANLON, of So. Ca.

Committee

Gen'l ANDREW JACKSON

Washington City

— F —

GENTLEMEN

I have received your polite invitation in behalf of yourselves, and a number of citizens "in this City from different

States of the Union" to partake of a public entertainment tomorrow.

For your politeness pray accept my thanks. I cannot decline, and ought not; yet can I not refrain from suggesting to you, and my friends, the propriety, perhaps necessity, of forbearing to confer upon me at this moment, any such prominent mark of your regard. You cannot, I am persuaded, mistake my meaning. A decision of a matter, about which much public feeling & concern has been manifested, very lately has taken place; any evidence of kindness & regard, such as you propose, might by many be viewed as conveying with it exception, murmuring, and feelings of complaint, which I sincerely hope belong not to any of my friends. I would therefore beg leave to suggest to you, that on reflection, you may deem it proper to forbear any course to which possibly exception might be taken.

Please accept my thanks and tender them to the Gentlemen respectively

ANDREW JACKSON

Feb'ry 10th, 1825

Messrs

SAM'L SWARTWOUT

JOHN CONRAD

WM ROBINSON

J. O'HANLON

Committee

— G —

NEW YORK

18th feb 1825

To the Hon'l ANDREW JACKSON

Washington City

MY DEAR SIR

The singular reason which Mr. Clay has thought proper to give to Judge Brooke of Virginia, in his letter of the 28th ult. for the choice he had determined to make amongst the Presidential candidates, has excited more surprise than apprehension in the public mind.

Upon what grounds of analogy Mr. Clay can sustain his objections is not perceived. If we are to Judge of his meaning

by his words, he has certainly placed himself in a dilemma, and his character for learning must be considered in equal danger with his reputation for integrity. To apprehend disaster to our institutions from the same causes which occasioned the overthrow of the ancient Republics is to suppose the gov'ts the same and the people of this country as ignorant, oppressed and corrupted as they were. Their overthrow it is well known (as far as history may be credited) was occasioned by the ignorance & slavish oppression of the people and the corruption & profligacy of their rulers. But this is not the case with us thank God. Our people are free, are educated, intelligent & happy. The Gov't is founded in knowledge & virtue and derives its stability from the representative principle. These did not belong to the ancients & hence the difference between us & them. Ours is a government of trusts & responsibilities, of equal rights & obligations. And as all the power is derived directly from the people, who are the sovereigns of this country, they will never surrender their liberties (being free intelligent & virtuous) nor be alarmed for their security by the cries of a demagogue.

I have been induced to make these remarks from the perusal of Mr. Clay's letter published in one of our journals. The deep solicitude which he seems to feel for the welfare of his country is very interesting & truly remarkable. It appears that he "interrogated his conscience as to what he ought to do & that that faithful guide told him how to vote." It is really a pity that the same scrupulous conscience had not admonished him of his obligations to the constitution, whilst he was plotting the most deadly blow to the liberties of his country that it has ever rec'd, in the daring & open infraction of representative duty.

It is supposed by many that you intend to notice this production. I know not if you do, but if you should your friends feel persuaded that the same mild, & dignified language will characterize it, which so conspicuously marked your other productions during the Presidential controversy. Your dignified deportment & magnanimous submission to the recent outrage, have confirmed the opinions your friends had conceived of your character and drawn from your enemies

expressions of admiration & confidence, which nothing but the most exemplary conduct could have elicited.

I have said that many suppose that you intend to notice this production, and many imagine that you design to pass it over in silence, I must confess that there is a decided majority of those who entertain the latter opinion. It is really gratifying to your friends to witness the deep feeling that pervades the country upon the subject of the recent usurpation & your conduct under it. Society is filled with conjecture & anxiety—one person wonders whether you intend to hold Mr. Clay personally responsible, another conjectures you will not whilst all commend the silence with which you have hitherto treated the reports of your enemies. Intrigue & corruption have deprived the people of their President, but neither has been able to deprive the man of the people of his dignity, or of the fast hold he has in the affections of 10 millions of freemen. Your gallantry & services to your country, won the hearts of your friends, whilst your temperance & forbearance has subdued your enemies. Your silence & neglect of Henry Clay will mortify him more than volumes of reproaches. His card astonished all parties and he only waits an opportunity of being associated in controversy, with men of high character to imbezzel himself into decent society again. Every man, excepting his coadjutors and followers, consider him as irrevocably lost. And nothing, I think would have so great a tendency to reconcile Society to his name again & to weaken the moral odium of his disregard of the Representative obligation, as a spirited controversy with a dignified adversary. He has fallen so low that he can never rise again except from personal contact with one greatly above him.

I hope my dear Sir that you will consider these sentiments as proceeding from a heart deeply alive to your present situation. I feel the importance of every act you do, however minute, upon the present welfare, perhaps the future destiny of our country. The eyes of the whole Union are upon you. The deepest solicitude pervades all ranks of people. Jackson, greater in adversity than in prosperity, is the only man who can rally the Nation & restore the Gov't to its primitive purity. The calm, erect [?] and dignified deportment of the truly great,

will achieve a thousand times more than the best told tale or the sharpest satire.

Will you my dear Sir, pardon me for this long letter and believe that it is penned in the same spirit of affection & attachment with which I shall always remain

Your ob't Servant

SAM'L SWARTWOUT

ENDORSMENT

Copy Gen'l JACKSON 18th February 1825

This letter was written to endeavor to prevent Gen'l Jackson from noticing Mr. Clay's remark made to Judge Brook. It was not deemed necessary to publish it at the time, altho it may be thought advisable at some future day to show the immediate cause of the Gen'l's celebrated reply to it.

SAM'L SWARTWOUT

P. S. Mr. Clay in his address to his constituents amongst other defenses charged an understanding and concert between Gen'l JACKSON & myself, on this subject. I therefore state most solemnly that I never conversed with him on the subject while at Washington or elsewhere and that no communication ever took place between us, at any time or place, excepting the above or within,

SAM'L SWARTWOUT

WASHINGTON CITY Fbry 22d 1825

— H —

MY DEAR SIR

I was quite concerned that you left the city so suddenly, as that I was denied the pleasure of seeing & shaking you by the hand. You took with you however my best wishes for your safe arival home. I beg you to present to Mrs. S. my & Mrs. Jackson's affectionate regard.

Yesterday I rec'd your communication adverting to the reasons and defence presented by Mr. Clay to Judge Brooks why duty & reflection imposed upon him the necessity of standing in opposition to me, because of my being as he is pleased to style me, "a Military Chieftain." I had before seen

the letter; first when it appeared, I did entertain the opinion, that perhaps some notice of it might be necessary, for the reason that the expression seemed to carry with it more the appearance of personality than any thing else; and could the opinion be at all entertained, that it could meet the object, which doubtless was intended, to prejudice me in the estimation of my countrymen, I might yet consider some notice of it necessary; such a belief however I cannot entertain, without insulting the generous testimonial with which by ninety-nine electors of the people I have been honoured.

I am well aware that this term "Military Chieftain" has for some time past been a cant phrase with Mr Clay & certain of his retainers; but the vote with which by the people I have been honored, is enough to satisfy me, that the prejudice by them, sought to be produced availed but little. This sufficient for me. I entertain a deep and heartfelt gratitude to my country, for the confidence & regard she has manifested towards me, leaving to prejudiced minds whatever they can make of the epithet "Military Chieftain."

It is for an ingenuity stronger than mine to conceive what idea was intended to be conveyed by the term. It is very true that early in life, even in the days of boyhood, I contributed my mite to shake off the yoke of tyranny, and to build up the fabric of free government; and when lately our country was involved in war, having the commission of Major Gen'l of Militia in Tennessee, I made an appeal to the patriotism of the western citizens, when 3000 of them went with me to the field, to support her Eagles. If this can constitute me a "Military Chieftain" I am one. Aided by the patriotism of the western people, and an indulgent providence, it was my good fortune to protect our frontier border from the savages, & successfully to defend an important & vulnerable point of our Union. Our lives were risked, privations endured, sacrifices made, if Mr. Clay pleases, Martial law declared, not with any view of personal aggrandisement, but for the preservation of all and everything that was valuable, the honor safety & glory of our country. Does this constitute a "Military Chieftain"? and era all our brave men in war, who go forth to defend their rights, & the rights of their country to be termed Military

Chieftains, and therefor denounced? if so, the tendency of such a doctrine may be, to arrest the ardor of usefull and brave men, in future times of need & peril: with me it shall make no difference; for my country at war I would aid assist & defend her rights, let the consequences to myself be what they might. I have as you very well know, by some of the designing politicians of this country, been charged with taking bold & high-handed measures; but as they were not designed for any benefit to myself I should under similar circumstances not refrain from a course equally bold; that man who in time of difficulty & danger shall halt at any course, necessary to maintain the rights & privileges and independence of the country, is unsuited to authority; and if these opinions & sentiments shall entitle me to the name & character of a Military Chieftain I am content so to be considered, satisfied too for Mr. Clay if he chooses, to represent to the citizens of the West, that as the reason why in his opinon I meritted not his & their confidence.

Mr. Clay never yet has risked himself for his country, sacrificed his repose, or made an effort to repel an invading foe; of course his "conscience" assured him that it was altogether wrong in any other man to lead his countrymen to battle & victory. He who fights, and fights successfully must according to his standard be held up as a "Military Chieftain": even Washington could he again appear among us might be so considered, because he dared to be a virtuous and successfull soldier, an honest statesman, & a correct man. It is only when overtaken by disaster & defeat, that any man is to be considered a safe politician & correct statesman.

Defeat might to be sure have brought with it one benefit, it might have enabled me to escape the notice and animadversions of Mr. Clay but considering that by an opposite result, my country has been somewhat benefitted, I rather prefer it even with the opprobrium & censure which he seems disposed to extend. To him thank god I am in no wise responsible, there is a purer tribunal to which in preference I would refer myself—to the Judgment of an enlightened patriotic & uncorrupted people—to that tribunal I would rather appeal whence is derived whatever reputation either he or I are possessed of.

By a refference there, it will be ascertained that I did not solicit the office of President, it was the frank & flattering call of the freeman of this country, not mine, which placed my name before the nation; when they failed in their colleges to make a choice, no one beheld me seeking thro art or management to entice any Representative in Congress from a conscientious responsibility to his own, or the wishes of his constituents. No mid-night taper burnt by me; no secret conclaves were held, or cabals entered into, to persuade any to a violation of pledges given, or of instructions received. By me no plans were concerted to impair the pure principles of our Republican institutions, or to frustrate that fundamental one which maintains the supremacy of the peoples will; on the contrary, having never in any manner either before the people or Congress in the slightest manner interfered with the question, my conscience stands void of offence, & will go quietly with me, heedless of the insinuations of any, who thro management may seek an influence, not sanctioned by merit.

Demagogues I am persuaded have in times past, done more injury to the cause of freedom & the rights of man, than ever did a "Military Chieftain,"; and in our country, at least in times of peace, should be more feared. I have seen something of this in my march thro life, and have seen some men too, making the boldest professions who were more influenced by selfish views & considerations, than ever they were by any workings of an honest conscience.

I became a soldier for the good of my country: difficulties met me at every step; I thank god it was my good fortune to surmount them. The war over & peace restored I sought to retire again to my farm, & to private life, where but for the call made by my country to the Senate I should have contentedly remained. I never yet have been a hanger on upon office & power, or was willing to hold any post, longer than I could be usefull to my country, not myself, and I trust I never shall. If this makes me so, I am a "Military Chieftain."

I had intended visitting Philadelphia and hoped probably I again might have seen you in person but the health of Mrs.

Jackson may prevent me, should I not have the pleasure of seeing you rest assured of my sincere friendship & esteem.

I am very respectfully

Yr mo. ob'dt. servt.

ANDREW JACKSON

SAM'L SWARTWOUT, Esq'r

— I —

HERMITAGE near NASHVILLE T.

May 16th 1825

MY DEAR SIR

Your friendly letters of the 2nd & 5ult reached me by due course of mail, and would have been replied to when rec'd had my health permitted.

Owing to the fatigue I underwent on my Journey home, brought on me a severe affliction that confined me for many days: The arival of Gen'l Lafayette aroused me from my bed to hail him welcome, which retarded my recovery, and has prevented me until now from replying to your letters.

I had seen Mr Clays laboured address to his constituents before your letters reached me, I viewed it (as it is generally viewed here) the dying struggle of a political gambler who having abandoned his political principles, & the expressed wishes of his constituents, sacrificed at the altar of self agrandisement; and then forsooth, whiningly asks forgiveness for his corruption, because all this was done with the sole view of bringing himself into the office of Secretary of State,—from whence, by "*the safe precedents established*" he would of course step into the Presidential chair. I must confess there is more candour in this *precious confession* than good common sense. Your view of the subject is certainly correct, and the course pointed out, I had determined to adopt, before your friendly letters had reached me. Still Mr Clay had left himself in his address, so open to a severe scourging that it has been with difficulty I could withhold my pen. I too could have unfolded some "*voluntary information given,*" that would have been usefull to a full understanding of the corrupt course of Mr Clays friends & himself. The information given, first to Major Eaton, then to Mr. Kreamer, by a Representative from

Pennsylvania, that they might communicate it to me, and which, on their refusal to be the organ, he personally communicated to me, would be an important link in the portrait of the corrupt scenes at Washington, of which Mr Clay has become the most conspicuous character. I think with you that he has fallen below anything but contempt, he never can rise again except by noticing him in such a manner, that he & his friends, can cry out persecution. Therefore for the present I have determined to be silent. If a time should arise when I conceive it proper for me to speak, I will endeavour to speak to the point, and with that energy and freedom, that the subject may require, regardless of consequences, when you will find that this *braggadocio will cower*.

I have with pleasure perused the letter of my Revolutionary friend Mr Little; he breathes the sentiments of the patriot of 76, who fought, & suffered privations to obtain the blessings we now enjoy, and who wishes to perpetuate the pure principles of our Republican institutions to our latest posterity. I have no doubt but he is an honest man, who in my estimation, is "the noblest work of god." Should you see him present me respectfully to him.

Mrs Jackson health is perfectly restored; as soon as we got on the mountains, the healthfull breezes operated as a specific, and she mended by the hour, she is now in good health and Joins me in the kindest salutations to Mrs Swartwout and yourself.

I shall be happy to hear from you often. Accept the expressions of my sincere friendship & esteem.

ANDREW JACKSON

Mr. SAM'L SWARTWOUT.

P. S. My general health is good, my affliction arose from fatigue & riding on horseback, which occasioned an inflammation in the rectum, which communicated to the bladder, & affected the prostrate glands; rest has removed all pain.

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