

therefore, that all parties should have sought to avail themselves of his great and growing popularity, and that he should have been nominated not only by independent bodies of the people, but by regularly organized county and State conventions, and legislative caucuses in several of the States. There seemed, indeed, to be almost one universal voice from one end of the Union to the other in favor of his nomination: and numerous letters were addressed to him in Mexico, by individuals and public meetings, urging upon him the acceptance of a nomination for the Presidency. Although a formal reply to all of these letters imposed upon him an amount of labor that few men in his position, and with the great responsibilities it necessarily devolved upon him, could have performed, he replied to them with that directness and candor which was so peculiar a part of his character. In these replies, he frankly avowed himself a Whig, whenever circumstances seemed to require or justify a declaration of his political sentiments. One of the earliest, and indeed the first of his letters on the Presidential question, is annexed, as an illustration of his manly frankness, as well as to show the political bias of his mind. It was addressed to the Editor of the New Lisbon, (Ohio,) Palladium, and was written at Matamoras, but little more than two months after his victories on the Rio Grande.

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF OCCUPATION, }
Matamoras, July 21, 1846.

DEAR SIR:—By yesterday's mail, I received your letter of the 19th June, and have given the subject to which it refers some serious reflection and consideration. I feel very grateful to you, sir, and to my fellow-citizens, who with you have expressed the very flat-

tering desire to place my name in nomination for the Presidency, but it becomes me sincerely and frankly to acknowledge to you that for that office I have no aspirations whatever. Although no politician, having always held myself aloof from the clamors of party politics, I am a Whig, and shall ever be devoted in individual opinion to that party.

Even if the subject which you have in your letter opened to me, were acceptable at any time, I have not the leisure to attend to it now: the vigorous prosecution of the war with Mexico, so important to the interests of my country, demands every moment of my present time, and it is my great desire to bring it to a speedy and honorable termination.

With my best wishes for your health and prosperity,
I am sincerely yours,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major General U. S. A.

There are no concealments in this letter. He states with his accustomed frankness that he is a Whig in principle, and shall ever be devoted in individual opinion to that party. This explicit avowal, it would naturally have been supposed, would have left no one in doubt in respect to his political sentiments. Yet such was not its effect. Wide-spread and general as the determination amongst the people to make him a candidate for the Presidency evidently was before his return from Mexico, that determination was strengthened by his arrival in the United States. The enthusiasm which before seemed to have reached its highest point, was greatly increased by this event, and it soon became apparent amongst leading Whig politicians in different parts of the country, that he not only would become a candidate, but that no other name could be brought forward with equal chances of success. It is

true, there was a strong opposition to him in several of the free States, principally on the ground of his supposed prejudices in favor of the institution of Slavery. But though he was a Southern man by birth and education, he had given evidence by his life and public services, and inspired sufficient confidence by his enlarged and liberal mind, as well as by his high character, that he was an *American* in feeling—that his views were not circumscribed by mere State or sectional boundaries, and that if called to preside over the destinies of the nation, he would be the President of the whole people. There were again another class, also confined principally to the North and to the Whig party, who seemed to entertain doubts upon the policy of nominating General Taylor, on the ground that he was not known, or believed by them not to be strongly enough identified with the principles and policy of the Whig party. The evidences of his decided Whig preferences multiplied so rapidly during the progress of the Presidential canvass, that these doubts, in a great measure, gradually wore away. But in proportion as the knowledge of his Whig predilections lessened opposition from that quarter, it increased amongst the Democratic party, until he was finally abandoned as a candidate by the Democrats in every instance where he had been formally nominated; and all intention of making him the Democratic nominee was relinquished long before the time for selecting a candidate had arrived. General Taylor, therefore, in the end, became to be only urged as a candidate by members of the Whig party, and by one or two independent organizations in particular States.

Many letters from General Taylor upon the subject of the Presidency had in the mean time been publish-

ed, each of which contributed more or less to change, in some degree, his relation to the two great parties of the country. Amongst others which had an important influence upon the public mind, was one written at an early stage of the canvass to the Hon. Joseph R. Ingersoll, a distinguished member of Congress from Pennsylvania, but the explicit avowals of which, in regard to his political opinions, had been nearly lost sight of until General Taylor's prominence as a candidate, and the doubts already mentioned in relation to his political preferences, were the cause of bringing it again more directly before the public. It is here placed on record as the most direct avowal of his principles that had yet been made public, and the most explicit expression of his views and feelings upon the possible contingency of becoming a candidate for the Presidency. The same generous frankness and shrinking modesty, (if such a term may be applied to a man of General Taylor's character,) that so pre-eminently distinguish all his official despatches, will be remarked in every sentence. It was written at Monterey, three months before his withdrawal from the army in Mexico, and bears evidence of the freedom of a confidential correspondence. But it nevertheless displays the sentiments of a sound head, an honest heart, and a great mind.

MONTEREY, MEXICO, August 3d, 1847.

DEAR SIR:—I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your esteemed letter of the 7th ult., which has just reached me, in which you say:

"I had the honor of being called upon last evening to address a mass meeting of the Whigs of the city and county of Philadelphia. At that meeting, your name was frequently mentioned in connection with the office

of chief magistrate. I stated in that meeting, as I had before stated in my place in the House of Representatives at Washington, that you were a Whig; not indeed an ultra partisan Whig, but a Whig in principle."

All of which is entirely correct; and after the discussion which occurred in both Houses of Congress, at the last session, growing out of the capitulation of Monterey, in which discussion you thought proper to defend my conduct in regard to that transaction, when assailed somewhat, if not entirely, on party grounds, I can hardly imagine how any one who was present and heard the speeches on that occasion, or read them after they were published, could well mistake the complexion of my politics. At the last Presidential canvass, it was well known to all with whom I mixed, Whigs and Democrats—for I had no concealments in the matter—that I was decidedly in favor of Mr. Clay's election, and would now prefer seeing him in that office to any individual in the Union.

I must say, I have no wish for the Presidency, and cannot consent to be exclusively the candidate of a party; and if I am one at all, or to be so at the coming election, it must be borne in mind that I have been, or will be so by others, without any agency of mine in the matter. Independent of my wishes, I greatly doubt my qualifications to discharge the duties properly of an office which was filled and adorned by a Washington, a Jefferson, as well as several others of the purest, wisest, and most accomplished statesmen and patriots of this or any other age or country. I almost tremble at the thoughts of the undertaking. Yet if the good people think proper to elevate me, at the proper time to the highest office in their gift, I will feel bound to serve them, if not from inclination, from a principle of

duty; and will do so honestly and faithfully, to the best of my ability, in accordance with the principles of the Constitution, as near as I can do so, as it was construed and acted on by our Presidents, two of whom, at least, acted so conspicuous a part in framing and completing that instrument, as well as in putting it in operation.

But very many important changes may take place at home and abroad, between now and the time for holding the election for our next Chief Magistrate—so much so, as to make it desirable, for the general good, that some one with more experience in state affairs, should be selected as a candidate, than myself. And could he be elected, I will not say I would yield my pretensions, for I have not the vanity to believe I have any for that distinguished station; but would acquiesce not only with pleasure in such an arrangement, but would rejoice that the Republic had one citizen more worthy and better acquainted than I am, to discharge the important duties appertaining to that position; and no doubt there are thousands. Be this as it may, if I ever occupy the White House, it must be by the spontaneous movement of the people, without any action of mine in relation to it, without pledges other than I have previously stated—a strict adherence to the provisions of the Constitution, so I could enter on the arduous and responsible duties appertaining to said office, untrammelled; so that I could be the President of the country, and not of a party.

With considerations of great respect and esteem,
I am your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR.

To J. R. INGERSOLL, Esq., Philadelphia.

But notwithstanding all thought of nominating Gen-

eral Taylor had been abandoned by the Democratic party, and it had been conceded on every side that he was identified in principle and feeling with the Whig party, he had never been claimed as an ultra partisan. In every communication he had made to the public, upon the subject of the Presidency, he uniformly declared, that though a Whig, he should, if elected, go into the Presidential chair untrammelled by any pledges whatever, and must be permitted to maintain a position of perfect independence of all parties, claiming to look only to the Constitution, in the spirit and mode in which it was acted upon by the earlier Presidents, and the best interests of the whole country, as the guide for his conduct. An admirable and comprehensive declaration of his doctrines, however, and the principles upon which he should administer the government, if promoted to the office of Chief Magistrate of the nation, is contained in the celebrated "Allison letter." The sentiments avowed in this letter are such as would have done honor to the noblest patriot of the Revolution, and it embodies as perfect a political chart as the wisdom of man ever devised. If the doctrines it lays down are taken as his political guide, as the lofty character General Taylor has established by forty years of public service gives assurance they will be, the original purity of the government will be restored, and the "golden age" of the Republic will date from his inauguration as President of the United States, on the fifth of March, eighteen hundred and forty-nine. The following is a copy of this justly admired declaration of principles:

BARON ROUGE, April 12, 1848

DEAR SIR:—My opinions have so often been been misconceived and misrepresented, that I deem it due to

myself, if not to my friends, to make a brief exposition of them upon the topics to which you have called my attention.

• I have consented to the use of my name as a candidate for the Presidency. I have frankly avowed my own distrust of my fitness for this high station; but having, at the solicitation of many of my countrymen, taken my position as a candidate, I do not feel at liberty to surrender that position until my friends manifest a wish that I should retire from it. I will then most gladly do so. I have no private purposes to accomplish, no party projects to build up, no enemies to punish—nothing to serve but my country.

I have been very often addressed by letter, and my opinions have been asked upon almost every question that might occur to the writers, as affecting the interest of their country or their party. I have not always responded to these inquiries, for various reasons.

I confess, while I have great cardinal principles which will regulate my political life, I am not sufficiently familiar with all the minute details of political legislation to give solemn pledges to exert myself to carry out this, or defeat that measure. I have no concealment. I hold no opinion which I would not readily proclaim to my assembled countrymen; but crude impressions upon matters of policy, which may be right to-day and wrong to-morrow, are perhaps not the best tests of fitness for office. One who cannot be trusted without pledges, cannot be confided in merely on account of them.

I will proceed, however, now to respond to your inquiries.

First—I reiterate what I have so often said: I am a Whig. If elected, I would not be the mere President

of a party. I would endeavor to act independent of party domination. I should feel bound to administer the government untrammelled by party schemes.

Second—The veto power. The power given by the Constitution to the Executive to interpose his veto, is a high conservative power; but in my opinion should never be exercised, except in cases of clear violation of the Constitution, or manifest haste and want of consideration by Congress. Indeed, I have thought that for many years past, the known opinions and wishes of the Executive have exercised an undue and injurious influence upon the legislative department of the government; and for this cause I have thought our system was in danger of undergoing a great change from its true theory. The personal opinions of the individual who may happen to occupy the Executive chair, ought not to control the action of Congress upon questions of domestic policy; nor ought his objections to be interposed where questions of constitutional power have been settled by the various departments of government, and acquiesced in by the people.

Third—Upon the subject of the tariff, the currency, the improvement of our great highways, rivers, lakes, and harbors, the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected and carried out by the Executive.

Fourth—The Mexican war. I sincerely rejoice at the prospect of peace. My life has been devoted to arms, yet I look upon war, at all times and under all circumstances, as a national calamity, to be avoided if compatible with the national honor. The principles of our government, as well as its true policy, is opposed to the subjugation of other nations and the dismemberment of other countries by conquest. In the language

of the great Washington, "Why should we quit our own to stand on foreign ground? In the Mexican war our national honor has been vindicated; and in dictating terms of peace, we may well afford to be forbearing and magnanimous to a fallen foe.

These are my opinions on the subjects referred to by you, and any reports or publications, written or verbal, from any source, differing in any essential particular from what is here written, are unauthorized and untrue.

I do not know that I shall again write upon the subject of national politics. I shall engage in no schemes, no combinations, no intrigues. If the American people have not confidence in me, they ought not to give me their suffrages. If they do not, you know me well enough to believe me, when I declare I shall be content. I am too old a soldier to murmur against such high authority.

Z. TAYLOR.

TO CAPT. J. S. ALLISON.