

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE PERIOD FROM 1812 TO 1830.

The Republicans tried conclusions with their opponents again in 1812, but the people of the state, especially those who had shipping and commercial interests, were great sufferers from the embargo and non-intercourse policy of Madison's administration, and were alarmed at the prospect of war with Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> At a large meeting of young men, held in the state house in Providence, just before election, strong resolutions were passed, denouncing the approaching war, and recommending the support of the Federalist ticket. The latter won by an increased majority. At the May session a joint committee of the general assembly was appointed to voice the latter's sentiments regarding public affairs, to draw up a statement concerning the exposed condition of the coast, and to recommend instructions to Rhode Island members of Congress. In accordance with the report of this committee, the assembly adopted a resolution, opposing a declaration of war against Great Britain, and requested the senators of the state in Congress to endeavor to secure the removal of restrictions on commerce. At the July session a council of war of six leading citizens of the state was elected to confer with and advise Governor Jones. A petition, adopted at a meeting of freeholders in Providence, and presented at the October session, prayed for the enactment of a law forbidding the "distillation of grain into spirituous liquors". The house negated the proposition by a decisive vote, but Speaker Mason, of Providence, who seems to have been largely interested in a distillery, was declared by a Republican newspaper to have indignantly asked if

to this period, see S. H. Allen's "Federal Ascendency in 1812" in *Narr. Hist. Reg.* vii, 381.

<sup>1</sup> The sentiment in Rhode Island, to quote the words of Benjamin Cowell, was that "a British war is unnecessary as it would be unjust". (See his anonymous *Letter to a Member of Congress on the Subject of a British War*, p. 32.) The Rhode Island representatives in Congress, Richard Jackson and E. R. Potter, addressed their constituents with a pamphlet, dated March 16, 1812, in which they urged them to cast off all party lines and vote against those favoring such measures.

he was to be allowed to conduct his own business, or if he was to be hampered by restrictive legislation.<sup>1</sup>

When news of the declaration of war reached Providence, bells were tolled, stores closed, and flags half-masted. The Providence Gazette of June 27, 1812, in commenting upon the report of the committee on foreign relations recommending war, declared that "they reported in several heavy columns their malignant, hostile manifesto against Great Britain, and with gigantic strides and ostentatious swellings, had thrown down the gauntlet of defiance to John Bull, in favor of the atrocious murderer and incendiary Napoleon Bonaparte". It declared the action of Congress "a work of darkness". "We are now", it said, "to contend against an oppressed nation gloriously struggling for the preservation of its liberties". Although the supporters of the national administration still constituted a strong minority, public opinion in the state was generally opposed to war. On the night of July 20 a small schooner which was being fitted out in Providence for a privateer, was taken down the river and scuttled.

At the presidential election in November, the Madison ticket received only 2,084 votes to 4,032 for DeWitt Clinton, the Federalist candidate. In the August previous, Richard Jackson, jr., and Elisha R. Potter, the Federalist candidates, were elected to Congress over Jonathan Russell and Isaac Wilbour, by about 1,300 majority.

A committee was appointed at the February session of the general assembly in 1813 to consider whether any violation of the compact by which Rhode Island had accepted the Federal constitution had occurred. In messages to the assembly, Governor Jones discussed the state's relations to the Federal government, and stated that, in accordance with the advice of the council of war, he had determined that the final authority as to the use of the state's militia outside of its borders rested with him and not with the President. The 500 men whom President Madison required as the state's quota, were, however, drafted and dispatched outside of the state upon Madison's requisition.<sup>2</sup> The Governor delivered messages on the subject at each session. The burden of them was that the country had been egged on to an unjust war, a war especially detrimental to Rhode Island's interests; that the coast of the state was in a defenseless condition; that the general government had removed the garrisons from the Newport forts, and had invited

<sup>1</sup> James B. Mason was speaker of the house from 1812 to 1814, and was elected representative to Congress in 1814 and 1816. He owned a gin distillery building at India Point, Providence, which was carried on during Mason's political career by Darius Sessions.

<sup>2</sup> For Rhode Island's participation in the War of 1812, see the bibliography at the end of the last volume, under HISTORY 1790-1840; also chapter on "The Wars and the Militia." For Commodore Perry's victory at Lake Erie, Sept 10, 1813, see the bibliography under BIOGRAPHY. See also chapter on "The Sea Force in War Time.

the state to garrison them with state troops, but required the latter to accept the commands of a regular army officer. A memorial to the President, demanding the protection of the Federal government was adopted, and a resolution was passed, instructing the Governor to employ patrols to guard against surprise by the enemy. A committee was appointed at the June session to collect evidence regarding Rhode Island seamen detained against their wishes in the service of foreign powers, and to take the most efficient measures to secure their release. The committee's report, rendered at the June session, showed that the impressed seamen were 19 in number. No opposition was made to the Federal state ticket—which was known as the "Peace Prox."

In his message to the general assembly in February, 1814, Governor Jones used extremely strong language in denouncing the action of the Federal government. The reverses which had occurred to our arms were apparently a just retribution, caused by an all-wise Providence because of the wickedness of the administration in bringing on an unjust war. "We should, however", the Governor said, "indulge the hope that our national rulers will remember that there is a point at which oppression must stop, and that, notwithstanding our respect for the laws and our strong attachment to the union of the states, there may be evils greater than can be apprehended from a refusal to submit to unconstitutional laws". This was a thinly veiled threat of secession. The state joined with Massachusetts and Connecticut, two counties of New Hampshire and one county of Vermont in holding the Hartford convention.<sup>1</sup> At the September session, Governor Jones was authorized to borrow \$100,000 for the purpose of providing clothes and other necessaries for the state troops in the service of the general government, and he was requested to order the militia to march to the relief of a neighboring state, in case of the invasion of the latter's territory.

The Republican minority in the state criticised the state government because it did not assume the direct taxes assessed against the state, as it could, they claimed, have obtained a rebate. The freemen of Little Compton sent in a petition at the March session requesting such action, but the Federalists claimed that the direct tax law was unconstitutional, and refused to recognize it. The Federalist watchword, which accompanied its "Peace Prox" in April, of this year, was "No war; no direct taxes to support it; but Jones, peace, and freetrade together". The Republicans again allowed the election to go by default. They seemed to derive some consolation, however, from the fact that Governor Jones's vote was growing smaller each year, a circumstance

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island's delegates were Benjamin Hazard, Daniel Lyman, Edward Manton, and Samuel Ward. The proceedings of the convention were published in 1833 in Dwight's *History of the Hartford Convention*.

which was, of course, attributable to the lack of opposition. At the congressional election in August, the Federalist candidates, James B. Mason and John L. Boss, jr., were elected by seven or eight hundred majority in a full vote.

At the February session of the general assembly in 1815, Governor Jones reported that the state had advanced the money to pay for clothing and other needful articles for Major Wood's battalion of Rhode Island soldiers in the United States service, and that the state also had advanced the money to pay that command a portion of the money due its soldiers upon the assurance of the United States authorities that the sum would be refunded. The Governor laid before the assembly the proceedings of the Hartford convention and commended its action. The Governor's council of war was continued through the year.<sup>1</sup>

The Republicans held a convention of delegates from the several towns, and nominated Peleg Arnold for Governor in opposition to Governor Jones. The latter was re-elected, however, by a decisive majority, although the total vote was only 5,960. The Federalist majority in the house was 26. In November, 1815, the cotton manufacturers of Rhode Island sent a memorial to Congress asking for more protection.

The two parties had another trial of strength in April, 1816. Jeremiah Thurston of Hopkinton was placed on the ticket as their candidate for Lieutenant-Governor by the Federalists. The Republicans nominated Nehemiah R. Knight, then clerk of the United States Circuit Court, for Governor. The campaign was fought upon war issues. The Republicans accused their opponents of disloyalty, while the Federalists, in their appeal to the people, commended Governor Jones for having refused to obey the President's call for troops. Governor Jones received 3,591 votes, and was elected by 332 majority—452 less than the year before. The Federalist strength in the house was somewhat less than usual, although it was still double that of their opponents. The leaders of the party, however, were sensible of the fact that their unpatriotic course during the war was a dead weight and must soon put them in the minority. Senator Howell's term in the United States senate was to expire on the 4th of the next March. It had always been customary to elect senators at the October session preceding the 4th of March when their term was to commence. Had the Federalists waited in this instance until October, they would have had to take the chance of defeat at the semi-annual election of house members in August. They had obtained an unquestioned majority in the grand committee. Still

<sup>1</sup> It was on September 28 of this year that the famous gale of 1815 occurred, causing tremendous damage throughout the state. (For accounts of this gale see *R. I. H. S. Publ.* ii, 202, 232.)

it was less than they had had since 1811, and they knew that the August election might go against them. Therefore they decided to hold the election in June, and thus make sure of the choice of a Federalist. They carried the house on a motion to go into grand committee for the purpose by a vote of 40 to 20. Then, in balloting for senator, the Republicans abstained from voting, and the Federalist candidate, James Burrill, jr., was elected unanimously. The Republicans made a great outcry over the affair, insisting that it was an act of usurpation. The Federalist defense was rather weak, and finally, to silence criticism, Judge Burrill, at the February session in 1817, sent in his resignation. The August house was nearly as strongly Federal as its predecessor, and Mr. Burrill did not risk much in resigning, for he was immediately re-elected, the Republicans, as on his previous election, abstaining from voting. The Federalists made no nominations for presidential electors in 1816, and the electoral vote of the state was cast for Monroe, the Republican candidate.

In view of the fact that no opposition had been made to Monroe in the previous November, the Federalists claimed that the Republicans ought not to oppose the Jones ticket in April, 1817, but the Republicans thought, that if it was a question of courtesy, the fact that they had not opposed the Federalist candidates for Congress in August, 1816, was a fair offset to the action, or non-action of their opponents in November. They again nominated Knight and Wilcox, and a warm campaign ensued. Political rallies were seldom held in the early days of the century. The issues of the day were generally explained by political pamphlets, or through the medium of the newspapers. During Washington's and Adams's administrations, when the Federalists experienced but little opposition in the state, the Governor and other state officers and Federalist leaders in the assembly were accustomed to hold an informal caucus at the February session, and decide upon the party "prox" to be supported at the state election in April. These caucuses were probably as representative of party sentiments as have been delegate conventions of a later date, but after the Republicans became strong, they often had a majority or a strong minority of the general assembly. At such times the legislative caucus was not sufficiently representative, and prominent Federalists not then members of the assembly were invited to meet in caucus with the Federalist assemblymen. The Republican caucuses were necessarily more democratic from the first, because the larger portion of the towns were represented by their opponents, and because many of their ablest leaders resided in towns that invariably sent Federalists to the assembly. Republicans in towns unrepresented by Republican members of the assembly were invited to send delegates to the Republican conventions, and thus the conventions of that party gradually became delegate conventions, while those of their opponents in time became in a certain sense mass

conventions, attended by leading members of their party. It is easy to understand, however, that as the general assembly was usually in session about the last of February, and as it contained a large proportion of the politicians of both parties, the town where it was then in session, and the state house itself were the most convenient places in which to hold these political conventions, and that they were, in fact, if not in name, largely in the nature of legislative caucuses.

When the opposing "proxies" were fairly launched, the party papers were filled with long political essays in the form of communications, setting forth the political issues as the writers understood them, in which personal abuse of the candidates of the opposite party appeared to be considered the most weighty arguments. The Federalists, during the time of the French Revolution and of the Bonaparte era which was its outcome, were accustomed to bestow the terms of "Jacobins" and "Democrats" upon their opponents; while the Republicans called the Federalists "Tories", "Monarchists" and "Aristocrats". For a few years, however, previous to 1817, the term "Jacobin" had gradually been falling into disuse on the part of their opponents, who had shown a desire to usurp the name of Republican by occasionally calling themselves "Federal Republicans". In the campaign which preceded the state election of 1817 there was a noticeable difference in their newspaper arguments from those of the previous year. They had lost the aggressive feature. Instead of commending Governor Jones for refusing to allow the militia to be marched outside the state, they sought now to defend his action. He thought that he was doing his duty; it was best for the state after all; and his action had really saved the state much expense at a time when it was hard for the people to pay their taxes; he had labored conscientiously for the best interests of his state. By such arguments they sought to defend and palliate conduct which their opponents declared was disloyal.<sup>1</sup> The Republican ticket was triumphant in a total vote of 7,830 by an average majority of less than 70. The Republicans cast 229 votes in Providence, which was 20 per cent. larger than their highest previous total, while Jones's vote in the town (544) was smaller than in 1816. A disagreeable incident occurred at Newport on election (inauguration) day, which led to a court martial of a militia officer and an exchange of compliments between the party organs. According to the usual custom regular troops had been sent from Fort Wolcott to participate in the parade, and the band of the fort was also loaned for the occasion. The latter marched to the

<sup>1</sup>This election gave rise to a well written electioneering pamphlet, addressed by a "Citizen" of Warwick *To the Freemen of the State of Rhode Island*, in which the author defends Governor Jones, and told his readers: "If you elect Mr. Knight and his friends, you elect many of the hirelings and tax-gatherers of a government, which, by its misconduct the last twelve years, has brought the country to a state of mourning and misery."

wharf to greet the Providence boat on its arrival. The band was placed under the orders of Captain Robert B. Cranston, a local militia officer who appeared to be acting, although in an unofficial capacity, as a master of ceremonies at that point. As the boat was tying at the wharf, Cranston called for some marches with which the band was unfamiliar. Thereupon, just as Governor Jones was stepping ashore, Cranston ordered the band to play the "Retreat". Although he soon had it changed to "Yankee Doodle", Governor Jones interpreted the affair as an intentional insult. He was still the captain-general and commander-in-chief of the militia, and as such demanded the respect and obedience of militia officers. Cranston disclaimed any intention of insulting his excellency, and the Republicans generally made light of the affair. But the Federalists still had a majority in the house, and at the following June session, a joint resolution was adopted ordering a committee of inquiry to consider the case. The committee, which was composed of members of both parties, declared Cranston's conduct "highly improper, and derogatory to the dignity and honor of the state". A court martial was convened, but it decided that it had no jurisdiction, as the accused officer was not on duty and was in civilian's clothes at the time.<sup>1</sup>

President Monroe made a northern tour in the summer of 1817. He reached Newport June 29, and the next day went to Fall River, and from there to Bristol. The steamer "Fire Fly" conveyed him from the latter place to Providence, where he arrived in the evening. The next day, after visiting points of interest in the town, and seeing the "original cotton mill" at Pawtucket, he proceeded on his way to Boston. The citizens and officials, generally without distinction of party, united in doing honor to the Chief Magistrate of the nation. He was greeted with military and civic parades, the ringing of bells, salutes, illuminations and addresses. That of the town council of Providence, which was supposed to have been written by a prominent Federalist politician,<sup>2</sup> was so cordial and complimentary in its character as to receive the commendation of the Republican local organ, the Columbian Phoenix, which seldom praised anything that emanated from a Federalist source. At the June session the senate, in view of the scarcity and high price of grain, passed an act, which was rejected by

<sup>1</sup> The proceedings of the court martial, as officially reported by the judge advocate, were published in 1817. Robert Bennie Cranston (1791-1873), although a Republican at this time, was subsequently found in the Whig ranks. His court martial did not cause him to lose caste in military circles, as he was made a lieutenant-colonel in 1818. Afterwards he was for a time sheriff of Newport county, and in 1837 was elected to Congress as a Whig, and was twice re-elected serving until 1843. In 1847 he was elected for the fourth term. He was afterwards elected mayor of Newport, but declined the office. In his will he bequeathed \$75,000 to those poor of Newport "who were too honest to steal and too proud to beg."

<sup>2</sup> Senator Burrill.

the house, prohibiting its use in the distillation of spirituous liquor between June 30 and September 30 of that year, under penalty of a fine of \$1,000, one-half of which was to go to the informer.<sup>1</sup> In the representative elections in August the Republicans elected 33 and the Federalists 39 members of the house.

At the February session of the assembly in 1818 a resolution was adopted calling for the records, papers and correspondence of the late council of war, and ordering them to be deposited with the secretary of state. The cotton and woolen manufacturers in and near Providence sent a petition to Congress, early in the year, reciting the condition of the two industries, and asking that the duties then existing upon foreign cotton and woolen products be made permanent.

The Republicans renominated Governor Knight and the other state officers in 1818, while their opponents issued a "Union Prox", with ex-Congressman Elisha R. Potter at the head. The Federalists seemed to have but little hope of winning. In their newspaper arguments they carefully abstained from abuse of their opponents and even avoided using the term "Federalist" in speaking of themselves. The total vote cast in this contest was the largest ever given at a gubernatorial election under the charter. Knight received 4,509, and Potter 3,893 votes. The Republicans had two majority in the house, and now controlled both chambers. A proposition introduced at the June session of the assembly to extend the right of suffrage to citizens who were not freeholders, but who paid taxes or served in the militia, was postponed to the next session. The congressional election in August was not contested by the Federalists, Samuel Eddy of Providence, secretary of state, and Nathaniel Hazard, speaker of the house, being chosen. At the October session a committee, appointed to consider and report upon certain recommendations in the Governor's message, reported that it was not prepared to recommend free schooling for persons employed in manufacturing establishments. A committee was appointed at this session to consider and report upon the expediency of amending the act regulating the manner of admitting freemen.

At the February session in 1819 a committee was appointed to consider the advisability of establishing free schools. Mr. Hine of Coventry introduced a resolution in the house requesting freemen, at the annual election in April, to express their opinions regarding the expediency of calling a convention to form a written constitution. On motion of Benjamin Hazard of Newport, the matter was postponed, and a committee was appointed to take the matter into consideration, and also consider and report regarding fraudulent practices at elec-

<sup>1</sup>The fact that the senate was then controlled by the Republicans leads to the suspicion that the advocates of this proposed prohibition measure had Congressman Mason's India Point distillery in mind and that the non-concurrence of the house in the measure was due to its having a Federalist majority.



tions. No opposition was made at the April election to the Republican ticket, although political lines were drawn in the choice of town representatives.

At the February session of the assembly in 1820, George Field of Cranston introduced a bill for the establishment of a free school system throughout the state, which, after a brief discussion, was postponed to a future session in order to obtain the sense of the freemen regarding the matter. A law was passed abolishing the summary process in the collection of debts, which had always been enjoyed by the banks. A bill passed the senate in June to extend the right of suffrage to citizens equipping themselves and serving in the militia. It was postponed by the house. The subject of a constitutional convention was quite generally discussed throughout the state this year. A convention was held in Providence to further such an object. Two of the Federalist semi-weeklies of the town united with the Republican organ in its advocacy, and one of the former<sup>1</sup> declared in an editorial "that a free people have for more than forty years submitted to a species of government, in theory, if not always in practice, as despotic as that of the autocrat of the Russias."

The Federalists made no contest in April, but they tried conclusions with their opponents in August in the congressional election, although they did not come out under their own colors, but hoisted the banner of the "People". They put in nomination, as the People's candidates Samuel W. Bridgham, a leading Federalist, and Job Durfee, of Tiverton. The latter came out in a card in the papers, declaring that his name had been used without his consent, and that he should vote for Messrs. Eddy and Hazard, the Republican candidates. Mr. Eddy had voted to admit Missouri at the late session of Congress, and the Federalists appealed to the anti-slavery sentiment of the people to encompass his defeat. Mr. Hazard, the other representative in Congress, was not very popular, and the Republicans were somewhat fearful of the result. But they feared Bridgham more than they did Durfee. They denounced the former because he was not a native of the State, and because he was a lawyer. The Providence Patriot in an editorial declared, "They (the Federalists) profess to be actuated by the cardinal principles of honesty, integrity and fair dealing, and yet they nominate a practicing lawyer!" One candidate of each party—Eddy and Durfee—were elected. No opposition was encountered by the Monroe candidates for electors, but the vote was very small—only 720 in all, of which Providence cast only 81.

The Republicans had a small majority in the assembly at the October session, and they elected James De Wolfe to the United States senate on November 4, to succeed William Hunter, whose term would expire

<sup>1</sup>The *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*, November 27, 1820.

on March 4, 1821. Some years before, Mr. De Wolfe had been extensively engaged in the slave trade, and when the Federalist journals called attention to this fact, he declared that it had been "many, many years" since he had trafficked in slaves, and that the greater portion of his property had been obtained in honorable employment.<sup>1</sup> Anti-slavery sentiment was very strong in New England at this time, and Senator Smith of South Carolina, in a speech in the winter of 1820-21, undertook to prove the insincerity of Rhode Island antagonism to slavery by showing the interest of the state in the African slave trade. He said that the law against the importation of slaves into his state had been suspended for four years, from 1800 to 1804, inclusive, and that during that time 59 Rhode Island vessels—nearly one-half of the whole number—had entered the port of Charleston with shiploads of African slaves, and of the 59, 10 had been owned by Senator-elect James De Wolfe.<sup>2</sup>

The Rhode Island Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry, which subsequently became an important factor in the industrial development of the state, was organized in 1820. It held its first fair in 1821 at Pawtuxet. The census of 1820 gave Providence a population of 11,767, of whom 5,118 were on the west side of the river. Westminster street was already beginning to rival "Cheapside" as a resort for ladies looking for bargains.<sup>3</sup> The rapid growth of the town about this time is shown by a writer in the Providence Gazette of September 5, 1820, who stated that he counted one day one hundred and seven wagons of fruit and vegetables at market, while only six years before the presence of forty-nine such wagons at market was a matter of surprise and remark. This year public lamps were erected at the expense of the town. A fire hook and ladder company was also established.

A resolution was passed at the January session of the general assembly in 1821, requiring town clerks to collect and transmit information regarding schools and the cost of the same in their respective towns. At the same session, Representative Dexter Ford of Providence introduced a resolution which passed both houses to submit the question of calling a constitutional convention to the people at the

<sup>1</sup> The *Providence Gazette* retorted: "More humane, honorable, successful and constitutional business—that of privateering!"

<sup>2</sup> Rhode Island's participation in the slave trade was indeed large. As far back as May 1, 1784, the *Newport Mercury* had admitted, "It is well known that inhabitants of this state have had a greater hand in the slave trade than any other on the continent", and the records show that this reputation was fully sustained during the next twenty-five years. (See Spears, *American Slave Trade*.)

<sup>3</sup> A local news item in the *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* of April 8, 1822, says: "A number of shops have lately been fitted up in superb style for the retail dry goods trade. The pleasant promenade on the north side of the street will probably be more frequented than ever by our belles and beaux."

town meetings in April. All the Providence papers, without distinction of party, favored the convention project, and at the election the town voted 598 to 2 in favor of it. Six other towns of Providence county, the three towns of Bristol county, East Greenwich in Kent county, and Hopkinton in Washington county, also gave majorities in its favor; while Newport county was solid against it, as were Kent and Washington counties—with the single exceptions noted—and three of the towns in Providence county also opposed it. Newport gave 57 votes in favor and 275 against a convention. The total vote was, yeas 1,619, to 1,905 nays. A leading argument in the Providence papers in favor of the project was the inequality of representation existing under the charter, which gave Newport six, Providence, Warwick and Portsmouth four each, and the remaining towns only two representatives. The equalization of the representation under a new constitution would have deprived some of the smaller towns, and Newport as well, of a portion of the representation which they then had, in favor of Providence, Smithfield and other growing towns.

Senator James Burrill, jr., having died on December 25, 1820, Governor Knight called a special session of the general assembly to choose his successor, and was himself unanimously selected for the coveted position. On January 9, 1821, the Republican state convention, which was held soon after, placed William C. Gibbs of Newport in nomination for Governor, with Caleb Earle as the nominee for Lieutenant-Governor. The Federalist party was no longer in existence, but, although this once powerful body had lost many followers by desertion to the party in power, it still constituted a strong minority, ready to renew the fight at a favorable opportunity. An attempt was made this year to form a union ticket in opposition to the Republican Prox. Samuel W. Bridgham was placed at the head of the ticket, with Ezbon Sanford of North Kingstown, a Republican, for Lieutenant-Governor. About half of the candidates selected for the senatorial ticket for this "Union Prox" were also Republicans. Most of the latter, and the nominee for Lieutenant-Governor declined to have their names used on this ticket, and changes had to be made, George W. Tillinghast, of North Kingstown being substituted for Sanford. Gibbs received 3,801 votes, exactly a thousand more than were polled for Bridgham.

In October, 1821, a court martial was held at East Greenwich to try Colonel Leonard Blodget of the Second Regiment, who was charged by Brigadier-General Joseph Hawes with unmilitary and disorderly conduct, neglect of duty, and disobedience of orders. The court-martial, of which Brigadier-General George De Wolf was president, found the accused officer guilty of the charges and specifications, and sentenced him to be "broke". It is not known whether the murder of the King's English, or the injustice done the accused by the sentence had

the greater weight with Major-General Albert C. Greene, the ranking officer of the militia at the time, but he overruled the sentence, and merely suspended the convicted officer from his command for thirty days.<sup>1</sup> While it was generally admitted that the sentence of the court-martial was unduly severe, General Greene met with considerable criticism for assuming authority to overrule the sentence of a court-martial.

This year the "side-walk commissioners" of Providence "commenced their herculean labors of making the rough places smooth and the crooked straight in the foot-ways through the town".<sup>2</sup> The increased expenses of the town, involved in this and other recent public improvements, alarmed some of the older citizens, and at the June town meeting one of the heaviest taxpayers made a motion that the town watch and the street lights be discontinued during the summer months. The motion was negatived.

An act was passed at the January meeting of the general assembly in 1822, forbidding the sale of rum, wine or strong liquor within one mile of any meeting being held for the worship of Almighty God. Another important law enacted at this session imposed a fee upon licensed persons and others, and bodies corporate, which was to be collected by town officers without remuneration and turned over to the state treasurer. After a year or two the towns were allowed two-and-a-half per cent. for making the collections. Another law forbade the running at large of cows in the business portion of Providence between the 10th of November and the 10th of April, except on Sundays, and between 8 at night and sunrise. The constitutional convention question came up again at this session, and the matter was again submitted to the freemen at the April town meetings. The friends of the measure appear to have been discouraged by the adverse vote of the year previous, and it was again defeated, the vote being 843 to 1,804. Providence cast 110 in favor and 26 against a convention. At the June session, ex-Congressman Elisha R. Potter, then a member of the house from South Kingstown, introduced a bill to increase the representation of Providence in the house to seven members and that of Smithfield, South Kingstown, Bristol, Coventry and North Kingstown to three each.<sup>3</sup> The bill by common consent was laid over till the next session, that being then a favorite way of disposing of unpopular measures.

<sup>1</sup> It appears that General Hawes as reviewing officer had exceeded his authority in giving Colonel Blodget orders to march his men to a certain location and dismiss them. The orders were ignored, and subsequently, when Hawes ordered his arrest, Colonel Blodget resisted. The report of Blodget's trial was published at Providence in 1821.

<sup>2</sup> Staples, *Annals of Providence*. p. 386.

<sup>3</sup> The population of Rhode Island towns of over 3,000 inhabitants in 1820 was as follows: Providence, 11,767; Newport, 7,319; Smithfield, 4,678; South Kingstown, 3,723; Warwick, 3,643; Bristol, 3,197; Coventry, 3,139; North Kingstown,

A bill to reduce the justices of the Supreme Judicial Court from five to three was passed by the house at this session, but did not get through the senate. The Rhode Island Historical Society was chartered at this session.

The Republican state ticket met with no opposition either in 1822 or 1823; nor were Messrs. Eddy and Durfee opposed in the congressional election in August, 1822. Mr. Durfee, who had declared himself a Republican when placed on the opposition ticket two years before, was now accepted as the candidate of the dominant party. But, although the opposition did not deem it expedient to hazard a contest on general issues, it was always in evidence at the representative elections, and in August, 1822, it succeeded in securing one-half of the total (72) membership of the house. When the new house was organized in October, several of the Republican members were sick and unable to attend, and the "Federal Republicans" had a clear majority. So it happened that when the senate, which was unanimously Republican, invited the house to meet in grand committee to elect a United States senator, the house refused. On January 17, 1823, the two houses assembled in grand committee, and re-elected Senator Knight for six years, on the second ballot, by 40 votes to 39 for ex-Congressman Potter.

The year 1823 witnessed a slight collision of interests in this state between steam and sail passenger boats. The Fulton company of New York had built several steamboats for the Sound and the Hudson river services. A line of packets for passengers and freight was put on between New York and Providence, which also called at certain Connecticut ports. The New York legislature had attempted to give the company an exclusive franchise in New York waters, and, although its right so to do was subsequently denied by the Federal judges, its monopoly seems to have been in force some time before the decision was rendered. The Connecticut legislature, in retaliation, had excluded the New York boats from Connecticut ports. This "embargo" of course had a tendency to increase the travel and traffic between the metropolis and Rhode Island ports, but the sailing packet interest, which had already experienced a loss of business in consequence of the advent of steam, tried to secure the passage of an act by the Rhode Island legislature, at Newport in May, practically to exclude its powerful rival from Rhode Island waters. A petition from Newport and other shore towns asked the assembly for an act to prevent the New York boats from navigating Rhode Island waters, unless the Fulton company should grant reciprocal rights to Rhode Island citizens. A bill actually passed the senate imposing a tax of 50 cents a

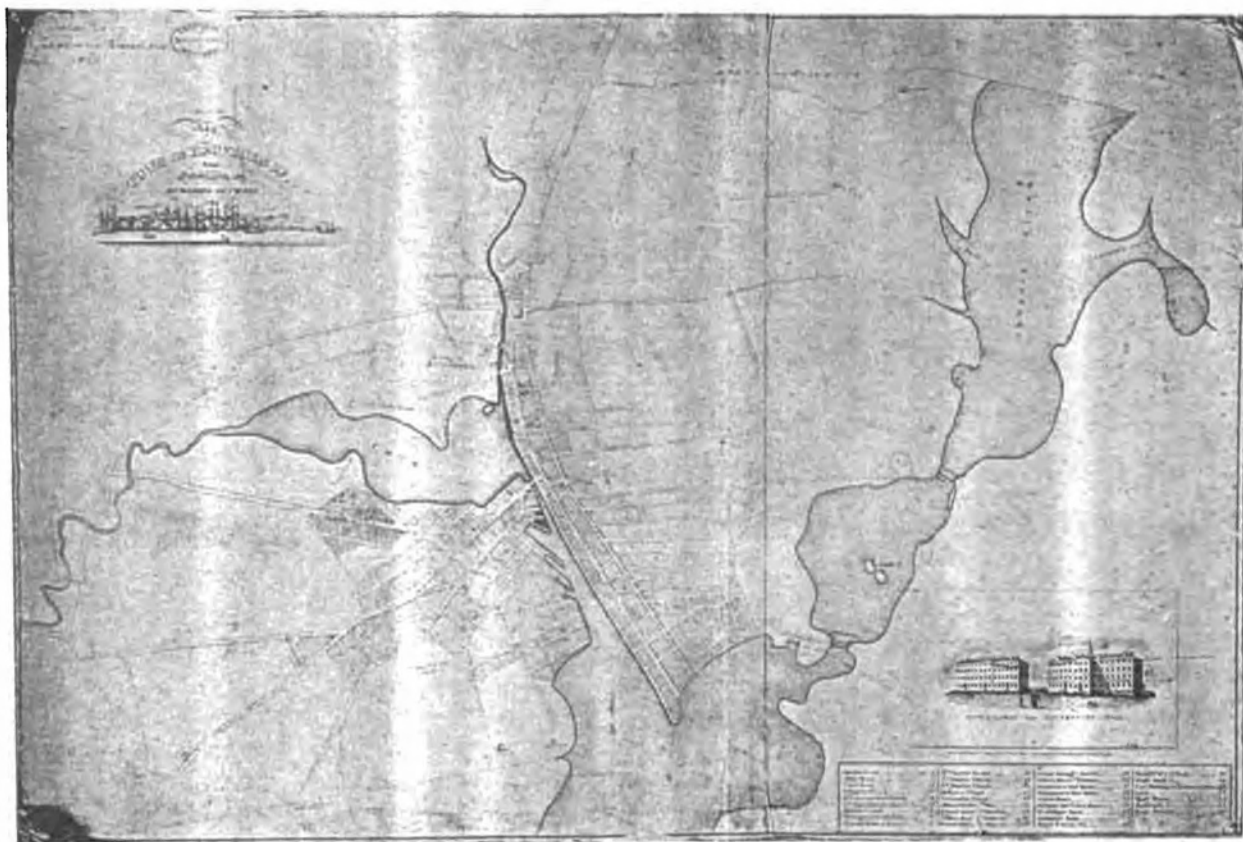
8,007. Newport then had six members, while Warwick and Portsmouth, which had only 1,645 inhabitants, each had four, they constituting, with Newport and Providence, the four original towns.

head upon all passengers brought into Narragansett bay by steam-boats. The house referred the bill to a committee, which was to report at a subsequent session, but before it had completed its duties, the United States Court had decided that such legislative attempts to impede inter-state commerce were unconstitutional.

The question of a constitutional convention was a subject of debate all through the year, both in the general assembly and in the state at large. At the June session of the general assembly, Elisha R. Potter revived the subject by offering a resolution to issue a mandatory call for the election of delegates to a constitutional convention, without waiting for the previously attempted popular initiative. The resolution was laid on the table until October, when a committee was elected to bring a bill for a convention. The committee was unable to agree, and another committee was appointed for the purpose. The latter finally reported a resolution, at the session of January, 1824, calling a convention of delegates, equal in number to the representation of the several towns in the house. The resolution was adopted and the free-men of the several towns elected delegates in June.

The movement in favor of the adoption of a written constitution at this time was entirely non-partisan. While its earliest advocates had been more numerous in the country than in the larger villages, and were consequently more Republican than Federalistic in sentiment, at this time the sentiment favorable to a change was stronger in Providence, the growing towns of Providence county, and in Bristol and Warren than elsewhere. As any attempt at an equalization of the representation of the house on the basis of population must reduce the representation then existing of Newport, Warwick and Portsmouth, those towns were opposed to a change, and they were aided in the fight by the small towns generally, which already scented danger from the rapidly-growing young giant at the head of Narragansett bay. Hence it happened that conditions had been somewhat reversed, and Providence, the populous town and the Federalist stronghold, was clamorous for a constitutional convention, while most of the small Republican towns were now opposed to it. No attempt, however, was made to give any political tone to the matter. Providence selected two leading Republicans along with two Federalists to represent it, and party lines were ignored in the other towns.

The convention met at Newport in June and prepared a constitution, which was to be submitted to the people in October. The proposed instrument, in the preparation of which ex-Congressman Potter, the president of the convention, seems to have been the most influential factor, did not change the freehold qualification for voters. It gave the Governor the power of veto, and made the Lieutenant-Governor the president of the senate, with only a casting vote in case of a tie. The senate, which was to consist of ten members, chosen on a general ticket,



MAP OF THE TOWN OF PROVIDENCE IN 1828, BY DANIEL ANTHONY.  
FROM AN ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

was practically the same as under the charter. In the house of representatives, every town, however small, was to have two members; towns of three thousand and less than five thousand inhabitants were to have three; towns of five thousand and under eight thousand, four; towns of eight thousand and under twelve thousand, five; towns of twelve thousand and less than seventeen thousand, six; and towns of over seventeen thousand people, seven and no more.<sup>1</sup> One session of the general assembly was to be held at Newport in May each year; another session was to be holden each January, at Providence and South Kingstown alternately, while adjournments from the May session were to be held at East Greenwich, and adjournments from the January session in Bristol. The freemen rejected the proposed constitution by a decisive vote of 3,206 negative to 1,668 affirmative votes. Providence, North Providence, Smithfield, Johnston, Gloucester, and the three Bristol county towns were the only ones that gave majorities in its favor. Providence gave 653 votes to 26 in its favor, but Newport polled 531 ballots against it and only 5 affirmative ones, while several towns voted solidly against it.

Governor Gibbs declining a renomination in 1824, the Republican convention selected ex-Governor Fenner as the standard bearer of the party, with Charles Collins of Newport as the candidate for Lieutenant-Governor. No opposition ticket was nominated, but two or three days before election a ticket with Wheeler Martin's name at the head was secretly circulated in Providence and a few other towns. It had little effect, although Martin, who was more acceptable to the Federalist element than Fenner, carried Providence, West Greenwich and Warren, his vote in the former town being 165 to 159 for Fenner. As there was supposed to be no contest the vote of the state was a light one—only 2,751 in all—of which total Fenner received 2,146, and Martin 594.

The report of the committee selected to make a new estimate of valuation for the state reported at the January session in 1824. The total for Providence was placed at \$9,500,000, while that for Newport was \$2,000,000.

An event of considerable importance this year was the visit of Lafayette to Providence, which occurred on the 23d of August. He came by carriage from Plainfield, Connecticut, and was met at the western border of the town by a great military and civic procession. The ovation extended him was fully equal to that given Washington in

<sup>1</sup> If the constitution had been adopted Providence would have had five members; Newport, four; Smithfield, South Kingstown, Warwick, Bristol, Coventry and North Kingstown, three each; and the remaining twenty-three towns two each. This would have given a house of 78 members. Were such a basis of representation in force at the present time (1901), the six cities and the town of Warwick would each have seven members of the house, and the total membership would be 186.



1790, and was participated in by the veterans of the Revolution<sup>1</sup> and by their children and grandchildren. The festivities were brought to a conclusion by the inevitable banquet and toasts, in which Tristram Burges proposed the toast to the honored guest, in an eloquent and felicitous little speech.<sup>2</sup>

The presidential campaign this year in Rhode Island was possessed of some peculiar features. The opposing political parties had become considerably mixed, and many leading Republicans, as well as many who were formerly Federalists, were favorable to the election of William H. Crawford, who had secured the Republican Congressional caucus nomination. Many, however, of both party affiliations, desired John Quincy Adams.<sup>3</sup> The Republican convention to nominate presidential electors was called to meet in Providence, October 27, but a convention, called in Adams's interest, met on the 26th of that month and nominated electors. When the Republican convention met the next day, the "machine" magnates who expected to endorse Crawford's candidacy without opposition, found themselves in a decided minority, and the Adams electors were unanimously endorsed by the convention. The popular vote in November was: Adams, 2,145; Crawford, 200.

The most important legislation enacted by the general assembly in 1825 was an act to transfer the jurisdiction of petitions for the benefit of insolvent debtors to courts of commissioners. Three courts were established; one for Newport and Bristol counties; a second one for Providence county; and a third for Kent and Washington counties.

The town of Providence had maintained free schools since 1800. Newport adopted measures for the purpose in 1825, but not without strong opposition, which culminated in a petition to the general assembly from ex-Senator Christopher G. Champlin and one hundred and fifty others, who asked the assembly to declare the action of their town null and void. The assembly doubted its authority to interfere so radically with the rights of its premier capital, but it modified the

<sup>1</sup> As Lafayette entered the State House on North Main street, he recognized and cordially embraced Colonel Stephen Olney, who had served under him at Yorktown, and had been one of the first to penetrate the British works. For further details of Lafayette's visit, see Z. Allen's *Memorial of Lafayette*, Providence, 1861.

<sup>2</sup> Burges toasted Lafayette as the companion of Washington and the friend of Hamilton and Greene. The incident, and the fact that the placing of Hamilton by the side of Washington and Greene as a military hero met with no criticism, show the strong Federalist sentiment of Burges, and of Providence as well, a sentiment that still lived, although no man then, when the memory of the Hartford convention was fresh in the minds of the people, had the moral courage to declare himself a Federalist.

<sup>3</sup> Two anonymous pamphlets, one entitled *Principles and Men*, advocating the election of Adams, and the other, entitled *Pro and Con*, urging the claim of Crawford, appeared in Providence in 1828.

town's action in appropriating \$2,000, by authorizing it to use not to exceed \$800 for the free education of "white children."

The dead calm which was resting on the political waters was disturbed in the summer by a lively contest over congressmen. It had been customary to hold the congressional elections during the August preceding the fourth of March on which the terms of the members began, but by resolution of the general assembly in June, 1823, the date of election was changed from August, 1824, to August, 1825. The Republican convention for the nomination of successors to Messrs. Eddy and Durfee was called, according to the usual custom, to meet at Newport, during the June session of the general assembly. But few delegates were elected, and, as was customary in such cases, Republican assemblymen from the unrepresented towns acted as delegates in the convention. Mr. Eddy was renominated without a contest, but Mr. Durfee was not so fortunate. He was beaten in the convention by Dutee J. Pearce of Newport. The defeated candidate claimed that the convention did not fairly represent the wishes of the freemen, and announced himself as a candidate for re-election. The old Federalist element, which had never been cordial in the support of the candidates named for them by the Republican conventions, which were—they claimed—a mere reflex of the wishes of Bennett H. Wheeler, the editor of the Providence Patriot, seized the opportunity to hold a conference and nominate Tristram Burges of Providence for Congress. William Hunter of Newport was also named. The original Republicans opposed Burges because, as was claimed, he had been a Federalist, and was still one in sentiment, and neither he nor any of his supporters dared either acknowledge or defend the "heresy". Burges received 2,932 votes; Pearce 2,534; Durfee 2,468; Eddy 2,121; and Hunter 364. Burges was declared the only one elected, and a second trial took place in November, when Pearce was chosen.

A municipal census, taken this year, gave Providence a population of 15,941, of which number 8,729 were on the east and 7,212 on the west side of the river, and of whom 1,414, or nearly ten per cent., were colored. The Providence papers about this period frequently complained of the numbers of colored people in the town, a large percentage of whom were, they asserted, lawless and idle. This year thirty acres of land at Field's Point were purchased by the town of Providence for \$4,500, or \$150 an acre.

James De Wolfe having resigned his seat in the United States senate, Asher Robbins, Republican, of Newport, was elected in his place, on November 5, 1825, by the general assembly, by a small majority over Elisha R. Potter.

The assembly in January, 1826, passed an act forbidding members of the courts of commissioners being members of either house of the general assembly, but the act itself constituting that court, together

with all other acts for the relief of insolvent debtors were repealed in June by four majority in the house and one in the senate. The debate over this matter attracted a good deal of attention, on account of its importance, and because of the ability of the debaters, some of the best legal talent in the state being arrayed on each side. Ex-Congressman Potter led the fight for repeal, and was given credit by his political enemies for the final outcome. The lottery question attracted considerable attention this year, and the propriety of suppressing this form of gambling was already being discussed.

The manifestations of grief when news was received of the deaths of ex-President Adams and Jefferson, and the tributes to their memory which were bestowed in equal degree, showed that the former feeling, so prevalent in the state against the Sage of Monticello, had been greatly modified. At the time of Jefferson's death, a public subscription was being raised throughout Rhode Island to assist in relieving his pecuniary embarrassments, and one of the most responsive toasts given in Providence on the Fourth was the hope that the venerable patriot would not be compelled to dispose of Monticello by lottery.

As a United States senator to succeed Senator Robbins would, in the regular order of things, be chosen at the October session of the assembly this year, considerable interest was manifested in the August semi-annual election of members of the house. It was assumed that Mr. Potter would again be a candidate, and Mr. Robbins's friends, especially in Providence, urged the freemen to return men pledged to support him. Mr. Potter was accused of all manner of political heresies, and among other things of being an enemy of the town of Providence. The Providence Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal was particularly bitter in its denunciations. A few weeks before the meeting of the assembly, Mr. Potter came out in a letter in the Providence Microcosm, in which he struck back at his opponents, and insinuated that Senator Robbins had been guilty of questionable conduct, when he held the position of United States district attorney under President Monroe. This compelled Senator Robbins to publish affidavits to clear his reputation. When the time for the choice of senator in grand committee arrived, Mr. Potter, who was a member of the house from South Kingstown, declined being a candidate, and Senator Robbins was unanimously re-elected.

A new judiciary law was enacted in January, 1827, which involved some reforms in procedure, and reduced the justices from five to three. Some of the judges who expected to be displaced under the action of this law secretly circulated a "prox", just before the April election, in the attempt to defeat four of the senators whose votes had assisted in the passage of the new law. The attempt, however, was a failure, as the judges' candidates received on an average only about 525 votes. An attempt was made at the May session to repeal the new law, but,

although Mr. Potter favored such action, the house rejected the act of repeal, the vote on its passage being 25 to 41.

The temperance movement, at least in its public manifestations, had its inception in Providence this year. A public meeting was held in April in the First Baptist meeting house, at which resolutions were passed in some measure condemnatory of the liquor evil.<sup>1</sup> Governor Fenner, than whom few public men in Rhode Island history have been more successful in trimming their sails to catch an approaching breeze, must have had a premonition of the coming temperance deluge, for on election day at Newport, in May, he abstained from treating, and instead thereof gave \$100 to the Newport public school fund. Lieutenant-Governor Collins, following the example of his superior, also gave \$50 to the fund.

Considerable rivalry existed between the original Republicans, and those of the newer (Federalist) brand, as to which were the truest friends of President Adams's administration. Both parties claimed to be truly loyal thereto, and no Republicans were considered genuine without the Adams "hall-mark". The newer faction stole a march upon the Patriot regulars, at Newport in June, by calling a caucus of "Senators, Representatives and people", who were supporters of President Adams's administration, to meet on the day previous to the regular Republican congressional convention. The caucus, which was well attended, renominated Messrs. Burgess and Pearce, and the regulars doing the same, the two congressmen were re-elected without opposition.

The "Administration party" again forestalled the Patriot Republicans in nominating a "prox" for the April election of 1828. All of the old officers except four senators were renominated. The Republican convention renominated the old ticket with two exceptions, and the two senators left out of both proxies—one of whom openly avowed himself a Jackson man—ran independently and failed of election. Two of the senators who were "turned down" by the "Administration prox" were elected, and the other two were defeated.<sup>2</sup>

A free school law was passed at the January term of the general assembly in 1828. The receipts from lottery managers and agents and the duties obtained from auctioneers had been allowed to accumulate for a year or two for the purpose, and by the terms of the law now enacted, ten thousand dollars of such receipts were to be divided each year among the several towns in proportion to their several school populations, to be used for the support of free schools. Five thousand dollars of the

<sup>1</sup> For a history of the temperance cause in Providence, see a series of sketches by S. S. Wardwell in the *Prov. Journal* for 1859.

<sup>2</sup> This strife over the election of state senators brought out two pamphlet addresses, both anonymous and both filled with the personal vituperation that so especially distinguished the politics of the period.

accumulated receipts then in the state treasury were at once set apart as a permanent fund for the use of schools, and thereafter all state receipts from lotteries and auctioneers over and above the ten thousand dollars distributed to the several towns, were to be added annually to the permanent fund, which was to be invested by the general treasurer in good bank stock. The towns were authorized to appropriate such additional sums for schools each year as a majority of the freemen of each, assembled in town meeting, should deem proper. A new law for the relief of insolvent debtors, which referred their petitions to the Supreme Judicial Court, was passed at this session. At the June session permission was given for the extension of a railroad, starting from Boston, from the Massachusetts state line to Providence. The legislators, who were accustomed to provide for the assessment of tolls by turnpike associations operating under state charters, gave the railroad company authority "to take and exact from persons making use of the same (the railroad), reasonable tolls", and for that purpose to "erect and keep up a toll-gate, together with the necessary appendages thereto". A toll gate upon a railroad seemed to be a very necessary provision at that time.

At the October session a resolution expressing confidence in President Adams's administration, and in Henry Clay, and advocating the President's re-election, passed the house by a vote of 44 to 18. President Adams passed through Providence, which he reached by the New York boat, on Sunday, August 10. Salutes were fired, and he was received cordially, and with as much attention and pomp as could be expected on the Lord's day.

The Jeffersonian Republicans allowed the "Friends of the Administration" to call the convention for the nomination of presidential electors, and the ticket selected was endorsed by them. Shortly before the election a Jackson weekly, the "Republican Herald", was started in Providence, and a Jackson Electoral Prox was put up.<sup>1</sup> A large portion of the freemen of Rhode Island, however, looked upon Jackson with great distrust. The Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal warned its readers shortly before the election that if the "Military Chieftain" was chosen, the country would probably be ruined, and that the people then living might see established upon its ruins "a long line of sceptered kings". Even the Patriot, which had sounded the war cry of the plain people for many years, after Jackson's success seemed assured, regretted the result, but not so much because it distrusted the successful candidate, as because his candidacy had been dictated by British influence, and his election was due to the "wild Irish rabble of New York city." The Adams electoral ticket received

<sup>1</sup> The Herald office also issued *An address to the people of Rhode Island proving that more than eight millions of the public money has been wasted by the present administration.* By a Landholder, 1828.

2,754 votes, and the Jackson ticket 821. The vote of Providence was 538 to 73 in favor of Adams, and that of Newport 290 to 66. The wisdom of adopting a city form of government and establishing a high school was frequently discussed in Providence at this period.

A bill was introduced at the January session in 1829 to repeal the 27th section of the law for the assessment and collection of taxes, which exempted school and religious property from taxation. It passed the house by 9 majority and in the June following was accepted by the senate in an amended form, the exemption being retained on these classes of property when protected by charters.

The free suffrage party began to be heard from again this year. Meetings were held in several of the towns. Large assemblages were held in Providence in aid of the movement. One on the 28th of March was described by the Journal of that town as the largest meeting ever held in the state, as many as 1,200 to 1,500 being in attendance. Most of the leading citizens took part in the campaign, and all of the newspapers advocated the reform but the Jackson organ, which warned the farmers against giving Providence too much power. At the May session memorials were sent to the general assembly by the suffragists,<sup>1</sup> but a motion by Wilkins Updike that the petitioners have leave to withdraw, put a stop to the movement at the June session.

The state campaign of 1829 was a fight between the "General Republicans" and the Democratic-Republicans (Jackson) on the senatorial ticket, in which the latter elected eight of their ten candidates. A trial of strength took place in the house on "Election Day" over the speakership. The Regulars nominated Joseph L. Tillinghast of Providence, while the Jacksonians supported Wilkins Updike. The former was chosen, receiving 37 votes to 27 for Updike. The Jacksonian Republicans were now the Administration party. The Providence Patriot accepted the situation and retained the advertising patronage of the national government. Many of the Republicans of the Jeffersonian stripe now aligned themselves with the radicals who had been supporting Jackson. Governor Fenner trimmed his sails to catch the Jackson breeze, and ex-Congressman Eddy, now chief justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, did likewise. Messrs. Burges and Pearce were nominated for re-election to Congress by the anti-administration Republicans, who now began to call themselves "National Republicans". The Jacksonians, who took the name of "General Republicans", put forward Judge Eddy and Job Durfee, while Elisha R.

<sup>1</sup>The memorials were referred to a committee of which Benjamin Hazard was chairman. The report of this committee, known as Hazard's Report, was strongly adverse to the petitioners, urging that the franchise should be preserved to the freehold class and denouncing "democracy" as a thing to be shunned. The argument, although specious and illiberal, had its effect with the "landholding" assembly.

Potter and John De Wolf, jr., also had some supporters.<sup>1</sup> The two sitting congressmen were re-elected, however, by more than two thousand majority over all competitors.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### FROM 1830 TO THE DORR WAR.

The National Republicans could no longer support Governor Fenner. He was renominated at their convention in January, 1830, but their newspapers repudiated him, and put Dr. Asa Messer of Providence at the head of their ticket, with Nathan M. Wheaton for Lieutenant-Governor. Fenner was re-elected, however, by over a thousand majority. The General Republican senatorial ticket was elected in most cases by small majorities. Elisha R. Potter was now fully committed to the Jackson party, and he was placed in nomination for speaker in May against Tillinghast. The latter won, however, by one vote, he receiving 34 and Potter 33. At the previous January session the latter had offered resolutions indorsing Jackson's administration. They were rejected, the vote standing 8 to 50. Mr. Potter, who was acknowledged by friends and foes alike to have been a man of great influence, seems to have been fairly driven into the Jackson camp. He was a constant target for many years for the shafts of the Providence press, and he, on his part, responded by generally opposing legislation favorable to Providence. Any measure which the Providence delegation desired, if advocated by any country member, subjected the latter to the charge from Potter and his followers of being "the fifth member from Providence". At the June session in 1830, Mr. Potter presented a resolution—which, however, was laid on the table on his own motion—for the appointment of a committee to take into consideration the expediency of more effectually guarding the liberty of the press, and "protecting the citizens of the state against its licentious abuse."

The town of Providence having, by majority vote in town meeting,

<sup>1</sup>The election contests of this year 1829 were productive of no less than five electioneering pamphlets in which personal abuse, as usual, played an important part. The "Herald office", the Jacksonian stronghold, started the ball rolling in April with some anonymous *Hints to the Farmers of Rhode Island*. Replies and counter-charges followed in rapid succession, Tristram Burges himself taking a hand in the controversy with an *Address to the Landholders and Farmers of Newport County*. These pamphlets reveal much that is interesting in relation to the politics of the period.