

**THE LIFE OF MARTIN VAN BUREN,
HEIR-APPARENT TO THE
"GOVERNMENT" AND THE
APPOINTED SUCCESSOR OF
GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649011506

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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DAVID CROCKETT

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THE LIFE
OF
MARTIN VAN BUREN,

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CONTAINING

EVERY AUTHENTIC PARTICULAR BY WHICH HIS EXTRAORDI-
NARY CHARACTER HAS BEEN FORMED.

WITH

A CONCISE HISTORY

OF THE

EVENTS THAT HAVE OCCASIONED HIS UNPARALLELED
ELEVATION; TOGETHER WITH A REVIEW OF
HIS POLICY AS A STATESMAN.

"Good Lord! what is Van?—for though simple he looks,
Tis a fox in unrares his looks and his crooks;
With his depths and his shallows, his good and his evil,
All in all, he's a *Riddle* must puzzle the devil."

BY DAVID CROCKETT.

PHILADELPHIA
ROBERT WRIGHT.

1835.

P R E F A C E.

STATESMEN are gamesters, and the people are the cards they play with. And it is curious to see how good the comparison holds as to all the games, the shuffling, and the tricks performed with them sort of books, as they are sometimes called. From "*three up*" to "*whist*," from a "*constable*" to a "*president*," the hands are always dealing out; and in both cases, the way they cut and shuffle is a surprise to all young beginners.

The present "government" has been a great sportsman in his time; and he has played at both games with equal success: and not content with his own good luck, he is actually giving *item* in favour of another, and has so shuffled and stocked the *cards*, that unless we can *cut the pack* in the *right place*, he will turn up a *Jack* upon the country.

I have gone fur enough on this hook to show what I mean: the people are tricked and cheated, and what is worse, they are satisfied to stay so. If any one tells them that they are used by political

gamblers as a blacksmith uses his tongs, they fly into a passion, and say it is all a trick to abuse Jackson. If you ask them what it is that makes Van Buren fit for a president, and why it is that General Jackson has appointed him for his *successor*, they answer, "he has been persecuted for Jackson's sake." Jackson, they say, has done enough, not only to reign himself as long as he wants to, but to say who shall reign after him. But the good of this joke is, these same people call themselves democratic republicans! *Republicans!* unable to choose for themselves, and consenting to give that right to a single individual. What think you of that?

We read that when the democratic republicans of France gave Bonaparte the privilege to nominate his successor, they became ashamed of their name, for it was too barefaced to keep it up after that; and they called themselves the dutiful subjects of that glorification hero. I make one reflection right here: if any member of the convention that formed the constitution had proposed that the president should appoint his successor, the motion would have been scouted out of the House; and yet that principle is now about to be acted out, in full blast, in the case of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. It cannot be denied. It is need-

less to say it is done by the *will* of the people ; law is nothing but the *will* of the people. The only difference is, the last goes through certain forms, and becomes fixed for a time ; but if it is a good principle as between President Jackson and Van Buren, it is equally so as between all future presidents and their *pets*, and ought to be carried into a law. Now, as little as people think of this matter, if this principle was grafted on our constitution, it would change the whole character of the government ; and instead of a republic, it would be a right-down monarchy, and nothing else ; and things ought to be called by their right name. There would not be left a democratic republican upon the face of the earth in all America. That fine party name that has gulled, now gulls, and will gull thousands of people, would have to give place to another catch-word. Wonder what Maine and New Hampshire would do for their word "*democracy*." It would scatter 'em for a while ; but I rather think they would rally under another of quite a different meaning—one that meant submission ; showing a first-rate willingness not to think for themselves, but to be ready to go or do, where or whatever a leader or deputy-leader might point or plan.

I say, then, it is in vain to deny that if Van

Buren is elected, it is wholly and solely upon the strength of General Jackson's popularity, and his having the good fortune to be selected by the old gentleman as his successor. He nor his friends plead no merit in himself; there is no manner of good thing in him, and that he has no earthly chance of reaching the presidential chair but in and through the "greatest and best." What has he done that entitles him to such distinction? His friends are so conscious that the people everywhere look upon him with a jealous eye, that they are either afraid or ashamed to come out with his name openly. Look at the Van Burenites in Virginia, where Rives and Ritchie are trying to smuggle him in upon the people. They won't come out flat-footed for him, but are moving on tip-toe, to catch the people a napping, and by-and-by they will hurra for Van Buren as the candidate of the *great republican party*, nominated by the Baltimore packed convention, and that the democratic republicans must support him, to keep from dividing the party. In North Carolina it is the same thing; although the office-holders and their friends intend to support Van Buren with all their might, yet they pretend they will leave the whole matter to a caucus at Baltimore, and yet they won't send anybody there who will not first pledge him-

self for Van Buren. What sort of a convention is this; filled with no other sort of delegates but whole-hog Van Buren men? Why don't the managers who send representatives to the convention, nominate him themselves? They might as well do it as instruct their representatives to do it. Where is the difference? No; they know better; they know that Van ain't the choice of the people, no how, nor of his *whole* party; and they are afraid to try his chance single-handed, in the states; they want the mutual support of several states, backed by the all-powerful influence of Old Hickory. Hence you see the Enquirer, the Globe, the Albany Argus, and all the little fry, coming out and saying that Judge White's offering is in opposition to General Jackson's administration. Now, what has General Jackson's administration to do with the next president? Don't this prove that Van Buren is General Jackson's appointed successor, and that White's daring to offer is in opposition to Jackson's wishes? Don't it show that the people must not think or even talk about choosing anybody but the man selected by General Jackson's administration? And who is General Jackson's administration? Why everybody knows it is none but the office-holders; they have got the government in their hands, and there they intend to keep it.

And the way they intend to keep it is by getting a president they can manage as they have old General Jackson. And the way they intend to get a president is by getting up a caucus at Baltimore, filled with, and elected by, men of their own stamp. They intend to call this meeting a convention of the democratic republicans, and proclaim with a loud voice that whoever they nominate must be supported by the *whole* republican party, well knowing that Van Buren will be nominated, because their tools were sent there for that purpose, and that alone. Who else has ever been spoken of but Van Buren to be presented to that convention? Has not every delegation or member yet chosen, been positively instructed to vote for Van Buren? And who are these delegates elected by? Does any one dare to say it is by the people at large? Does more than one man in a thousand know any thing about it? Is any time and place specified, and the legal voters for the president invited to attend and choose a representative to go to Baltimore to nominate a president for them? I call upon the people in general to ask themselves the following questions: Who authorized these delegates to dictate to us who we should vote for as president? When did we appoint them for this purpose? When and where