

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SECOND INAUGURAL AS GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA, ON THE 18TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1876.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives and Fellow Citizens:

Three years ago, when the oath of office was administered to me as Executive, I took occasion to express the sense of my infinite obligations to the people of the State who had honored me with repeated proofs of their confidence and good opinion, and it would be unworthy affectation if I did not now renew my acknowledgments to the same generous constituency, who, after a three years' stewardship of the highest office in their gift, have called me again to assume its important duties.

The continued favor and inflexible support my conduct of public affairs has received from the citizens of the Commonwealth, bespeak from me in return, the utmost zeal and fidelity in their service, and my highest ambition will be reached if my administration will be remembered as an honorable one that studied and provided for their best interests. I still have as exalted an opinion of the great trust you have conferred upon me as when first confronted with its novel and grave responsibilities, and despite the experience had, am none the less distrustful of my abilities to meet its requirements, but whatever may be my other deficiencies, I do not know what it is to be wanting in attachment to my State, or affection for her people who have distinguished me with so many obliging and conspicuous marks of partiality. I am not unmindful that the welfare and progress of a State depend less upon its government and rulers than upon the habits and circumstances of its citizens, and no measures or administration can produce any substantial good unless they are dictated by public opinion or are begotten of the public necessities. A people must be ripe for reform or reform can work them no permanent benefit. Invention may exhaust itself in contrivances of public utility and rulers may be never so wise in their devices, but if the dispositions and intelligence of a people are unprepared for the reception of remedies they will not take root in their affections or affairs.

Imbued with these convictions, the maxims for the conduct of my administration were easily formed. It was only necessary to resolve that its acts should have no selfish taint, that they should be colored by no personal predilections or warped by any favorite theories, and that inspired neither by fear nor favor they should aim to reflect the people's will. With the lights which Heaven has endowed me I have striven to adhere to these maxims, and if at any time I have failed to conform thereto it has not been from lack of patient investigation and honest exertion or of a tender and jealous regard for the honor of the State but from a misconception or misapprehension of the wishes or the needs of her people. In the future then, as in the past, as the Executive of the Commonwealth, I can have no interest to serve that is not her interest, and can embrace no doctrine or embark in any cause that will not advance the material prosperity and promote the enlightenment of her citizens.

My opinions upon the questions that affect the government of the State have been presented in my annual message and it is unnecessary to refer to them.

When we look around us, gentlemen of the Legislature, how various, multifarious and intricate are the interests of our great Commonwealth. Certainly it is proud distinction to be chosen to administer the affairs of a State that has within her limits so many of the elements of empire and it behoves us to see to it that neither its dignity or prosperity suffer through any fault of ours. Let us remit no effort that will enlarge the happiness or benefits of her citizens; let us be distinguished by loyalty to her interests, by a jealous care of her institutions, a liberal understanding of and provision for her necessities, by humane attention to the wants of her poor and afflicted, and enlightened treatment of her criminal classes, and by a tolerance of opinion, political and religious, so that when we are discharged of our trusts we can deliver them to our successors with the approval of our consciences, and, let us hope, with the blessings of a grateful people.

With this renewal of my obligations as your Executive, I invite the earnest and active co-operation and counsel of all good citizens, and implore that my official acts may have the sanction of Divine Providence.

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