

Franklin Repository

ADDRESS OF THE UNION STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

To the People of Pennsylvania: The day is rapidly approaching upon which you will be called to choose between rival candidates for the high offices of Governor of the Commonwealth, and Judge of its Supreme Judicial Tribunal.

To the one is to be committed the executive power of your great and noble State, and to the other a weighty voice in deciding questions closely affecting your most sacred rights of persons and of property.

To an intelligent exercise of your right of suffrage, it is very necessary that you should clearly understand the difference between the party whose nominees are Andrew G. Curtin, and Daniel H. Agnew; and the party whose nominees are George W. Woodward, and Walter H. Lowmyer. It is, therefore, in obedience to a custom, wise and time-honored, that you are addressed by the official representatives of each organization in behalf of their respective principles and candidates.

It is not vague commonplace but solemn truth to say, that there never was a political contest in America whose issues were so important as to the life of the Republic as are those involved in the pending canvass. In other days we prudently occupied our minds with questions of State policy, local affairs in their interests, and their influence; but to-day the citizens of Pennsylvania ascend to the higher and broader ground whereon the nation struggles for its life, and the ballots of freemen were never more weighty with great consequences than those now resting in their hands, containing, as they probably do, not only the question of civil war at our own homes, not only the fate of our Constitution and Union, but the destiny of free government throughout the world.

It is a source, therefore, of profound gratitude with all reflecting men, that while all the gentlemen in nomination bear characters alike honorable and without stain, thus enabling them to the fullest presumption of honest motives and conscientious convictions, yet the lines of division are drawn with such distinctness, the policy proposed is so plainly different, and the principles avowed so radically hostile, that no man of ordinary intelligence need hesitate in his choice.

The history of America before our civil war began is read and known of all men. In the years of our colonization we were obedient to the plain purpose of God in reserving this continent as a theatre whereon the capacity of the human race for self-government should be fully and fairly tested; and the men to whom was entrusted the great experiment in civilization fitly builded their infant States upon the principles of civil and religious liberty.

When the condition of colonial dependence ceased to protect these principles, the scattered settlements came together in the presence of a common danger, and in the interest of human freedom declared their independence. Joseph Warren, proto-martyr of the Revolution, writing, just before his death, to Quincy, says: "I am convinced that the true spirit of liberty was never so universally diffused through all ranks and conditions of men on the face of the earth as it now is through all North America."

In this spirit and for this cause our fathers endured seven weary years of unequal warfare, and that their children to the third and fourth generation should understand the purpose of the great struggle in the calm peace which followed victory, they solemnly engraved it above the entrance to the sources of the fundamental law, declaring it to be, "To secure the blessings of liberty to the people and to their posterity."

The Government of the United States, thus plainly established to preserve the liberties of its people, contained an element of the legal existence of slavery. It was believed, however, that this evil would soon disappear, and Jefferson vied with Franklin in his efforts to secure a result earnestly desired by all good men. In the course of a few years it was confined, nominally, as it had long really been, to the States lying south of the line of Mason and Dixon; and patriotic men of all parties rejoiced in the hope of its speedy and total disappearance.

This reasonable hope was destined to disappointment. In 1820, the first great concession was demanded by the slaveholding interest at the hands of the National Legislature, and for the sake of harmony Missouri was admitted into the Union as a slave State. Then followed other and greater demands in favor of slavery, urged with increasing arrogance; and notwithstanding the wonderful prosperity which, like a benediction, attended the North, and the stagnation and decay which began to cover and cling like a curse to the lands filled by enforced and unpaid labor; a party, small in numbers but great in the intellectual powers of its leaders and devoted to the defence and propagation of American slavery, by the free and alternate use of flattery and threats, wrong obedience to its requirements from the unwilling hands of American statesmen.

What followed is a three-fold tale. The admission of new slave States; the annexation of Texas to the war with Mexico; the consequent accession of great territories in the Southwest; the compromise legislation of 1850, including the Fugitive Slave law; the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; the lawless invasion of Kansas by the ruffians of the Southern border, with its attendant slaughter of peaceful Northern settlers; and the culminating efforts of the Administration of Mr. Buchanan, to force by the bayonet a pro-slavery Constitution, whose provisions were disgraceful to civilized human nature, upon the heroic people of that devoted Territory. What were all these but the successive steps in the long and painful descent, whereby the conservative, law-abiding people of the North vainly endeavored to appease and even to satisfy the constant aggressions of their slaveholding brethren?

The political history of America for forty years is written in this brief statement of concessions to slavery. We had done much to please our friends. We had surrendered, almost without the forms of protest, the chief executive offices of the nation to their keeping. They were filled either by themselves, or by those Northern gentlemen whom they greedily selected for the merit of prompt and unquestionable obedience to their commands. The judicial branch of the Government, entrusted with the construction of this Federal charter, and the consequent abrogation, when necessary, of all laws, State or national, was composed of judges of their choice. The representatives of the nation at the Courts of Europe had been trained with their training. The conservative branch of the National Legislature was unquestionably under their control.

We had parted with many plain rights to satisfy them. We endured the utter denial of free speech, and even of unimpeded travel in the Southern States. We waived the protection of the Federal law, which should have covered us as with a shield, everywhere beneath the Federal flag, and consented to receive instead the jurisdiction of ruffianly mobs, bred and fostered in slavery. We saw without complaint the North made a vast hunting ground for fugitives from bondage. We accepted with meekness the constant assaults of our social and political inferiority. We permitted our representatives to be treated with personal violence in the streets of the capital. We stifled our just and sacred wrath when a Northern Senator, graced with all generous culture, and bearing the commission of a free Commonwealth, was beaten by slaveholders to the verge of death on the floor of the Senate, for words spoken for liberty in debate. Enduring all in patience, for the sake of peace and union, we sat in quiet obedience to the law, unwilling but submissive pupils, receiving lessons of chivalric honor from Mr. Brooks, and of chivalric manners from Mr. Wigfall, of loyalty from Mr. Davis, and of honesty from Mr. Floyd.

At last, in the year of grace 1860, the Constitution afforded to the citizens of the land the privilege of again expressing by their votes their choice of national rulers. The exercise of that right, quietly, peaceably, and in perfect obedience to the form and the spirit of all our laws.

The lawful discharge of this high duty, imposed upon all good men by their country, was declared by a few bad, bold men to be just cause of civil war. This proposition involved, of course, the startling doctrine that Northern men must vote in the interest of Slavery, or its friends would appeal from the ballot to the bullet, destroy the Constitution, dissolve the Union, and deluge all the land with its most precious blood.

It must be remembered that the Senate, without whose consent no law can be enacted, was proslavery. The Supreme Court, against whose judgment no law, if enacted, could avail, was proslavery. There was, therefore, no danger possible to the institution; and it was simply because once in forty years the people had lawfully chosen a President who was believed to be opposed to further concession to slavery, that an embittered and malignant faction, who had been long nursing their treason, declared their purpose to cause to flow all the terrible evils following in the train of this cruel war, which has wasted our substance, and placed our chief treasures beneath the seals of clay. The utter groundlessness of their complaints, and the want of even a decent pretext for their threatened crime against their country, was placed in full light before the world when Alexander H. Stephens spoke to the people of Georgia those memorable words, which history will always remember, sealing with the seal of lasting condemnation this wicked and causeless rebellion:

What right has the North assumed? What interest of the South has been invaded? What justice has been denied? or what claim founded on justice or right has been withheld? Can either of you to-day name one governmental act of wrong deliberately and purposefully done by the Government at Washington which the South has a right to complain. I challenge an answer!

While the ablest statesmen of the South were endeavoring with words like these to stay the hands of traitors raised to dishonor our flag, to destroy our Government, and to afflict us with the awful sufferings of civil strife, the Honorable George W. Woodward, then and now Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, deliberately disrobed himself of his ermine, and walking from the seat of judgment to the platform of a great meeting assembled in Independence Square, ground sacred to freedom, spoke, and over and beyond his audience to the maddened partisans of slavery, ripe for revolt and battle, those words of sympathy with their baseless and pretended wrongs: "Everywhere in the South the people are beginning to look out for the means of self-defence. Could it be expected that they would be indifferent to such scenes as have occurred here—that they would stand idle and see such measures concerted and carried forward for the annihilation, sooner or later, of their property in slaves. Such expectations, if indulged, are not reasonable."

And these sadder words, sounding like an invitation to treason:

"The law of self-defence includes rights of property as well as persons, and it appears to me that there must be a time in the progress of this conflict, if it indeed is irrepressible, when slaveholders may lawfully fall back on their natural rights, and employ in defence of their property whatever means of protection they possess or can command. They who push on this conflict have convinced one or more Southern States that it has already come."

And these sadder words of attempted consecration of that fearful combining of crimes against God and all his creatures which is called American slavery: "The providence of that good Being who has watched over us from the beginning and saved us from external foes, has so ordered our internal relations as to make negro slavery an incalculable blessing to us. Whoever will study the Patriarchal and Levitical institutions, will see the principle of human bondage divinely sanctioned if not divinely ordained."

The address thus delivered went forth with the added weight of judicial sanction, and aided by many others of kindred import, produced its legitimate effect in convincing the traitors who had hesitated that a large and important portion of the Northern people were heartily with them in spirit, and anything had been done which some think should have been done, we reserve these matters for more opportune discussion in the calmer days of peace. To-day, while armed rebels threaten the Federal capital, and trample flag and law and Constitution under their feet, we come together without distinction of party, in loyal union, and pledge to the Administration, which represents the Government of our fathers, our earnest and unconditional support.

These are the principles and this is the policy of the loyal men of Pennsylvania. To represent it they offer to your suffrages our present Governor, Andrew G. Curtin. He needs no eulogy, for he has so borne himself in his high office that his name is known and honored through all the land, winning the love of the soldiers and the respect and confidence of a patriotic constituency. His great services to the cause of the Union and its most deadly peril, his constant solicitude and care for the brave men he sent to battle, his foresight, his energy, his faithfulness, in the discharge of every duty, impelled a grateful people to disregard his declination, and place once more the banner of the Union in his tried and honorable hands.

In the Honorable Daniel H. Agnew a candidate is presented worthy of the support of all men who desire to maintain the high character for pure and varied learning, for unswerving loyalty to the Government, and for adherence to the duty of declaring, not making, the law, which our supreme judicial tribunal won and wore in our days. Judge Agnew is an accomplished lawyer, and the presiding judge of his district, and his elevation to the bench of the Supreme Court

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Thus we gather for the contest around worthy bearers of a worthy standard, written all over with unconditional loyalty, and under their good leadership, we march forward with the faith and hope of Christian men, to the victory which awaits the cause of justice and of freedom.

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SWORD PRESENTATION TO GEN. MEADE.

Maj. Gen. Geo. G. Meade, now commander of the Army of the Potomac, entered the war as a Brigadier in the gallant Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, and continued to share its fortunes in every battle until he was promoted to the command of the 5th Corps. He so endeared the Reserve Corps to him by his heroism and skill as a commander, and his ceaseless care for his brave soldiers, that they resolved to present him with a magnificent sword, belt, spurs, &c., as a testimonial of their admiration for his qualities as an officer. On Friday the 18th ult., the sword, presented by Brig. Gen. S. W. Crawford, now the honored commander of the Reserves, and Gov. Curtin, Col. Forney, Hon. Morton M. Michael, Col. R. Biddle Roberts and others were in attendance. Our limited space forbids a full account of the proceedings; but we give beneath the patriotic and eloquent addresses delivered by Gov. Curtin and Gens. Meade and Crawford.

GENERAL CRAWFORD'S SPEECH. GENERAL: I stand before you to-day, sir, representative of the officers of that division who once called you their chief. Impelled by a desire to perpetuate the memory of your connection with them; desirous, too, to manifest to you the affection and esteem they bear to you, they ask your acceptance to-day of this testimonial, which shall mark it forever. Accept it, sir, from them, and here, in the presence of him who conceived the idea of this division—and who I trust, a faithful people will return to the position he so worthily occupies—not as a reward, nor as a recompense for your care for them, but as the exponent of those feelings of their hearts whose value cannot be expressed in words. Transmit it to those who bear your name, and let it ever express to you and them that devoted attachment and regard that the officers of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps shall never cease to feel for you.

General Meade then stepped forward amid tremendous cheers, and responded as follows: SPEECH OF MAJ. GEN. GEORGE G. MEADE. General Meade said: Gen. Crawford and Officers of the Division of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps: I accept this sword with feelings of profound gratitude. I should be insensible to all the promptings of nature if I were not grateful and proud at receiving a testimonial of approbation from a band of officers and men so distinguished as has been the division of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps during the whole period of this war. I have a right, therefore, to be proud that they should think my conduct and my course have been of such a character as to justify them in collecting together here so many distinguished gentlemen as I see around me from different parts of the country and our own State to present to me this handsome testimonial. It is in effect says to me that in their judgment I have done my duty towards them and towards the country. (Applause.) I began my career in this army by commanding the Second brigade of your division. I faithfully endeavored during all the time I held that command, and also the command of your division, to treat the officers and men in a manner that would express to them my high appreciation of their conduct as soldiers and brave men.

I am very glad, sir, that you have mentioned your distinguished guest, the Governor of Pennsylvania. [Cheers.] I have a personal knowledge of his patriotic efforts in behalf of the soldiers. "To him the country is indebted for putting in the field in its hour of sorest need this splendid corps, and I have watched with pleasure and satisfaction the solicitude he has always shown to see that all its interests and wants are attended to. I have been with him on the occasions when he has visited the officers and men from our State, and I know that he has induced to him for many months; and that the country is indebted to him for words of eloquence which he addressed to us to inspire them with increased patriotism and courage. [Cheers.] I am gratified that he is here to witness this presentation, and I heartily join with you, sir, in the hope that his fellow-citizens will remember on occasion his services in promoting the interests of the country, and the suppression of the rebellion. [Long continued applause.] In speaking of the pride which I experienced in receiving this sword, I feel myself justified, even at the risk of being charged with egotism, in saying a few words about the services rendered by this division. I say unhesitatingly here before this assembly, and I am quite sure that when the history of the war is written that the facts will vindicate me, that no division in this glorious army of the Potomac—glorious as I conceive it to be—is entitled to claim more credit for its uniform gallant conduct and for the amount of hard fighting it has gone through than the division of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps. [Cheers.] I do not wish to take any credit to myself in this. It is not of my own personal services that I would speak, but of the services of the soldiers—of the privates of the Pennsylvania Reserves. [Cheers.] and I have only to appeal to Drainesville, where the first success that crowned the arms of the army of the Potomac was gained, unaided and alone, by a single brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves. [Cheers.] I have only to refer to Mechanicsville, where I began the six days' fighting on the Potomac, and where the whole of Longstreet's corps was held in check for several hours, and victory really won by only two brigades of the Reserves. [Cheers.] I refer you to New Market Crossroads, sometimes called Glendale, and I refer emphatically to that battle

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General Meade then stepped forward amid tremendous cheers, and responded as follows: SPEECH OF MAJ. GEN. GEORGE G. MEADE. General Meade said: Gen. Crawford and Officers of the Division of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps: I accept this sword with feelings of profound gratitude. I should be insensible to all the promptings of nature if I were not grateful and proud at receiving a testimonial of approbation from a band of officers and men so distinguished as has been the division of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps during the whole period of this war. I have a right, therefore, to be proud that they should think my conduct and my course have been of such a character as to justify them in collecting together here so many distinguished gentlemen as I see around me from different parts of the country and our own State to present to me this handsome testimonial. It is in effect says to me that in their judgment I have done my duty towards them and towards the country. (Applause.) I began my career in this army by commanding the Second brigade of your division. I faithfully endeavored during all the time I held that command, and also the command of your division, to treat the officers and men in a manner that would express to them my high appreciation of their conduct as soldiers and brave men.

I am very glad, sir, that you have mentioned your distinguished guest, the Governor of Pennsylvania. [Cheers.] I have a personal knowledge of his patriotic efforts in behalf of the soldiers. "To him the country is indebted for putting in the field in its hour of sorest need this splendid corps, and I have watched with pleasure and satisfaction the solicitude he has always shown to see that all its interests and wants are attended to. I have been with him on the occasions when he has visited the officers and men from our State, and I know that he has induced to him for many months; and that the country is indebted to him for words of eloquence which he addressed to us to inspire them with increased patriotism and courage. [Cheers.] I am gratified that he is here to witness this presentation, and I heartily join with you, sir, in the hope that his fellow-citizens will remember on occasion his services in promoting the interests of the country, and the suppression of the rebellion. [Long continued applause.] In speaking of the pride which I experienced in receiving this sword, I feel myself justified, even at the risk of being charged with egotism, in saying a few words about the services rendered by this division. I say unhesitatingly here before this assembly, and I am quite sure that when the history of the war is written that the facts will vindicate me, that no division in this glorious army of the Potomac—glorious as I conceive it to be—is entitled to claim more credit for its uniform gallant conduct and for the amount of hard fighting it has gone through than the division of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps. [Cheers.] I do not wish to take any credit to myself in this. It is not of my own personal services that I would speak, but of the services of the soldiers—of the privates of the Pennsylvania Reserves. [Cheers.] and I have only to appeal to Drainesville, where the first success that crowned the arms of the army of the Potomac was gained, unaided and alone, by a single brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves. [Cheers.] I have only to refer to Mechanicsville, where I began the six days' fighting on the Potomac, and where the whole of Longstreet's corps was held in check for several hours, and victory really won by only two brigades of the Reserves. [Cheers.] I refer you to New Market Crossroads, sometimes called Glendale, and I refer emphatically to that battle

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It only remains for all good men to perfect the local organizations of the friends of the Union, to secure full discussion of the questions in dispute, to bring every loyal vote to the polls, and to use all proper efforts in their power to secure our success. If this is done, Pennsylvania is saved to the Union, and the Union is saved to us and to our posterity.

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In behalf of the Union State Central Committee. WAYNE McVEAGH, Chairman.

SWORD PRESENTATION TO GEN. MEADE.

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