

M'KEAN COUNTY DEMOCRAT

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M'kean County Democrat.

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THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE.

No political topic is of greater importance to the individual citizen, or to the nation at large, than the elective franchise. The subject is of IMMEDIATE AND PRESSING INTEREST. Let us contemplate it in several points of view.

The elective franchise is a great privilege. It gives each voter a voice and an agency in the selection of public officers, and from the lowest to the highest grade. It places the poorest man in a great degree on a political level with the richest. The humblest citizen is thus invested with a peculiar dignity and elevation of social character. His rights of person and property are more secure since his vote is both a weapon and a shield. He is endowed with a share of the sovereign authority of the State and the nation, and his vote is the scepter of his sovereignty.

This franchise is our solemn and weighty public trust. The right to vote is accompanied by serious responsibility, and it should never be exercised thoughtlessly or for mere selfish purposes. It should always be exercised deliberately and with a single eye to the public good. Personal malice or personal partiality should never guide the hand of the voter. The ballot should never be cast for an incompetent or immoral man. Nor should it ever be subject to the control and guidance of a party. Unconditional subservience to a party is inconsistent with fidelity to our country. If we place ourselves passively in the hands of a party, it will surely call upon us to vote for worthy men and for pernicious measures. No exigencies of a party, and no rules of party discipline, can ever justify us in giving such a vote.

The election of our rulers is also the grand characteristic of our institutions, as compared with those of Europe. With them, the sovereign power, the privileges of nobility, and a large share of the legislative and executive functions, are hereditary. Though in England the elective principle is largely applied in the designation of inferior officers, yet the hereditary principle is greatly predominant; and in France the formal election of the Emperor is the merest farce, and he undertakes to establish the hereditary principle as the basis of the claims of his own descendants. This distinction of ours is one of which we are proud, and for which we are grateful to Heaven. It is one which draws upon us the jealousy and hostility of the nobility and crowned heads of Europe. Remembering our former colonial relations, and actuated by unfriendly and revengeful impulses they are availing themselves of our present depressed condition for the formation of a coalition for our destruction. Sectional state-ship has furnished them with the occasion; and upon national state-ship is devolved the duty of saving the country from the dangers to which it is thus exposed.

Nothing can be more evident, than that in this species of government there is a peculiar necessity for a high degree of popular intelligence and virtue. Without extraordinary popular intelligence, the people cannot judge what is the real interest and policy of the country or the State; and without public virtue, they will not conscientiously and impartially keep in view the public welfare, or regard the demands of public justice. As one means of securing the requisite intelligence and independence of mind the elective franchise is restricted to the adult male portion of the population; and the fostering of popular education is deemed by all judicious men the essential means of securing to republics the necessary degree both of popular intelligence and virtue. In the light of this principle, we can form some faint estimate of the folly of those who would elevate to the enjoyment of the privileges and powers of electors, a class or race unprepared to exercise these functions with integrity or intelligence.

The election of public officers by the people, is an excellent and noble feature of our political system. It saves the people at large from being made the prey of the ambition and lust of kings and nobles. It reasonably ensures the great desideratum in politics, a sincere disposition on the part of those who wield the sovereign power to secure the public welfare. It concentrates the thoughts and energies of a vast multitude of minds upon the one end of national prosperity, greatness and glory. It is a grand bulwark to political and civil liberty, placing in the hands of the people a weapon with which they can, if they desire, protect themselves against the encroachments of ambitious men. A country where the people enjoy the elective franchise in its genuine purity, cannot long be deprived of that liberty so exquisitely described by Tacitus, as "the power to speak what you think, and to think what you please." Though our country and her beloved institutions are now shrouded in a cloud of adversity, yet our past history has shown that our system is adapted to produce public prosperity and happiness; and we trust that now, even as our distresses, we are only experiencing one of those vicissitudes of fortune to which all nations, whatever may be their form of government, must be occasionally subject.

In view of these considerations, the unperverted mind must be deeply impressed with the sacredness of the elective franchise. We have seen that the general diffusion of the right to vote is an inestimable privilege; that it involves high and solemn responsibility; that it requires, and tends to produce a peculiar degree of intellectual elevation and moral rectitude in the mass of the people; and that it is in itself eminently adapted to promote the national welfare and greatness, and to secure the public liberties. On account therefore of its great value to public and individual happiness, the elective franchise must be considered as pre-eminently a sacred thing. More especially is this the case, when it is regarded as pertaining to that sovereign power which is "ordained of God," and which He will surely guard with the sanctions of His moral government over mankind.

How urgent the need that the purity and inviolability of this sacred franchise should be carefully guarded! Everything having the taint of fraud, in the mode of voting, in the treatment of voters, or in their own conduct, should be guarded against to the utmost possible degree; and when it does occur, it should be severely punished. The greatest degree of freedom, both moral and physical, should be accorded to every voter; and the attempt to control the acts of citizens, by threats or by actual force, whether in respect to the mode of voting at all, should be regarded as a heinous crime against the public as well as against the individual. A fraud-

ulent or coerced election is morally and politically good for nothing. No imaginable motive can justify the violation of this high prerogative of American citizens. Every species and degree of fraud, even for the supposed purpose of philanthropy or national salvation, is moral treason; and every species and degree of intimidation or force, is an outrage upon the authority and sanctity of the sovereign power of the nation.

There are decided symptoms and proofs of a disposition in our national rulers, to violate the purity and security of the elective franchise. The disposition was first manifested in the treatment of the citizens inhabiting States controlled by the rebellion. It led to the nominal and partial election, and actual reception into Congress, of sham Senators and Representatives from other portions of the region named. None of these were elected in accordance with the existing constitutions and laws of the States in question. If the course should be persisted in, Congress itself is liable to become nothing but a sham. The country wants a Congress composed of men freely chosen by the lawful people, and legislatures of their respective States. These proceedings are "doing evil that good may come"; and whatever the plea of patriotism or necessity, they can produce nothing but mischief. They are an imitation of the evil and shameful example of the unguided and wicked leaders of rebellion.

The experience thus acquired by our rulers in those dark regions gave them a taste and aptitude for practicing upon the elective franchise in States free from the power of the rebellion. It led their followers to clamor for statutes entitling the soldiers to vote in their camps, while subject to the salutary coercion of military discipline. Thus the door would be thrown wide open for that fraud and force which is so destructive of the purity and sanctity of the ballot. Then followed in succession those operations upon the elections in New Hampshire and Connecticut, so disgraceful to the operations and so injurious to the true welfare of the nation. And the moral sense of the country has been finely shocked by the audacious invasion of popular rights in the patriotic State of Kentucky, where voters were driven away from the ballot-box by military intimidation and by the actual surrounding of the places of voting, with bristling bayonets! These atrocious proceedings, so mournful in the retrospect, are terribly ominous of what we may expect in the time to come. Their alarming import is heightened by the significant coincidence, that in September of last year, just previous to the general election, the county was started by a general proclamation of martial law, and it is now, in similar circumstances, surprised by a proclamation of the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*—broad enough in its terms to embrace political offenses as well as military, and to affect civilians as well as soldiers.

My countrymen let no motive or pretense of necessity or expediency lead you to violate or to excuse the violation of fundamental principles! Such acts will not save, but will surely destroy, our country and its free institutions!

A. B. S.
NEW HAVEN, Sept. 18, 1863.

Furloughs for Abolitionists—Fighting for Democrats.

It is very evident that the central despotism at Washington intends to use the army, as far as it is possible to do so, to control the next election in Pennsylvania. Already the foot-prints of the political tricksters are plainly visible. Hundreds of soldiers have been sent home on furlough from Meade's army, to electioneer for the abolition State ticket. No Democrats are permitted to be absent from their regiments; they must remain and bear the brunt of the battle; while the more favored Abolitionists are allowed the privilege of spending two or three weeks at home; just before the election in this State. One instance recently came to our knowledge, where an officer in sound health had a furlough of three weeks granted him, including the second Tuesday of October, when, at the same time, his regiment was hastily despatched, at a few hours' notice, to join the main body of Meade's forces. The fact that he is an ultra Abolitionist, and is supposed to wield considerable political influence in his district, fully accounts for the favorable election exhibited. This game will be extensively played by the authorities at Washington. The wicked men in power will not leave any means untried, fair or foul, to secure the success of their treasonable doctrines. They believe that it is better to lose a battle in the field than an election. Acting upon this infamous sentiment, they deplored the Army of the Cumberland to send political recruits in the defeat of Rosecrans and his gallant army. They will not hesitate to perjure Meade and his heroic command in the same manner. Their policy is to rule and ruin the free white men of the North, in order that they may elevate to social and political equality the African race. The *Press*, of yesterday morning, advocated the vigorous prosecution of the war in this style:—"The repulse at Chattanooga would be a mere trifle compared with the success of the Democratic party in Ohio or Pennsylvania."

Of course, if the Washington authorities believe this, they will send home every soldier from those States who will vote their ticket; and as there are nearly two hundred thousand men in the field from those States, and as it is claimed that a majority of them are Republicans, such a policy would take away a greater number of men than Rosecrans has in his whole army. "The first fruits of this political strategy are the losses of 1,700 killed, 8,000 wounded, and a loss in artillery which will not fall short of fifty pieces, while our deficiency in transportation and baggage cannot be estimated." Such is Abolition "friendship for the soldier."—*Age*.

"THE CONSTITUTION AS IT IS."—Nothing so whimsical as this platform. Everywhere throughout the country the officials are taking the oath to support it; but like Mr. Sumner when he first entered the Senate, they are taking it that of the heroic Lane who has just abandoned his pursuit of Quantrel and come to Washington for safety. In a late speech he said:—"The Constitution as it is, is played out; its technical definition is the restoration of slavery, and I am ready to see any Kansas man shot down who favors the Union as it was."

Plain Talk for Plain People.

We do not think that any man of plain, common sense, will say that the condition of the country at present is such as he would desire it to be. There is something wrong—some of the machinery is out of gear—and we take it, as a matter of course, that every right-minded man would like to see things set to rights, and the breaks and obstructions in the machinery removed and amended. Now, it is obvious to our mind that the men who have for three years past been running the machine do not understand its mechanism—otherwise it would not have been jarred and put out of running order by the people to repair and put it again in good condition. We have learned by costly experience in our own office that a steam press, which an experienced engineer, a steady man, a well-balanced mind, will run without breakage or impediment for a year, an inexperienced man, confident in his own ignorance, will put out of order every week, and if continued, to total ruin in a month. It is the same in government as in mechanical affairs. If the men entrusted with the management of the State are ignorant, or careless, or reckless, the machinery will soon be disarranged, the levers and screws and pulleys and cylinders, and wheels and bands cease to work as they were intended to—and unless the burglars are removed, and competent workmen put in their place, the whole machinery may be utterly ruined in as short a time as it takes an incompetent engineer and pressman to ruin a double cylinder steam printing press.

The history of the country, which is open to all, in its public records, in the proceedings of Congress and the State Legislatures, shows too plainly for contradiction or dispute, that while troubles have always arisen under administrations other than Democratic, everything has gone smoothly and well when Democrats were in power. And there is a very plain reason for this. The Democratic party, when administering the Government, have always confined themselves within the limits of the Constitution, literally construed, and been in all things observant and obedient to the laws. Their ambition has been to rule mildly, to carry out the intentions of their Fathers strictly, to place no unnecessary burdens upon the people, to restrain them in the exercise of no privilege granted by the Constitution or natural right, voluntarily resigned for the sake of good government—in short their aim has been to bestow the greatest number, and they have never failed to do so, while their political opponents, by whatever name known, have invariably pursued a different course, and invariably, under their administration of Government have the people suffered wrong and oppression. Their views, whatever they may pretend to the contrary, are not Republican—they are aristocratic, arbitrary, contrary to the principles upon which our free institutions are founded. They never could find power enough in the Constitution to carry out their policy, and hence they have disregarded it, when in authority, trampled the laws under foot, set their heels upon the necks of the people, and brought trouble and gloom upon the country.

Under the administration of John Adams this was exemplified in the passage and enforcement of the Alien and Sedition laws, from whence arose persecutions for opinions, and every species of tyranny, odious to a free people. The same policy, though in a lesser degree, marked the administration of every succeeding administration hostile to Democratic sentiment, down to the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln, since when the true spirit of the party has displayed itself in the most reckless acts of despotism that ever disgraced any nation.

Under this administration nothing has been regarded but the unchecked will of the ruling party. Every barrier erected by the Constitution and the laws against the exercise of arbitrary power and for the protection of State and popular rights, has been brushed away from its path, and we have had a reign of terror and blood, of conscription and exaction, of plunder and oppression, stained by crimes of every nature and degree, that finds no parallel in history—that sickens the heart and mantles the cheek of the civilized world with the blush of shame and indignation.

No one who understands the institutions of the country, and values his reputation, will deny this statement. It is true—and truth is mighty. This gang of ignorant and reckless engineers in charge of the National and State engines have thrown the train from the track, and have neither the desire nor skill to put it on again. What, then, is to be done? We must change our workmen—we must discharge the incompetent and careless hands we have, and employ skillful mechanics to repair the damage and put the train upon the rails; we must do this, or every hope of this free people, of this great republican nation, will be wrecked of every nature and degree. We must break down the ruling power, or we must ourselves go down. We cannot now reach Lincoln through the ballot-box—but we can reach Curtin, and Curtin is Lincoln's right arm. Let us lop off this right arm, and, by so doing, lessen the power of the Federal administration for mischief, and redeem Pennsylvania from disgrace. To save your country and yourselves you must do this. You will have an opportunity on the 13th—avail yourselves of it—let nothing deter or restrain you—strike them, and strike boldly. If you fail you can lose nothing—for things are as bad as can be—but if you succeed you will gain much—your country, liberty, constitutional government, peace, union and prosperity.—*Patriot and Union*.

"WHICH IS LOYAL?"—The will of the President is above the Constitution and the laws.—Whenever disputed this is a sympathizer with secession.—*The Republican Party*.
The laws of the United States must be executed. I have no discretionary power on the subject.—*Andrew Jackson*.
GOOD JOKE AND TRUE.—A young man was asked the other day why he was going to desert his friends and vote the Democratic ticket?—"Because I want to prepare myself for a nomination on the Republican ticket next fall," was his withering reply! The querist slyly!—*Columbus (Ohio) Crisis*.

What Gov. Curtin DID NOT do, and What he DID do.

From the Patriot and Union.
The friends of Gov. Curtin evidently do not feel very sanguine of his election, or they do not resort to the miserable shifts they do to bolster him up. At this moment they are pulling the "Soldier's Friend" string, with great energy, but to little purpose. They seem to have settled down in the conviction that only a very strong military feeling in his favor and a general belief that his election is necessary to preserve the Nation (Heaven save the mark!) can secure his election; and hence they resort to every means to produce such a feeling and such a belief. The people are assured by them that he is very "loyal" and Woodward is very disloyal—that the President desires his election and dreads the election of Woodward more than anything else; that his election would confirm the administration, put down the rebellion, and save the life of the nation, while Woodward's election would cripple the President, insure the independence of the Southern Confederacy, and, of course, sever the Union forever. This is said to the people to frighten them into the support of Curtin. It is mainly false in relation to Woodward. But what of that? It is the only means by which Curtin can be elected, and therefore they do not scruple to use it. This is their course with the people. They pull another string for the soldiers. They tell them that Curtin furnished the President with 200,000 troops—that he raised the Reserve Corps, and has since watched over it as a hen does over her brood—(if they would say as a hawk does over a partridge they would nearer)—that he, after the Reserves were sent to the army, made extraordinary exertions to raise a second similar body of troops to protect the frontier, and many other things equally silly and utterly false. These are things that Gov. Curtin did not do. Let us see what he DID do, to entitle him to the confidence and support of the soldiers and the people.

Here is a catalogue of some of the praiseworthy acts which he did perform, as we find it in the *Watchman*, published in the town of Bellefonte, Centre county, Gov. Curtin's home:

WHAT GOV. CURTIN DID DO.
Who appointed contractors that clothed the three months' men in shoddy, gave them blankets, thin as air—furnished them shoes with pine shaving soles—and fed them on rotten herring and stinking beef? A. G. Curtin.
Who rode over the terrible battle field at Gettysburg, and on hearing a wounded officer exclaim, "this is an awful slaughter of Pennsylvanians," remarked, "it mattered little, there were plenty more to take their places?" A. G. Curtin.
Who attempted to force the State militia into the service of the United States for six months or longer? A. G. Curtin.
Who keeps that miserable pack of shoddy contractors, horse thieves, and public robbers, that furnished the three months' men with rotten blankets and worthless clothes, still in employ? A. G. Curtin.
Who approved a bill that took from the tax payers of Pennsylvania eighteen millions of dollars, and gave it to the Pennsylvania railroad company? A. G. Curtin.
Who transferred the State and its Legislature into the hands of this plundering corporation? A. G. Curtin.
Who made an agreement with this same corporation, by which it was to pay the State \$75,000 per annum—contingent that agreement not afterwards surrendered it to the company, without ever preserving a copy or memorandum of it? A. G. Curtin.
Who permitted the soil of our State to be invaded by the Confederates and then said he had no power to defend the State when thousands of our citizens were on hand ready to repel an invasion and protect our homes? A. G. Curtin.
Who crawled to Washington, like a poor miserable beggar, and there, on bended knees, implored Father Abraham to allow him to protect our State Capitol? A. G. Curtin.
Who boasted in this town, on the night of the election, that he had his heel on the necks of Democrats, and would keep it there for three years? A. G. Curtin.
Who permitted the minions of Federal authority to enter the Capital of our State and drag from their homes, patriotic citizens, and incarcerate them in the loathsome cells of military prisons, without warrant or cause? A. G. Curtin.
Who pardoned the Abolition miscreants at Bloomsburg, after they had been found guilty of rioting by judge and jury? A. G. Curtin.
Who gave a respite to a negro murderer in Philadelphia, and at the same time refused to grant a few days to an Irishman convicted of the offence? A. G. Curtin.
Who took an oath before high Heaven, swearing that he would not vote, nor give his influence for any man for any office in the gift of the people, unless he be an American born citizen, nor if he be a Roman Catholic? A. G. Curtin.
Who took an oath before high Heaven, swearing that if ever elected or appointed to an official station conferring on him the power to do so, he would remove all foreigners, aliens or Roman Catholics from office or place, and that in no case would he appoint such to any office in his gift? A. G. Curtin.
Who swore to keep the above infamous oaths sacred and inviolate through life? A. G. Curtin.
Who was the first Secretary of State under a Know-Nothing Governor? A. G. Curtin.
Who traveled over this State in 1851, organizing Know-Nothing lodges? A. G. Curtin.
Who took an oath to prescribe you on account of your birth-place and religion? A. G. Curtin.

"THE RICHMOND ENQUIRER."—The Richmond Enquirer, gives the following opinion of the Democratic party:
That the Democratic party was our worst enemy, and but for its poisonous embrace these States would have been free and clear of the unnatural Union twenty years ago. It is not the Seward, and Sumners, the Black Republican and Abolitionists, who have hurt us. They were right all along; there was an irrepressible conflict between two different civilizations, two opposite social organizations; they were no more able to live peaceably together in one government than two hands can wear one glove."

"THE TYRANT'S PEN."—The plea of "military necessity," when plainly stated amounts to this, and no more: "That we must permit violations of the constitution and infringements of law, we must witness, without a struggle of remonstrance, the interference of the military power to control elections, right and justice must be held in abeyance at the dictate of expediency; in short, that we must consent, for a time, to surrender our liberties that the Government's policies may succeed." The "barbarous" plea, that in time of war the laws of the land are adopted, and re-affirmed by the Administration party. Dr. Franklin thought otherwise, but he was not a frank patriot. He has told the inheritors of American Union that "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."—*Chicago Times*.

"THE RADICAL JOURNALS."—The radical journals are striving to rechristen the Republican party. It needs a new name sadly. The old one is an offence to the nation. But they call it a Union party, let the definition be truthful and complete. Let it be stated; and state boldly in its title that the Republican party is in favor of the Union of Colors, as the Democratic party is in favor of the Union of States.

"IS IT TREASONABLE?"
The New York Sun, a neutral paper, with slightly Lincolnian proclivities, contains the following:
"The Hon. Thos. Stevens, the Republican leader in the last Congress, in a speech delivered in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, on Thursday, in favor of the re-election of Curtin, expressed the following sentiments:
"The Union as it was; and the Constitution as it is—God forbid that it should be Abolition doctrine, but it is the right doctrine."
This may be "unconditional" loyalty; but it looks uncommonly like treason. Other traitors never said anything so bad as this: They at least were in favor of the restoration of the Union and the Constitution, but Stevens is thinking that it can be better accomplished by peace than war. The President and Congress have placed on record the most solemn declaration that the sole object of the war was to restore and maintain the constitutional authority of the General Government in the insurrectionary States, and on the faith of these assurances a million of men shouldered arms, and a mint of money has been expended. But after two years and a half of war and the sacrifice of a million of men, a leading member of the dominant Republican party publicly deprecates the principle for which we have been contending. Other traitors have been exiled—will Stevens be shot, or imprisoned, or even proscribed?"

PRESIDENT LINCOLN FAITH TO HIS LEADER.—I do not object to a decision of the United States Supreme Court, or the Judges thereof, on the constitutionality of the draft law. In fact I should be willing to facilitate the obtaining of it; but I cannot consent to lose the hero while it is being obtained.—*President Lincoln to Gov. Seymour*.
The President has promptly consented to have it tested by judicial interpretation.—*Gen. Dix's Proclamation*.
Here is a distinct promise reiterated, to facilitate a legal decision as to the validity of the Draft. Yet when by special appointment, the Judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania met on Wednesday, in Philadelphia, to hear an argument upon the constitutionality of the Conscription Act, the U. S. District Attorney refused to appear, it is said, by instructions from Washington.
In every case in this State in which the question was up on a distinct issue, the government has refused to meet it—letting its opponents or other parties go, rather than have a decision.
At last comes the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, which takes all these cases (and many more) out of the jurisdiction of the Courts.
How different the course of President Lincoln in this matter, and in those questions affecting the Negro. In those he says "the promise being made, must be kept."
Here the promise is made to free white citizens—only to be broken.

CURTIN'S PATRIOTISM.—Three Abolition patriots recently made speeches for Andrew G. Curtin, the shoddy candidate for Governor. One was Thaddeus Stevens, who playfully said:—"The Union as it was and the Constitution as it is—God forbid!" The second was Wm. H. Armstrong, who coolly informed his hearers that "it was better to lose a battle in the field than the election in Pennsylvania." The third was the notorious Benjamin F. Butler, lately returned from Massachusetts, where he had been severely chastised for insubordination. He boldly announced to his Abolition audience that he was not for the Union as it was. As these three members were employed to help Curtin, Mr. Wayne McVough, the chairman of the Curtin State Committee, they undoubtedly expressed the opinions of their shoddy leader. Those who are willing to endorse the treasonable and disgraceful sentiments quoted above, will cast their votes for Andrew G. Curtin!