Democrat and Sentinel.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOVERNMENT, LIKE THE DEWS OF HEAVEN, SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ALIKE, UPON THE HIGH AND THE LOW, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

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SPEECH OF
Hon. D. W. VOORHEES, of Ind.,
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 20 1862.

[CONCLUDED.]

On the 22d day of April, 1861, Mr. Seward writing to Mr. Dayton, our minister at the Court of the Emperor Napoleon, and speaking of conquest of the present rebellious States, further elaborate the proposition that the revolution is without a cause; and that, as a consequence, peace must be restored at once, it is clear that it is without an example in history. Moral and physical causes have decided largely the character of each one of the contests over which the dispute has arisen, and both parties after the decision have cheerfully agreed on all the Federal laws and on their organization. The Territories will remain in all respects the same whether the revolution shall succeed or shall fail. The condition of slavery in the several States will remain just the same whether it succeed or fail. There is not even a pretext for the complaint that the disaffected States are conquered by the United States if the latter contend for the rights of the States with the condition of every human being in the country subject to exactly the same laws and forms of administration whether the revolution shall succeed or fail. And if the States would be federally connected with the new confederacy, in case they would, as now, be members of the United States, but their constitutions, laws, habits, and institutions in all cases will remain the same.

"It only remains necessary to add that the President regrets the further fact that the obstruction to the laws, as well as the civil conflict which has ensued, has been developed to a certain degree in States which always repudiated all disloyal sentiments whenever imputed to them and which, notwithstanding the system of slavery as existing under the Constitution, and which, however, would not be favorable, if it were to exist, to any such effort on the part would be true to themselves and all their relations in that direction would be prevented by the judicial authority, even though they were assented to by Congress and the people."

Upon this language needs no comment. It speaks plainly for itself. It is the solemn pledge of the Government that, under no circumstances, will it interfere to change or in any manner modify any of the laws or institutions of the States which are in rebellion. Will that pledge be kept? What say the friends of the movement for universal emancipation? Mr. Seward says that such a movement would be prevented by the judicial authority, even though the President and Congress and the people should all act together for its promotion. What say the political lawyers on the opposite side of the House or raised to the expected quarter against the fulfillment of their fond hopes? Everything is dependent of it by some sleight of hand not familiar to them than to me.

Under date of April 10, 1861, Mr. Seward wrote to Mr. Adams, the American minister to England, and in his official instructions he speaks as follows:

"You will indulge in no expressions of passion, disrespect, or even impatience, concerning the United States, their agents, or their policy, yet will, on the contrary, treat them with that liberality which is due from friendly powers to each other. You will not forget that these States have always heretofore been known, notwithstanding their temporary dissensions, to be friendly powers, that they must always continue to be so, and that their citizens, through all past and present misunderstandings and alienations, have been and always must be our kindred countrymen."

On this issue, sir, I take my stand. It is one of the deliberate conclusions of my mind and the sentiments of my heart. I believe in the principles laid down by the Secretary of State, on the 10th day of April, when they were written, and I believe in them now. If others have changed since then, I have not. The Union which I seek to have restored is the old Union, as it was made by our ancestors; not a new and different one, shaped and fashioned to suit the capricious notions of modern politicians. I long to see the States once more re united as "equal and honored members of this Federal Union," with the Constitution unchanged in letter or in spirit, extending its protection and its blessings alike to them all. I have no wish, however, for the kind of a Union which now seems to meet the approbation of many of the distinguished leaders of the dominant party. Rome had her subjugated provinces, reduced to squalid wretchedness by her vast standing armies. Her trembling tributaries wailed and bled beneath her cruel power. Her consuls went forth to govern, to rob, to plunder, to scourge, and to crucify. She reduced independent sovereign States to territorial vassalage. She received their enforced homage as a conqueror. She confiscated their lands and their substance. She filled her lap with coveted wealth. But does the sad sequal to her history commend her policy to us for adoption? Standing armies preyed upon her vitals and smote down her liberties. Unwilling, unequal, and dishonored States arose against her whenever the opportunity offered. The Gaul, the Briton, the Tartar, the Hun, the Goth, the Vandal, all,

"Dealt upon the seven hilled city's pride,"

rifled her of her glory, and repaid her a thousand fold for the bitter humiliations which her arrogance had inflicted. All history repeats the same teaching!

England in modern times, has contributed her example to this great lesson of history. Her whole existence has been one protracted struggle to hold within her grasp conquered and vassal colonies. Her success has, indeed, thus far been great, but her experiment is not over. She has formed many unions with weaker Powers whose soil she has laid waste and whose people she has murdered; but what sorrowful spectacles they are! Scotland has a union with Ireland; but who wants to behold one like it on this continent, filled with blood, with bitterness, with tears of grief, with cries of hate, with plunging armies, with revolution in quick and horrid succession, and with all those repulsive crimes which forever attend such events, and over which humanity has shuddered and wept in all ages? No, sir, let us hear no more such Union as this. All history, all ages, and every clime contain volumes of teaching on this momentous subject. It becomes the American statesman to heed their warnings. Give us back the Union as it always heretofore has been, consisting of "equal and honored members." Fail to do this; strip the States of their attributes as States under the Constitution and reduce them to territorial bondage, a measure already introduced into the other branch of Congress, and though our armies may be victorious in every field—though they may, in their triumphant march, cross every river, scale every mountain, and encamp in every valley, from the Potomac to Mobile, there will never come a day when the angel of peace will return to the land—there will never come a day when the drum beat and the roll call of vast standing armies shall cease to be heard; and there will never come a day when the foothill of the Federal taxgatherer shall cease to be heard at the threshold of every laborer's hamlet from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. There will be no peace in such a Union. The lightning of civil war will be forever playing in fitful gleams along our horizon. The people of the South are "our kindred and countrymen," and the blood which we inherit in common, the proud race to which we belong never yielded a passive obedience to the degrading conditions of inequality and dishonor. I am fully aware that the sword must now bring the conclusion of this unnatural strife. I am fully aware that a result must be attained now on the battle field. There was a time when it was not so, and history will embalm in everlasting infamy the names of those who rejected peace—who rejected union when both were offered on honorable terms. I leave the past, however, at least for to day, and deal with the present. Let the armies move on, and bring a speedy issue to this war of "kindred and countrymen;" but let them move in the name of the Constitution; in the name of the laws; in the name of the Union, composed of "equal and honored members;" in the name of God; and guided by the precepts of an enlightened Christianity.

I am not done yet, however, Mr. Chairman, with the recorded pledges of the Government. They exist on every leaf and page of the history of the first three months of this year. They are strewed on every hand during that period, and leave the laborer in the field only the difficulty of selection, not that of discovery. Sir, when that dear and honored State, Kentucky, where my ancestors were born, where they fought, where they died, and where their ashes repose, was trembling in the balance; when her fate from day to day was unknown; when the ties of blood and kindred and similarity of domestic institutions and interests pulled hard against the strong anchor of her fidelity to the Union, and when she poised herself upon her proud neutrality between the North and the South, one of her most eloquent and gifted sons spoke to her on behalf of the present Administration in language which Kentuckians trusted, which they received as an Executive promise, and on the faith of which thousands of her troops are now in the field.

On the 31st day of May, 1861, Joseph Holt wrote his celebrated letter to Mr. Speed, which rang through the country like a clarion. In it he said:

"No excesses will mark the footsteps of the troops of the republic; no institutions of the States will be invaded or tampered with; no rights of persons or property will be violated. The known purposes of the Administration, and the high character of the troops employed, alike guaranty the truthfulness of this statement."

Not content, however, with this most explicit and most satisfactory assurance that the rights of the States were to be respected, Mr. Holt proceeded to convince Kentucky that her rights in the Territories were also amply secured, and would be carefully guarded by this Administration. He discussed that point as follows:

"The Supreme Court has decided that the citizens of the slave States can, at will, take their slaves into all the Territories of the United States; and this decision, which has never been resisted or interfered with in a single case, is the law of the land, and the whole power of the Government is pledged to enforce it. That it will be loyally enforced by the present Administration, I entertain no doubt. A Republican Congress, at the late session, organized three new Territories, and in the organic law of neither was there introduced, or attempted to be introduced, the slightest restriction upon the right of the Southern emigrant to bring his slaves with him. At this moment, therefore, and I state it without qualification, there is not a Territory belonging to the United States into which the Southern people may not introduce their slaves at pleasure, and enjoy their complete protection."

It is no part of my purpose, at this time, to determine whether Mr. Holt construed the decision of the Supreme Court correctly or not. He is a very eminent and learned lawyer, and his opinion is entitled to great respect. But I simply now make this my authority to show the principles and the policy to which he pledged the Administration before the country in its conduct of the war, and its treatment of the question of slavery. Sumter had fallen. The nation was arming. Soldiers were wanted. Kentucky was to be saved, and language like this was more potent with the lovers of the Constitution and the friends of the old Union, than all the bounty land or monthly pay which the Government had with which to enlist regiments. There it stands, and there it will stand forever, to the honor of him who wrote it, and to the eternal shame and disgrace of those who shall turn their backs upon its teachings, and render false and deceptive its deliberate and solemn promises. I do not assume to speak for the affairs of Kentucky; she does not need my humble voice on this floor. Her own experienced and eloquent Representatives are here to speak for her. But this I may be allowed, as her neighbor and friend and kindred offspring, to say, that if the pledge that has been given to her on the subject of her domestic institutions is now to be broken, and the abolition of slavery declared, the treachery involved in the act will be so dark, the fraud so monstrous, that it will pollute every succeeding page of American history, and crimson the cheeks of our children with shame as they read it.

Sir, one more name I will add. It belongs now to the dead. It is a name which will live long in American history. I oppose it to the mad fanaticism which rings in this Hall, and by and in its authority denounce the wicked purposes of abolitionism. I read from the last speech of the great popular tribune, Stephen A. Douglas:

"We must not invade constitutional rights. The innocent must not suffer, nor women and children be the victims. Savages must not be let loose."

How pregnant and full of meaning are these three short sentences! The Constitution must be maintained at all hazards, and the rights of the South under it must not be invaded. "Savages must not be let loose." This was spoken in June. The full measure of the rebellion was before him, yet almost with his dying words he spoke for the preservation of the constitutional rights of the States; and as if with prophetic eye foreseeing the evil designs which where then cherished in secret, he lifted up his voice in behalf of the innocent—the women and the children of the South—and warned his countrymen against abolitionism in that short but powerful sentence, "Savages must not be let loose." Sir, there was a magnetic power in his voice while living; and though he sleeps now from the warfare of life, and shall awake no more, yet from the dread precincts of the grave is still ringing over all the land, in the tones of a monarch among men, his lofty and solemn injunctions that the Constitution, as it was then, must so remain for the North, for the South, and for all future time. This injunction may now be despised and discarded in this Hall by those who so recently for the first time have taken his name upon their lips to praise. They may reject and spurn it, as they do, and as they will; but when that is done, the cries of a deceived, an indignant, and an outraged people will arise from the plains of the Northwest, and from all sections of the country, like the mighty sound of rushing waters, calling for vengeance on those who have fatally stabbed the Constitution under smiling and hypocritical guise of a false and assumed friendship. I may not live long, Mr. Chairman. My life is perhaps bounded by narrow limits, but I trust that I may live till the sun rises on the day of a popular reckoning on this subject. I fear not its judgment. I invoke with confidence its decree on the humble record of my brief term of public life. Others, and not I—not those who take the Constitution as the measure of their authority to act here and elsewhere—will be found calling on the mountains to hide them from the wrath of their constituents. To that day I take my appeal; before that tribunal I lodge my cause.

But, sir, once more and finally, to the recorded pledges of the Government. I have given you the pledges of those in authority in whom the people were entitled to confide. I will give you now the voice of the people themselves, as assembled here in both branches of Congress, through their representatives.

On the 14th of February, 1861, in view of the gathering storm which has since broken upon the country, Mr. Sherman, of Ohio, then a Representative, now a Senator in Congress, introducing into this body the following resolution.

"That neither the Congress of the United States nor the people or governments of the non slaveholding States have the right to legislate upon, or interfere with, slavery in any of the slaveholding States in the Union."

This resolution passed this House unanimously upon a vote taken by yeas and nays, many of the present champions of abolitionism being present, and voting for it. Of course, this will be met with them now with the new doctrine, that a state of war enables us to legislate upon forbidden subjects, and changes the express, written letter of the Constitution; that we were at peace when this resolution was passed, and that we are at war now. We have heard much of this doctrine. It has been ably vehemently urged. But to my mind, it is the most dangerous dogma ever promulgated in a free country. It puts us out far from shore in the open sea, with the polar star obscured, without chart or compass to guide our course. 'State necessity' is to be substituted for the well known provisions of the Constitution! Strange and alarming doctrine in the American Congress! It calls up before the mind the darkest and bloodiest pages in history. It is the plea by which martyrs have been chained to the stake, and have ascended the scaffold in all ages. It erected the guillotine, and held a carnival of horror in France during the reign of terror. It is the founder of bastiles and inquisitions. It is of no kin to freemen. It is a foe to liberty. It is the monstrous engine of oppression by which the accidental majority of to day, unchecked, unlimited, and uncontrolled by law, may crush, plunder, and murder the minority. It is the bloody dripping sword of irresponsible power. State necessity! I know no 'State necessity,' equal to that which our oaths, registered in heaven impose upon us to support the Constitution in all its parts as our sainted fathers made it.

Such is the 'State necessity,' sir, which I acknowledge, and none other. In peace or in war, the written Constitution gives us all the power we have; and on this point, I content myself with referring, as authority, to the speech made at the late extra session by the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky, (Mr. Crittenden.) We all remember it. It has never been answered. It never will be. According to his construction of the Constitution, there was a total absence of all power in Congress over the subject of slavery in the States, in war as well as in peace. I will balance the weight of his honored name against the advocates of a different construction. It is a name that belongs to history. It is the name of a profound lawyer and an experienced statesman, and will live long and gratefully in the hearts of his countrymen.

Sir, Congress, however spoke again on this important subject. Who will forget the scene who witnessed it? Who will forget the 22d day of last July in this Hall? It was the darkest day in all the calendar of American history. Dismay or gloom sat on every face. A routed army were pouring into the city, and a triumphant army at the gates of the capitol. In that hour of extremity and peril, when a new army was to be raised, and the old one encouraged and invigorated, Congress announced to the country, and to the whole world, the policy which should govern the future conduct of the war. On motion of the distinguished gentlemen from Kentucky, (Mr. Crittenden) Congress said:

"That this war is not waged on their part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor for any purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution, and to preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired; and that as soon as these objects are accomplished, the war ought to cease."

The nation heard this and the loyal men trusting and confiding, again poured with military tread from the loyal States to the bank of the Potomac. They were repelled by no outcry from either end of the capitol, that slavery as the cause of the war, must be abolished, and that the seceded States had committed political suicide, and must be reduced by force of arms, to territories, and governed as such by Federal authority.

Mr. Chairman, I am amazed, utterly amazed, when I contrast the present with the past on this subject. All is changed, at least so far as Congress is concerned. Pledge upon pledge has been made by every department of the Government in the opening stages of this conflict. The national faith has been plighted at home and abroad in the most binding and obligatory manner, that the domestic laws and customs of the seceded States were not to be violated, that slavery was not to be abolished, 'that savages were not to be let loose.' We heard no indignant protests then against this policy. Tongues that are now loud in its denunciation were then mute. Voices that are now high in wrath against it were then silent.

The army, however, of six hundred thousand men stands banded together under the stern control of military discipline. In that I suppose, the object of conservative pledges is accomplished, and the time has arrived for the fulfillment of the purposes of the war according to the views of the abolitionists. They demand now that all these pledges shall be broken. They demand that the faith of the Government shall be dishonored. They demand that the present administration shall be disgraced in the eyes of all the world by abandoning its own deliberate construction of the Constitution—it own boldly and openly marked line of policy.—They demand that the army shall be deceived; that the promises by which it was raised shall be proven false; that the soldier shall now fight and die in the prosecution of purposes which were concealed from him when he enlisted, and which he abhors.—They demand that the people shall be betrayed, and their hard earned money taken to support this war, conducted on principles which they utterly repudiate. And, above all, they demand that the Constitution be ruthlessly violated; that the laws be stricken down, and the old Union, such as our fathers made it, shall never be restored.—

Had they avowed their purposes at the opening of the war, and appealed to the country to support the atrocious doctrines which they now avow; had they made their demands then, no proud army would line a thousand miles of border; but rather as my colleague (Mr. Dunn) has well and truly said on this floor, our army would have been composed of a small and deluded band, such as followed John Brown to Harper's Ferry. Let these demands be granted now, and the appalling fact will stand confessed that a stupendous fraud has been practiced on the nation, and that the army of the United States has been raised by *false pretenses*. Let these demands be granted now, and no American Union will ever more bless the eyes of men. No more

"Will bloom the thunder blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar."

Mr. Chairman, I represent, in part the people of a great State. Indiana may point proudly to her escutcheon. It is gemmed all over with honor. She did not want this war. She was for compromise and peace, and is now, when they can be obtained, as they once could, with honor and upon the principles of the Constitution. But once cast into the conflict, though by no act of hers she has wedded herself to victory on every battle field where her troops have drawn the sword. Go and ask her sixty thousand soldiers now in the field, encircled as they are with a halo of gallant achievments, whether these demands shall be granted, and listen to their answer. That answer will be, that they are fighting to restore a Union of 'equal and honored members;' that they have encountered the perils of war to restore the Constitution exactly as it came from Washington, and to enforce all the laws, to uphold all the institutions, to protect and defend all the rights of every person and State under that Constitution, and that if such is no longer the policy of the Government, they will turn their faces homeward, deceived and betrayed. Go and and ask the tax payers and the voters of that noble State for what they toil and pour out their money. They will answer that they live on the great tributaries of the great thoroughfare of their trade and commerce, the Mississippi river, that their fortunes are forever linked by nature and the great laws of geographical formation with the States which are washed by its descending waters; and that by virtue of, and in strict accordance with the Constitution, they intend to secure a free passage to the gulf Mexico; and that they will everywhere uphold the rights of others as well as their own; that they labor to maintain and preserve the laws, and not to trample them under foot; and that they seek a reconstruction of the Union on precisely the same basis on which it was made by the founders of the Government. They want no four millions of slaves free. They have no money with which to purchase territories for vast schemes of colonization. They are opposed to gigantic standing armies, with which to hold, from year to year, and through all time to come, degraded States in subjection. In this hour of triumph the true friends of the Union everywhere demand that a policy for the reconstruction of the Government be proclaimed from here which will insure for the future a Union of 'equal and honored members.' Let our 'kindred and countrymen' of the South know that liberty and magnanimity animate our councils, and that the spirit of vengeance, intolerance and spoliation, has no place in our midst. In this day of victory let the heralds of the Government go before our armies, and proclaim peace and Union, on the basis of equality, on the basis of the Constitution, and on the basis of the laws. Let them announce that the pledges of the Government so freely given in the early part of this struggle will not be broken at the mad behests of Abolitionism; but that the condition of every human being in the South shall remain unchanged, whether the revolution shall succeed or fail.

Sir, to my mind it is an omen of evil that the spirit of abolitionism, like a lurking fiend of mischief, a Mephistopheles of iniquity should boldly stalk in here, and, in such a crisis as this, assume to control American legislation. Its croaking raven cry is a hateful sound to the ears of the Union.—Its arrogant and defiant demands fill the future with gloom. It no longer comes in here the skulking and despised miscreant that it once was; but with the elevated mein and swaggering port of a conqueror, it strides forward over the mangled form of constitutional Government. It no longer hides and cowers and denies its name and its nature, and assumes false shapes, like Satan in the garden of Paradise, with which to beguile and deceive, as it did a few short years ago. The veiled prophet of Khorassan has revealed himself, and his hideous face is almost enough to affright union and concord from the land.

Why comes this fell spirit here now accompanied by its train of horrors? It has no merit in the past to entitle it to control the present and shape the future. It can point to no good act it has ever accomplished.—The cause of abolitionism is barren of beneficial results. No State, no Territory has it ever dictated to free labor, and no slave has it ever set free except in violation of law.—It has never had the sanction of the great and good names which, like stars in the clear upper sky, adorn and illuminate our history. On the contrary, it has been the object of their incessant maledictions from the hour of its birth. Its presence in the Halls of Congress was their abhorrence, and they prognosticated 'evil, and evil only, and that continually,' from its influence in public affairs.

Why comes it here now? It never was a friend to the Union, and it is not to-day. It never wanted a Union with slave States, or a fellowship with slave holders, or does not now. It is a war with the Constitution; it is an enemy to the Government; it is the twin monster to the doctrine of secession, and like the withered and hateful hags on the heaths of Scotland, the two together concocted the hell broth of the present civil war. Let the spirit of the Union, born of the Constitution, rise up between them like a bright angel and banish them both forever. Then will the nation renew its mighty youth, and go on again in its swift flight of prosperity and renown. Then will kindred and countrymen once more assemble under the same same flag; and obeying the command of the Prince of Peace, 'love one another.'