

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.

NEW SERIES.

EBENSBURG, PA. WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 1863.

VOL. 10--NO. 34.

"DEMOCRAT & SENTINEL" is published every Wednesday morning, at ONE DOLLAR AND FIFTY CENTS per annum, payable in advance; ONE DOLLAR AND SEVENTY FIVE CENTS, if not paid within six months; and TWO DOLLAR if not paid until the termination of the year. No subscription will be received for a shorter period than six months, and no subscriber will be at liberty to discontinue his paper until all arrearages are paid, except at the option of the editor. Any person desiring to subscribe for six months will be charged ONE DOLLAR, unless the money is paid in advance.

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THE FOURTH OF JULY IN NEW YORK.

SPEECH

OF
GOVERNOR SEYMOUR.

Delivered Before the Democratic Association.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—When I accepted the invitation to speak with others at this meeting, we were promised the downfall of Vicksburg, the opening of the Mississippi, the probable capture of the Confederate capital, and the exhaustion of the rebellion. By common consent all parties had fixed upon this day when the results of the campaign should be known, to mark out that line of policy which they felt that our country should pursue. But in the moment of expected victory there came the midnight cry for help from Pennsylvania to save its despoiled fields from the invading foe, and almost within sight of this great commercial metropolis, the ships of your merchants were burned to the water's edge. Since that time I have occupied every hour, to the point of physical exhaustion, to rally our troops to the rescue of an adjoining sister State, (tremendous applause.) to organize the militia of our own State for our own defense, and to place New York in that condition of dignity and power which a great State should ever hold that truly respects its own rights. (Great applause.) I have concerned myself with those measures that I thought were calculated to protect the commerce of this great city. I stand before you, then, upon this occasion, not as one animated with expected victories, but feeling as all feel who are now within the sound of my voice, the dread uncertainties of the conflicts which rage around us, not alone in Pennsylvania, but along the long line of the Mississippi—conflicts that are carrying down to bloody graves so many of our fellow-countrymen, so many of our friends—that are spreading renewed mourning throughout this great broad land of ours. Under circumstances like these I shall allow to go unmoted many topics upon which I meant to speak upon this occasion. They might seem to jar with the solemnity of the occasion. They might not be in keeping with the feelings which now press on each breast of ours. But there is one subject to which even now I feel it my duty to call your attention. There is one appeal that I now want to make to this whole community, irrespective of party, and I pray that you may bear that appeal.

A few years ago we stood before this community to warn them of the dangers of sectional strife, but our fears were laughed at. At a later day, when the clouds of war overhung our country, we implored those in authority to compromise that difficulty, for we had been told by a great orator and statesman, Burke, that there never yet was a revolution that might not have been prevented by a compromise made in a timely and graceful manner. (Great applause.) Our prayers were unheeded.

Again when the contest was opened, we invoked those who had the conduct of affairs not to underrate the power of the adversary—not to underrate the courage and resources, and endurance of our sister States. All this warning was treated as sympathy with treason. You have the results of these unheeded warnings and unheeded prayers; they have stained our soil with blood; they have carried mourning into thousands of homes, and to-day they have brought our country to the very verge of destruction.

Once more I come before you, to offer again an earnest prayer, and bid you to listen to a warning. Our country is not

only at this time torn by one of the bloodiest wars that has ever ravaged the face of the earth, or of which history gives an account, but, if we turn our faces to our own loyal States, how is it there? Do you not find the community divided into political parties, strongly arrayed against each other, and using with regard to each other terms of reproach and defiance? Is it not said by those who support more particularly the administration, that we who differ honestly, patriotically and sincerely, from them with regard to duty, are men of treasonable purposes and traitors to our country? ("Hear, hear.") But on the other hand, is it not true that many of our organization look on this administration as hostile to our rights and liberties; look on our opponents as men who would do us wrong in regard to our sacred franchises? I need not call your attention to the one of the press or the tone of public feeling, to show you how, at this moment, parties are thus exasperated, and stand in almost defiant attitudes to each other. A few years ago we were told sectional strife, waged in times like these, would do no harm to the country; but you have seen the sad and bloody results. Let us be admonished now in time and take care that this irritation, this feeling which is growing up in our midst and about our homes. Now, upon one thing all parties are agreed, and that is this:—Until we have a united North we can have no successful war. Until we have a united, harmonious North we can have no beneficent peace. How shall we have harmony? How shall the unity of all parties be obtained? I wish to say a few words to you on this point, which, I firmly believe, is one of the most important considerations to which I could call your attention. Is harmony to be coerced? I appeal to you, my Republican friends, when you say to us that the nation's life and existence hangs upon harmony and concord here, if you yourselves, in your serious moments, believe that this is to be produced by seizing our persons, by infringing our rights, by insulting our homes and by depriving us of those cherished principles for which our fathers fought, and to which we have always sworn allegiance? (Great applause.) I do appeal to you my Republican friends, and beg that you will receive this appeal in the same earnest and patriotic spirit which prompts me to make it I appeal to you if you are not doing yourselves and your country a great wrong when you de-harmonize and unity of parties are essential to save the nation's life, essential to the highest interests of the land, and yet stigmatize men as true and honest as yourselves and whom experience has proved to have been wise, too, as men who do not love their country, and who are untrue to her institutions.

How, then, sign are we to get this indispensable harmony—this needed unity? It is not to be obtained by trampling upon the rights; it is not to be obtained by threats; it is not to be obtained by coercion; it is not to be obtained by attempting to close our lips when we would utter the honest purposes of our hearts and the warmest convictions of our judgment. But, my Republican friends, there is a mode by which it can be reached: there is a mode by which the nation's life can be saved: there is a mode by which, in the end, we will restore this Union of ours and bring back those glorious privileges, which were so wantonly thrown away. We come to you in no spirit of arrogance. We do not come to you asking you to make any concession of advantage to us. On the contrary, we only ask of you, holding in your hands and in you control almost all the political power of the country, to exercise it according to your chartered rights. (Tremendous applause.) We only ask that which you claim for yourselves, and that which every freeman and every man who respects himself, will have for himself—freedom of speech, the right to exercise all the franchises conferred by the Constitution on an American. (Great applause.) Can you safely deny us these things? Are you not trampling on us and upon our rights, if you refuse to listen to such an appeal? Is it not revolution which you are thus creating when you say that our persons may be rightfully seized, our property confiscated, our homes entered? Are you not exposing yourselves and your own interests, to as great a peril as that with which you threaten us? Remember this, that the bloody and unreasonable and revolutionary doctrine of public necessity can be proclaimed by a mob as well as by government. (Applause.) Remember all the teachings of history; and we implore you with regard to our own interests, to stop and inquire if you are not doing yourselves and your own families, and all that you hold dear to you, an infinite wrong when

you sustain propositions that tear away from them, as well as from us, all the protections which the Constitution of your country has thrown around public liberty. (Great applause.) Can you tell me when ambition, love of plunder, or thirst for power, will induce bad and dangerous men to proclaim this principle of necessity, as a reason why they should trample beneath their feet all the laws of our land and the institutions of our country? I ask you again to think if measures like those give power, dignity, or strength to our Government? I ask you, on the other hand, if those governments have not lived out the longest periods, which, in times of public danger, instead of shrinking back from the principles of liberty and the barriers of order have raised aloft these great principles, and battled under them, and thus given strength to the hearts of the people and gained the respect of the world? (Applause.) I ask you if it is not an evidence of weakness, defeat and discomfiture, when, in the presence of armed rebellion, the administration is compelled to assert that the very charter by which it holds its power has ceased to have a virtue that can protect a citizen in his rights?

Suppose we accept this doctrine, what will be the consequence to this government. To-day the great masses of conservatives who still battle for time-honored principles—for chartered principles of government, amid denunciation, and contumely, and abuse, are the only barriers that stand between this government and its own destruction. If we accept to-morrow this teaching—if we to-morrow should acquiesce in the doctrine that in time of war Constitutions are suspended, and laws have lost their force, then we should accept a doctrine that the very right by which the government administers its power, has lost its virtue, and we would be brought down to the level of rebellion itself having an existence only by virtue of material power. Would not a vital blow be struck to liberty? If we should accept this doctrine, what would be the consequence? When men accept despotism, they may have a choice as to who the despot will be. The struggle then will not be, shall we have constitutional liberty? But having accepted the doctrine that the Constitution has lost its force, every instinct of personal ambition, every instinct of personal security, will lead men to put themselves under the protection of that power which they suppose most competent to protect their persons. And then this administration would find that, in putting military rulers over us they had made military masters for themselves; for this war teaches us that will betray the liberties of the people for the purpose of gaining the favor of power, will, when opportunity seize power itself. (Applause.)

I came here to-day to appeal to you, who may be politically opposed to us. Don't do yourselves a wrong. Don't do your own administration a wrong, and push us from that position which we are trying to hold. Do not use abuse and contumely against our persons, and threats against our property, because we stand up to say that you, and we, and all shall have our rights; because we stand up to say, the family circle shall not be entered, and in English parlance, every man's home shall be his castle, within which he is safe from intrusion. (Applause.) Why, what is the glory of a people and the glory of a nation? It is not the magnitude of its power; it is not the extent of its dominions. It is the fact that the humblest home is safe under its protection. The proudest boast ever uttered by Britain's proudest statesman was this—not of martial achievements—not of the triumphs of the field—not of that wonderful dominion upon which the sun never sets—no! it was this: that the British Monarch could never enter without permission the humblest home in the land, although its broken ceilings might give but scanty shelter to its humble, inmates. (Applause.)

For what are governments constituted but for this? not for dominion, not for grandeur, but in order that these great ends might be reached; that every man should enjoy the rights of person and security of home, and freedom of conscience and the enjoyment of his property, subject to the laws. These are the great objects of government; and any government, and any system that comes short of this, fails in its objects; and any declaration that assaults or endangers these great objects is treason against human rights. (Applause.)

But is said that there is a law of necessity that in times like these suspends our Constitution—that war is unfavorable to liberty. It is not true. Liberty was

born in war, it does not die in war. (Great applause.) Liberty was wrought on the battle field. That wonderful people who founded this great State—the Hollanders, who for eighty years battled against the martial laws and martial powers of Spain, made it a principle which sustained them during that long contest, and enabled them to render their history glorious in the annals of mankind. Were personal rights and personal liberties suspended by our forefathers during our Revolutionary contest? You heard the words of that Declaration of Independence, which said that men had a right to trial by jury; that the military authority should never be exalted above the civil jurisdiction; that men should not be transported abroad for trial—"tremendous applause"—that they should have all the rights and privileges known to English jurisprudence and English law; and yet to-day we are told that the men who put forth that declaration of rights and of independence amid the roar of battle, when our nation was struggling into existence in all its weakness, who declared—and they made their declaration good by their conduct through that contest—that these rights were to be held sacred in war, that these men who uttered this declaration in war made a Constitution that dies and shrinks away in war—that men learned in the perils of revolution had formed a government, under which we live, that was not equal to the very highest purpose for which governments are constituted. I tell you it is a libel upon our fathers. (Great applause.) So far from it being true that those who formed this Constitution contemplated that these powers should be suspended, you find in all these provisions the particular care for all the dangers and the exigencies of war; you find numerous provisions that are meant to guard against the very dangers that now menace us. Your attention has been called to the fact by the gentlemen who preceded me. Why was it that they so carefully guarded all your rights amid public disorder if they meant that the mere existence of disorder should suspend the barriers of public order and private rights? This doctrine of the Constitution—this doctrine of the suspension of the laws, is unconstitutional, is unsound, is unjust, is treasonable! Tremendous applause and waving of hats and handkerchiefs. A voice: "That's just the word!"

I am one of those who are full of hope for the future. Not that I underrate the dangers which threaten us—not that I do not deplore as much as living man can the terrible ravages of this war. But why does war rage in our land? It was because the people of this generation have lost the virtues, and patriotism, and wisdom of their fathers. It was because we had become indifferent to those great truths which we have now laid before us as if they were curiosities in legal literature, instead of being principles that should be impressed upon the heart and mind of every American. I tell you why I am full of hope that our liberties will be maintained, our nation restored, and order once again prevail over this land of ours. It is this: Examine yourselves, and I ask you, how many men there are within the sound of my voice, who knew twelve months ago what the Constitution of this country was? I do not mean to say that you did not understand it intellectually. I do not mean say that it was not imprinted upon your memory. I do not mean to say that it had not received your assent; but it was not until we were made to feel, as our fathers felt, the value of this declaration, that they had put forth, that any of us could ever see the significance of the Constitution of our country and the Declaration of Independence. (Applause.) We have accepted it, as I said, mentally and intellectually; but why was it, when these familiar words sounded upon your ears on this occasion, as you have heard them often before on the anniversary of our country's liberty, that they stirred your very hearts within you, and made your blood tingle in your veins? My friends, we have not now a more intellectual knowledge of the Constitution—we do not give it now a mere mental support—we have now, upon that subject, a vital, living piety that makes us better men and better patriots; and wherever you go, all over this land, you find these sentiments now exist in the minds of more than a majority of the American people. They are now fervent in their faith; fixed in their purpose—fanatics, if you please, for the great principles of liberty, and fanatical in their determination to see that those rights and liberties are established. (Great Applause.)

We have seen, in our land, two small parties, each an inconsiderable minority, in the section of our country where they existed, but men of purpose—men of zeal—men of fanaticism. We have seen them wage a war upon the Constitution of our country, with a persistence and power that has at last shaken it to its very foundation, and brought us to-day to the very brink of National ruin. We have seen what zeal and purpose could do when it was opposed only by a dull mental acquiescence in great truths. What may not we hope that we may do when the great majority of the American people have a fervent and vital faith in these principles which you have heard and read, and who propose to maintain them at every cost and at every hazard! (Great applause.) Do you wish for peace? Do you wish for victory? Do you wish for the restoration of our National privileges? Here lies the pathway, and let the American people once learn the full value of their liberties as our fathers did, and the battle is fought and won. Without this, my friends, we can bring you no success—peace can give you no quiet, until the American people are thus educated and elevated—until that takes place, war or peace are the mere incidents of the great underlying causes of convulsions which have affected our land and shaken our institutions to the very centre. Your particular views may lead you to attribute it to one special cause, but there is one great underlying general cause of this war which must be removed before the country can be restored, and that cause was indifference to our rights, indifference to our liberties, and want of an elevated wisdom that could understand the duties of American citizenship—When you have gained this, peace will have been restored; when you have gained this all the world can see that we have gone back to the wisdom of our fathers, and that we are again sustaining institutions that invited the whole world to their shelter and protection—institutions that made us but three short years ago the most glorious nation on the face of the earth. When we have again restored that virtue and that intelligence our country will again be restored to its former greatness, and its former glory. (Great applause.) But, my friends, anything short of this will disappoint your hopes. No victory can restore greatness, and glory, and power to a people who are unworthy of liberty. No peace will bring back prosperity to a land which cannot understand the great principles upon which governments should be protected, and the great objects for which governments are instituted.

But, my friends, I must close. (Go on! go on!) Let us now, upon this sad and solemn, as well as glorious occasion re-dedicate ourselves to the service of our country in pure and fervent patriotism, putting aside passions and prejudices as far as we may, and preparing ourselves to assert and maintain the great principles stated in the Declaration of Independence, and secured to us by the provisions of the Constitution of the United States. Let us resolve from this time on to do our duty, and to demand our rights. (Great applause.) In all that dignifies us, and so far as they are acting in the sphere of their constitutional powers, let us be obedient to rulers, let us submit cheerfully, patiently, and willingly to those commands which they have a right to issue, whether we like them or not. When we have done our duty let us claim our rights in all their fulness, in all their completeness, and in all their perfection. He who does not do his duty without regard to the misconduct of others is untrue to his country. He who does not claim his rights is untrue to liberty and to humanity. (Applause.) Our pathways are clear before us if we will accept the simple and wonderful teachings of our fathers. From this time let us resolve that we will uphold all the just powers of the general government, and the rights of the States, (applause.) and the rights of persons, and above all as their best and surest shield, the independence and purity of the judiciary. (Applause.) We stand to-day, amid new made graves; we stand to-day in a land filled with mourning, and our soil is saturated with the blood of the fiercest conflict of which history gives an account. We can, if we will, avert all these disasters, and these calamities, and evoke a blessing. If he will do what? Hold that Constitution, and liberties and laws are suspended—he untrue to them—shrink back from the assertion of right? Will that restore them? Or shall we do as our fathers did under circumstances of like trial, when they battled against the powers of a crown? Did they say that men might be deprived of the right of trial by jury? Did they say that liberty

was suspended? Did they say that men might be torn from their homes by midnight intruders? (Tremendous and continued applause.) If you would save your country, and your liberties, begin right, begin at the hearth-stones, which are ever meant to be the foundation of American institutions; begin in your family circle; declare that their rights shall be held sacred; and having once proclaimed your own rights take care that you do not invade your neighbor's rights. Claim for your own State that jurisdiction and that government which we, better than all others, can exercise for ourselves, for we best know our own interests, and that which will do the most to advance the happiness and prosperity of our country; and when you decide that, take care that you do not invade your neighbor's rights. (The speaker was here interrupted from a cry from a person in the audience, which was followed by shouts: "Put him out.") I thank my friend yonder that my appeal has stirred his heart enough to say that men should respect the rights of others. All the lessons of political wisdom are very few and very simple; they are, for men to respect their own rights and to respect the rights of others. (Great applause.) They are to declare that the great principles of government were not holiday affairs, meant merely for a period of calm; but that they are great truths that can battle a storm as well. When we have determined this, as I said before, we can hope that our country will be restored to its former greatness and former glory.

Once more, then, you, my Republican friends—once more, this whole community, I do invoke you to ask yourselves whether, in giving way to your passions and your prejudices, you will not endanger your own safety and your own homes? Once more I ask those who are politically opposed to me, if I am honored with the attendance of one such, that they will inquire if, in attempting to strike down my liberties, they have not struck a blow at their own also? (Great applause.) I ask all such if they can hope to stop the mighty ball of revolution precisely at that point which may suit their passions, their prejudices, and their purposes, and if they are not admonished that if they still set such an evil example, and declare that laws and constitutions have lost all their virtue to defend us, they have equally lost their virtue to defend them?

"The Cambria county volunteers need no defence at our hands. They are loyal gentlemen, and bore themselves with propriety under insults which the Bedford Secessionists heaped upon them."—JAMES TOWNS THIBENS.

The "insults" heaped upon the Cambria county volunteers by the people of Bedford, consisting in those volunteers being lodged in our houses and fed at our tables. Nobody in Bedford county sent for the Cambria county volunteers. They came here without any request from us. When they did come, however, our people treated them kindly and gave them a hearty welcome. They came here, as we understand it, not so much for our defence, as to cover their own homes from attack.

We gave them our soil for entrenchments, our bread for food, our dwellings, churches, and public buildings for lodging places and camps. In return, they stole our horses, wantonly and wastefully killed our cattle, wickedly destroyed private property, and now having returned home, tell their friends that the people of Bedford "heaped insults" upon them! They are doubtless, very "loyal," and quite likely are "gentlemen," when measured by the standard of the Johnstown Tribune. "And, really there were many decent and upright men among them, who deprecated the conduct of their comrades. To these, of course, we do not refer."—Bedford Gazette.

—A chap down in Connecticut, after the passage of the Conscription act, got married to evade the draft. He now says, if he can get a divorce he will enlist, as, if, he must fight, he would rather do so for his country. This fellow has evidently made a mistake matrimonially.

—A downster sold another man a horse for a certain number of sheep, to be delivered on such a day. They came promptly, but to the purchaser's astonishment, all nicely shorn! It was a cool transaction, especially for the sheep.

—When every one takes care of himself care is taken of all.

—Prejudiced opinion is fatal to judgement.