

# The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

"TO SPEAK HIS THOUGHTS IS EVERY FREEMAN'S RIGHT."—Thomas Jefferson.

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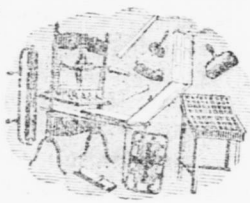
NEW SERIES,

TUNKHANNOCK, PA., WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 1863.

VOL. 2, NO. 49.

## North Branch Democrat.

A weekly Democratic paper, devoted to Politics, News, the Arts and Sciences, &c. Published every Wednesday at Tunkhannock, Wyoming County, Pa. BY HARVEY SICKLER.



Terms—1 copy 1 year, in advance \$1.50. If not paid within six months, \$2.00 will be charged.

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## SPEECH OF HON. D. W. VOORHIES, OF INDIANA.

DELIVERED AT CONCORD, N. H., JULY 4, 1863

To an Approving Audience of 30,000!

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: I stand for the first time on the soil of New England. I look for the first time on the majesty of her mountains and the beautiful face of her valleys. I feel for the first time fanning my cheek the winds that arise from from the breathing ocean at her feet. I have beheld for the first time those blushing achievements of art, science and industry, which long since filled the world with her fame. I have pondered for the first time over the varied spots of our national history, contained in her bosom, and mark classic scenes of liberty to every eye and to every people. The scenes which filled the hours of my boyhood with a burning devotion to the memory of the great deed, and which have inspired the manly years of my manhood with an unalterable reverence for their principles and conduct have for the first time saluted my eye. This to me is a land of history. Every step in your midst calls to my mind the imperishable legacy of the past, the dear memories of a more fortunate, more blessed day than this. And with my eye reverently bent towards the altars of New England I pray the august spirits of 1787 to pardon the feeble thoughts of a stranger, and to bless my feeble words.

I stand before you, O ye citizens of New England, in a humble capacity. I stand before you in the judgment of my presence, and I stand before you in the judgment of my words. I stand before you for the integrity of our new government, and I stand before you for the peace and stability of our new government. Without this, Government cannot exist. The necessity for a clearly defined and organic law by which to regulate society from chaos has been recognized in every period of civilization. And this would be an idle achievement unless it obtained obedience. There must be a sanction to which all render allegiance. It may be repugnant to some. It may not be entirely harmonious in all its parts with the views of any. But such sacrifices are compensated by the blessing of order, law and security. In this spirit the American Constitution was made. It was the work of the wisest and purest body of men known to history in connection with civil affairs. It was made in view of past institutions and varied interests which existed then and exist now. It was not, perhaps, what any one member of that immortal convention would have framed if left singly to himself; but each State, each section and every interest had something on the altar of compromise, and the angel of concord hovering over the scene accepted the grateful sacrifice, and cemented the Union. This Constitution, thus obtained, became at once entitled to the obedience of the citizen. The early days of the Republic present a glorious uniformity of affectionate attachment to the body of our Union and the charter of our liberties. But at a later period there arose a generation wiser and purer in their own conceit than the fathers. They discovered such defects in the Constitution as sorely touched their consciences. They were not content with its provisions on a subject which at the time of its adoption was common to every State in the Union. They were not satisfied with the stipulations which it originally made to obtain a Union. And without which they well knew no Union would ever have been formed. They declared disobedience to the Constitution a Christian virtue. They commenced a determined, deadly and unending war against its authority and its integrity. The truth of what I say is known to all men. The germ of that party which now administers the affairs of this Government first appeared more than a quarter of a century ago filling the world with its clamor against the alleged wickedness of the American Constitution. Its phrenzied face confronted the public at all seasons and places. It seized upon the engine of the press. It stalked into the forum. It rushed into the pulpit and repudiated alike the Bible and the Constitution. The Courts were its derision and mockery. It had no law that was visible to mortal eye. There was an unseen, unknown, intangible higher law to which it avowed its allegiance. The great chief of the Northern sectional party Wm. H. Seward, adopted this, and by doing so prolonged and dignified, so far as dignity can be given to crime, the original element of disobedience to law which has culminated in funeral sorrows to the land. The doctrine of a higher law than the Constitution in civil affairs is the doctrine of civil war. It is a fountain of blood. No government can survive in peace the ascendancy of such a principle. To this cause, to this spirit of rancorous disobedience, to this introduction into public affairs of a principle at war with all governments, rendering kindred heresies in other sections and entailing a wide-spread brood of pernicious dogmas in the country, is to be attributed, in my solemn judgment, as I shall answer to God for the rectitude of my motives the long train of bitterness, agitation, sectional hatred and alienation culminating in a civil war whose lurid and inflamed visage now appals the nations of the earth. Will it be said that this persistent defiance of the Constitution in the North was harmless? History will not so make the record. It bore the fruits of discord in a horrible abundance. It did not content itself with empty denuncia-

tion. It resisted the laws of Congress enacted within the plain provisions of the Constitution. State governments were turned against the Federal Government. The Courts were defied. The Union was divided and spurred as in the way of enlightened progress. All these things are familiar, nor do I recite them in your hearing for their novelty, but in these days of savage reproaches for disloyalty certain features in the history of American politics cannot be too frequently presented to the public. It would perhaps be a more grateful task on this and all other occasions to spend our time in loading the heavy burthens of our national offence on distant sections. It gratifies the love of self to banish from our own bosoms all complicity with the causes which have led to our cruel condition. We should gladly proclaim to God and to posterity that we are without sin—that we have been the patient, meek and enduring victims of a ferocious and aggressive spirit on the part of the Southern States throughout all our past history. I am aware that such language is alone to be adjudged to be loyal now by those who have always heretofore held that the blessings and glories of the American Union were emanated with the dismal pains and dark abodes of hell.—But at the risk of their denunciation I shall at all times endeavor first to deal justly with our own faults and crimes before I go wandering in quest of the faults and crimes of others to correct. As we are dealing in bitter and vengeful wrath with the rebellious sectionalism of the South, we can certainly afford to consider justly our own. Let us, in some measure at least, anticipate the cool verdict of history. In some distant age, when the roar and tumult of the present are heard no more, when the moss is growing on the tombstones of all the actors of this bloody and baleful hour, when broken hearts are at rest, when the gentle evening breeze is no longer filled with the voice of tears, when wounds and heart aches cease to be remembered, when the fires of passion and revenge have gone out, then from the serene and undisturbed heights of reason and political philosophy the judgment of the world will be pronounced. Northern disobedience is the supreme law. Northern discontent and Northern agitation of the question of slavery will be recognized as the cause, and Southern secession and armed rebellion as the effect. This great truth should be grided about us like a humiliating shirt of sack cloth at every step we take in the struggle now before us. It will enable us to discharge our duties in the spirit of Christian charity. He who goes through the world with his self-righteous head in the clouds, unwilling or unable to see his own conspicuous deformities while waging a war of extermination against the crimes and follies of others, is a being offensive to God and man.—Shall we as a government continue through time exhibit this miserable spectacle the disgust and derision of impartial mankind; or shall we not rather endeavor to train the public mind back into the channels of even-handed justice and restore the administration of our affairs to the equal and benignant precepts of the fathers? Let us first seek honestly with ourselves and purge our national councils of those offences against the institutions of the Republic which we seek to punish in others, and then we may confidently invoke the arm of a just God in aid of our efforts to restore national unity and peace. Let us make open atonement for the drama enacted by red handed fanaticism on the soil of Virginia in 1859 in pursuance of the teachings of a now dominant political party. It is doubtless easy and convenient now to forget that public honors were paid in nearly every State in the North to the memory of those who fired the first gun in the mortal strife which is now raging. But these facts are locked and bolted in the vaults of the inexorable past, there awaiting the use which posterity will make of them. And that abrupt chasm in the mountains which bind together different sections, that gaping rent in the design of nature that broken ridge at Harper's Ferry will hold a place in the history of the great civil war of America as a forerunner and prophecy. The raven has croaked the hoarse and bodding notes of war and disaster to the cause of the Union from its fatal settlements in every stage of the unnatural and revolting tragedy which there enacted its first scene. Shall we turn away affronted on this occasion from the appalling spectacle which the wand of truth summons from the bosom of the past? Do we dread to gaze steadily and earnestly at imperishable facts which underlie this great convulsion and rock this continent and the world to-day like the uneasy giant imprisoned beneath the volcanic mountain? If we do, we are not worthy to aspire to the control of a nation's welfare. If we do we would be found incompetent to the task of correcting those evils which we deplore. One more leaf allow me to turn in this chapter of disobedience to law as the cause of our national humiliation and suffering. Sectional hostility to the Constitution culminated, after years of storm and discussion, in the elevation of a man to the Chief Magistracy of the nation whose claims upon his party to that distinction consisted in his bold avowal of revolutionary principles. I appeal to the spirit of truth, and demand that the American people shall deal sincerely with themselves. The President of the

United States, a brief space prior to his election, announced to his fellow-countrymen as the deliberate result of his reflections and experience, that the whole domestic economy of the States, the whole framework of the internal policy of the Government, must undergo a stupendous change or the Union must submit to overthrow. He was not content with the Constitution. Over the graves of our ancestors he reviled their wisdom and sought to weaken public confidence in the result of their labors, and to bring in to disrepute the Government as they made it. These Northern States, these granite hills, these smiling plains, this constellation of New England States, clustering around the cold, bright North star, were all to take back to their bosoms that system of slavery which they had long since expelled; or else, on the other hand, the land of cotton and of cane was to revolutionize its social and industrial system in obedience to the distant and ungracious demands of the North; or in the event of the failure of both of these startling propositions, then the American Union was to "fall like Lucifer, the bright son of the morning, never to hope again." This was the logic of the President of the United States, and with these views unretreated, he entered upon the duties of his high office. He was not content with the Constitution. States part slave and part free moved in harmony and fraternity under its control. No discordant, jarring sounds issued from their respective orbits. The law of their political gravitation was perfect. It was the result of ages of experience, wisdom and suffering, applied with matchless skill to our peculiar interests as a nation. But he was not content with the Constitution. It had weathered many storms, and vindicated its power to meet all the demands of our unexampled growth. It was as elastic as our far-reaching boundaries, and as contracted as the smallest right of the humblest citizen. It had listened to the voice of the cannon in time of war, and proved itself sufficient for every military necessity. The Union was the child of its fostering love. It nursed its infancy, and shielded its gigantic manhood from every assault. But, disregarding its sacred origin, overlooking its beautiful workmanship, blind to its mighty achievements in behalf of human liberty, and human progress, and seeing nothing but what appeared to them as a defect, the party now in power boldly proclaimed, by their support of Mr. Lincoln, the necessity for its change or its destruction. I here aver, that in the whole range of history no contest short of actual armed revolt was ever waged in more open and avowed contempt and defiance of existing institutions, of judicial decisions, of sacred traditions, and of fundamental organic law, than the political contest which triumphed in the ascendancy of the present Administration. To what principle or department of the Government was obedience paid by the disciples of this destructive school of politics? Was it to the Constitution itself? They had a higher law than that on the subject of slavery, which gave them the liberty of disobedience to civil magistrates. Was it to the legislation of Congress? They brought it also to be tried at the bar of fanaticism, and if found repugnant to some thin and shadowy dogma existing in the realms of an impractical transcendentalism, it too was rejected with that cool disdain that hot indignation which so well becomes superior virtue. Was it to the Bible, the rock of ages, tower of truth, the light house of wisdom and mercy shining forever over the stormy waters? Did they yield it their obedience as the foundation of all civil government? Not so. It too was brought to the standard of preconceived and presumptuous notions and prejudices, and the providence and policy of God himself was there arraigned and condemned. I dwell upon these recent facts of American history with pain. I am quite aware of the awful circumstances which now surround us and engross every anxious thought. I am quite aware that a million of American citizens are in arms against each other. I need not be reminded that issues are now suspended in the balance, on whose decision will depend the future map of nations. I would be silent in the presence of these great events, on all save their solution, if the party now in power had been content, when once in control of affairs, to look to restoration and not destruction—the restoration of Constitutional supremacy, and not its further abasement—the restoration of the Union and not its irretrievable overthrow—the restoration of peace and not the prolongation of the horrors of war for its profits and spoils. We might cover up former crimes though they were freighted with our country's calamities, if some atonement had been made. I have not dwelt upon the pernicious issues of a former period as a justification for the fearful scenes which surrounded us, but rather by their light to interpret the meaning of strange and alarming doctrines now for the first time put forth in this Government, and also to guide us in our conduct in relation to the revolted States. Let us pause here on this 87th Anniversary of American Liberty and investigate the principles on which the Government is now conducted. Into what perilous and tempestuous latitude have we drifted, under the pilotage of a discontented and revolutionary

party? Guided by no respect for the Constitution, in its efforts to obtain power, it has simply used its elevation and possession of official station as a means of giving increased force to its assaults upon the established institutions and principles of the country. A war upon the South has not been sufficient to gratify its sanguinary purposes. The present Administration seem intent on conducting two wars at the same time. An open conflict has been waged from the commencement of hostilities in the South to the present hour, on a large majority of the citizens of the Northern States. Why do wise and prudent men now everywhere dread and predict civil war in the loyal States?—Would peaceful citizens, engaged in the happy scenes of domestic life, with the appalling spectacle of civil war in full view, transfer its desolating tread to their own corn-fields and hearthstones, without some cause as deeply moving on the public mind as the fierce hurricane that agitates the lowest depths of the ocean? Is the fault of a divided and restless public sentiment due to a vicious and depraved people failing to appreciate the glory and honor of their country, and inspired with no patriotic grief for its deep afflictions, or is it not rather due to the weakness and wickedness of incompetent and corrupt rulers? We stand to-day at the end of more than two years of desperate and gigantic war. No people ever made more sacrifice. Blood has been cheaper than water, and the wealth of the nation has been sported with as the player rattles his dice.—Great promises have from time to time inflated an expiring public confidence, but the people now no longer amuse themselves with the illusions of hope. They demand, without further delay, to know for what purpose and in what cause they sweat, and bleed and die. And first they demand to know whether this war cannot be waged without a corresponding war for the suppression and extinction of civil liberty in the North. If it cannot, then it must stop for that if for no other reason. Extended boundaries are desirable, the integrity of the Union is worthy of national ardor and devotion, but the indelible and indestructible rights of man, declared in the declaration of our independence and secured in the Constitution, can be bartered away in exchange for no object within the scope of human conception. Boundaries will grow again by the inspiring force of our youthful blood; time, the great physician for national as well as individual misfortune, will pour its oblivious balm into the gaping and gory wounds which sectional hate has inflicted in this modern strife between Cain and Abel. The rains will descend and the fields will bloom again under the hands of the husbandman. The golden-haired goddess of the harvest will preside over the fruits of the midsummer and autumn, wasted commerce will revive and flap its glad wings with a newness of life in all the four quarters of the globe.—The flag, the beautiful flag of the free hearts' only home, will still be known and honored throughout the earth—all this, and more, of renewed prosperity and national life we will behold if the vital powers of personal liberty older upon earth than Plataea and Marathon, and radiant as an emanation of Divinity, shall be preserved, and emerge at the close of the conflict unharmed by the flames. It will be the angel of our resurrection. I might dwell upon the influence of our free institutions in achieving the past greatness of the country. I might take up that favorite line of thought, so familiar to such an occasion as this, and show that popular liberty has been the majestic soul which has given to the Government its dignity, its grandeur and its power. Other nations have borne the eagles of their dominion farther than we have. They have accumulated more wealth. Their cities have outshone in dazzling luxury and magnificence any that point their spires towards the American sky. Their commerce has brought home more ample spoils from stranger lands. Their population has been as the leaves of the forest and as the sands of the sea shore. But why do the attention and interest of mankind turn from them with a sense of relief and delight to the Western World?—The student of ancient history drops the book from his hands and forgets to resume the story in gazing at greater wonders here than any of which he reads. It is the spirit of liberty that has worked this wonder.—Your fathers upon the rock of Plymouth, with the wilderness and the savage before them, the ocean and oppression behind them, and the wintry storm over their heads, did not reason on the extent of the country they came to possess. They made no calculations of the wealth it contained. Visions of splendor did not float before their eyes. One inquiry and one alone engrossed their minds; "Can we here be free? Will the shadow of our vine and fig tree be here unmolested by inquisitors into the rights of private conscience? Will civil and religious liberty take root and live in this barren soil? Can man here be the lord of himself and hold his rights by a well defined tenure? May free thoughts here elevate the soul; may free speech here justify the ways of men; and may a free press here, like the sun rising out of the sea, illumine the height of the dawn which yet hangs over the world?"

[Concluded next week]