

# The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

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

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## SPEECH OF HON. D. W. VOORHEES INDIANA, DELIVERED AT CONCORD, N. H. JULY 4th, 1863. To an Approving Audience of 30,000

(Continued)

This reasoned the fathers of New England and in like manner will reason their children. I have often gazed long and attentively upon the assembled group on the deck of the Mayflower as you see that vessel, "idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean," upon the canvas in the rotunda of the Capitol. How small was their country at that moment, but how free! They possessed not one foot of ground. They had weighed country, home, ancestral graves, all in the balance against liberty, and found them light as empty air. How insignificant to them in that hour seemed all the wars of occupation and possession which from the beginning of time have defaced this beautiful earth and destroyed the image of God! As time, and its interests and pleasures recede and disappear from the eye of the dying Christian, and Heaven and its glories magnify themselves to his awakening senses, so to the Pilgrims on the face of the waters the love of liberty rose with such effulgence in their minds that all else became obscured like the stars hiding their diminished light before the sun of no-day. That little speck along the desolate bosom of the great deep, animated and impelled, however, by a principle undestructible as matter, eternal, and of equal origin with the human soul before whose breath thrones are blasted, and empires fall prostrate, potent as the elements themselves, and triumphing over them in search of a new theatre of glory, has ever been to my mind a lesson for the American statesman. Though a free commonwealth be no larger than the deck of a ship, cut off from either shore, yet under God it is a power and light in the midst of the earth. The voice of the Messiah cries out to us from the fountains of inspiration: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" A voice too comes up from the tombs of dead Republics of former ages, saying to the American people: "What shall it profit you if you maintain by the sword your extensive possession and lose your own liberties?" No; rather a country on board the Mayflower again, rather the narrow limits of Plymouth rock, rather the original boundaries of the old thirteen colonies, with the undisturbed enjoyment of Constitutional liberty, than the possession of all the lands on which the dews of Heaven descend, with the unrestrained caprice and unbridled will of one man for my government. "Compared to the breach of our Constitution" says Edward Livingston, "and the establishment of arbitrary power, every other topic is trifling; arguments of convenience sink into nothing; the preservation of wealth, the increase of commerce, however weighty on other occasions, here lose their importance when the fundamental principles of freedom are in danger." Will it be said that our observations on this point have no sufficient facts for their support? Will it be contended that there is nothing in the current history of the day to warrant a well-grounded apprehension that American liberty is in danger? Must I prove by argument that the sun is shining? Must I demonstrate that the night follows the day? This servile cry of "all is well," in the face of the unbounded exercise of lawless power, leads to but one result as inevitably as mathematical science reaches its conclusions. The fawning courtier who, from the bare motive of promotion and gain, seconds with the voice and smile of approbation every encroachment on the rights of the people, is the most dangerous instrument by which popular governments have been overthrown in all ages of the world. He seeks to fill the people into a false sense of security, and at the same time invites the daring usurper to boldly bound over every barrier. A celebrated foreigner thus fairly describes the manner in which this class obtain eminence and favor with a corrupt and designing executive: "One makes a fortune because he can cringe, another because he can lie; this man because he reasonably dishonors himself; that because he betrays his friend; but the surest means to mount as high as Alabaster is to offer like him, razors of mushrooms to the Duke of Vendome, and there are Vendomes everywhere. They who are called great have generally no other assiduity over us but what our weakness permits them, or what our meanness gives them. The class here portrayed is unfortunately formidable at this time in control of public sentiment. By it, every warning voice in behalf of the supremacy of the Constitution and the rights of the citizen under it is at once clamorously denounced as evidence of hostility to the Government. Its peculiar province is to paint to the public eye the dispensers of patronage as incapable of error, infallible, without spot or blemish, and subject to none of the infirmities of sinful flesh. The disciples of this school of political Magdalens have the extraordinary faculty of transforming the most atrocious crimes on the part of those who hold the keys of wealth and position into the most resplendent virtues. To them the mur-

der of innocent men and women by slow torture in loathsome prison-house is simply evidence of devotion to the cause of the Union if committed by those who lead their abject partisans with the infamous wages of their adulation. The plunder of the public treasury, the wholesale robbery of the labor of honest people finds with them the ready and ample justification if their own palms are enriched with a portion of the spoils. Imbecility is converted into zealous patriotism, and the defeats of inferior partisan generals into grand and conclusive victories. In the press, in the pulpit, in the forum, and at the hustings they now invite the open and audacious approaches of a complete despotism, and proclaim in advance the submission of the countrymen of Warren and Hancock in the East, and of Jackson and in the West. That such destroyers of popular liberty and constitutional government shall aim their poisoned shafts of detraction and calumny at the faithful sentinel who announces the near approach of fatal danger is to be expected, but should not silence the voice of patriotic duty. They are in the service of their master. A passionate exclamation of Henry II. in the hearing of obsequious minions, turned them into assassins, and stained the altar of God with the blood of Thomas a Becket. In like manner this country now swarms with those whose feet are swift to carry out, in defiance of all law, human and divine the obscurely hinted wishes, the half disclosed views of an Administration which avows no restraints except its own will. Look with me for a few moments over the intolerable events that have marked the conduct of those now in chief authority since their accession to power, and which call in imperative tones, not to be denied, for reform or for revolution. I come from the broad free plains of the West. I come from a land of unmeasured attachment to the Union. Its patriotism has been spontaneous as the productions of its fertile soil. Its valor in the face of battle has been as fierce as the flames that rage over its prairies. It has not paused to measure its resources before pouring out in this contest. It has made no conditions, exacted no partisan pledges, required no proclamation before rendering obedience to the laws. The Northwest is no delinquent. She is so criminal. Yet the sentence of outlaw has been pronounced against her. Her proud and stately neck has been selected for the yoke—the yoke more galling than the Roman emblem of bondage which doomed whole provinces. She has been robbed of the protection of written laws, and placed in the custody of military governors. The great State of Indiana has had a succession of these officers. Her Constitution provides for a civil Governor who shall see that the laws are faithfully executed, and who is the chief of her military organization. That official, however, can no longer be regarded as the Executive of the State, inasmuch as the duties of that position in all important particulars have been surrendered to the hands of another. Thus Federal usurpation strikes down the Constitution and the Government of the State, and the advocate of a consolidated despotism abandon both dignity and duty in order to forward the "ravishing strides" which it is making in our midst. By some silent process of the Presidential mind, the privileges of the writ of *habeas corpus* have become suspended in the West. We had not thought that the subject had even engaged the attention of the Executive until after our citizens had clamored in vain from their prisons for trial and justice. We were not even informed of the great revolution in our rights and penalties until we were deprived of the former and suffering the latter. To suspend the privileges of this great popular writ is given by the Constitution as one of the enumerated powers of Congress; but the President of the United States exercises that power, as we at last discover, without condense ending to inform the people that he has done so. But I need not confine my remarks on this point to any one section of the loyal States. They apply equally to all—if not in extent, at least in principle. Arrest, trial, condemnation, and punishment of citizens free from every taint of crime, all take place in the silent chambers of one mind. Law, fact and sentence all exist alone in the will of the Executive. The person of every citizen of America, his wife and his child is more at the mercy to day of Executive caprice and tyranny than the slave of Virginia is at the mercy of his master. Written laws regulate the condition of the black man's servitude. None exist for the protection of the white man. In his letter to the Albany Committee on the subject of the arrest and exile of Mr. Vallandigham, the President plainly avows his independence of and supremacy over all law in his dealings with the liberty of the citizen. He announces that the public safety is the only law which he recognizes. In what the public safety consists he alone will judge. Whatever conduces to the public safety that he will do; and, again, he alone is to determine what may be necessary to this end. This is his argument, and it absorbs within himself every possible power that the maddest tyrant ever coveted over life, liberty and property. If in the estimation of Mr. Lincoln the life of Mr. Vallandigham or any other citizen was inconsistent with the public safety, this reasoning would produce his death in any manner which the

Executive might see proper to indicate.— We will have to turn back to the familiar and odious names of the worst despots of the old world and of ancient days to find a parallel to this monstrous assumption of power. The English house of Stuart was the champion of liberty in comparison. Louis XIV., when he exclaimed "I am the State," did not profane the world with so fatal and bloody a heresy as now stalks through this land almost without rebuke. Tiberius in his hours of vengeful solitude at Caprea never menaced more openly or more bitterly the lives and the liberties of Roman citizens. A law was enacted by the last Congress avowedly to cover such supposed offences as were alleged against Mr. Vallandigham, and for which he underwent the mockery, and insult of a trial by court-martial. By that law jurisdiction in such cases was expressly given to the Courts of the United States, and by that law express penalties were attached in the event of conviction, consisting of fine and imprisonment. Yet with that law staring him full in the face with its provisions all unrepented, with the ink scarcely dry which affixed his name to it, and with his official oath on his conscience to execute it, the Executive of the Republic ignores its existence, and substitutes in its place a trial and a punishment unknown to free governments.— Banishment; Banishment! do we live in Russia or America? have we a Liberia, a Botany Bay? Banishment! What sad memories atrocious despotism the word recalls! We at once behold the pure and inflexible citizen of Greece, the just and upright citizen of Rome, going forth to exile for braving the tyrannical license of arbitrary power. The melancholy lessons of history are busily repeating themselves in our midst. The old principles of good and evil are contending, as they have ever contended, with various success. To-day the lovely features of virtue are marred and defaced by some foul and revolting Caliban of malignant mischief. Tomorrow she triumphs with a brow as radiant and unshuffled as the jennet beams of the morning. To-day a law-abiding, earnest and distinguished citizen flings away into banishment on an iron clad vessel surrounded by bayonets for making a defence of the acknowledged letter and spirit of the Constitution. Tomorrow he will return, strengthened by the ordeal like the giant after his slumbers, bringing a new vitality and force to the cause for which he has suffered. Men of revolutionary ancestors! The great and solemn question of the hour is whether the Constitution and the law are yet supreme in this land. Shall the mind of one man constitute your Government? To what do you allegiance? Shall Roman Decemvirs hang the written laws of your sight, and then punish you for offending against the hidden purposes of their own minds? Into what war of Plutonian darkness have we been driven by the warring elements? Where are the North star? Where are the compass and the needle? "Dispel this cloud, the light of Heaven restore, Give me to see—and Ajax asks no more." Yes, give us to see the light of the Constitution still unobscured, and we will be content to abide the tardy steps of time for the alleviation of all other wrongs. But shall all our obedience be required of the people and none of their public servants? Is not obedience in a free government a mutual duty? Shall discriminations be made between American citizens in the enjoyment of rights and the support of burdens? What burden has the Democratic party failed to assume in support of the government, and of what right has its members not been deprived by the express order or the silent consent of this Administration? In the words of John Jay, "Reason looks with indignation on such discriminations, and freemen can never perceive their propriety." What home in this broad land has been secure from the parted satanic hoof or bare, naked suspicion? Am I working a sketch from the colors of fancy? Let the screams of the wife and mother emanating from a hundred inward households at the dead hour of the night, answer. These facts shall not escape history. They will constitute the stocks in which the present Administration will stand pilloried forever in open shame and infamy. The angel of death respected the blood on the door-posts of Egypt. The King of England could not enter the humblest tenement in his realm, but the meanest and basest of mankind in the employment of the present Administration have had the power of access over the insulated body of the Constitution into every chamber beneath every roof between the two oceans. This is the necessary result of the argument of the President that he is the supreme judge of what is essential to the public safety. Before this baleful theory every head bows to the earth, every mouth is silent, and every door flies open.— Robespierre, in the delirium of the French Revolution, when "the sun's eye had a sickly glare," and the world grew faint with horror never assumed so much. The responsibility of the doctrine and practice of this phase of despotism was divided in his day among the members of a committee of public safety. No one man accepted the terrible consequences. It erected that frightful, appalling spectacle of insatiable murder—the guillotine—in France. It may do the same here to-morrow, if the President should declare the public safety to

require it. It filled every prison, it desecrated every home, it spared no age, no sex, it pitted no condition, it sacrificed whole hordes of victims to suspicion and private malice, it converted all France into a field of blood. All this may transpire here before our eyes if the doctrine of the Executive, lately announced, is to receive our submission. Well might a leading Administration journal (The New York Times) exclaim a few months ago: "hitherto President Lincoln has given us no Constitutional Administration." He has assumed himself to be the sole Executive—to control in his own person the whole action and conduct of the Government, and that, too, avowedly without any fixed and stable policy, but according to the shifting drifts and currents of public sentiment and the changing judgments and caprices of his own mind. \* \* \* No monarch in Europe at this day, however absolute, attempts or dreams of such an undertaking, and Mr. Lincoln must abandon it, or the ruin of his country will be the price of his presumption." But let us indulge in some inspiring historical recollections. The history of New England is full of glory on this subject. The writs of assistance were the contrivance of a servile Parliament in aid of the usurpations of a tyrannical king. They gave the right in a mode, however pointed out by law, to do that which our present Executive authorizes his officers to do, without color of legal enactment. The spirit of liberty took the alarm. The flames of the Revolution blazed up under the eloquent denunciations of James Otis. I quote from the speech of that fervid apostle of American freedom: "In the third place," said he, "a person with this writ, in the daytime, may enter all houses, shops, &c., at will, command all to assist him. Fourthly, by this writ not only deputies, &c., but even their menial servants are allowed to lord it over us. What is this but to have the curse of Canaan with a witness on us; to be the servants of servants, the most despicable of God's creation. Now one of the most essential branches of English liberty is the freedom of one's home. A man's house is his castle; and whilst he is quiet he is as well guarded as a Prince in his castle. This writ, if it should be declared legal, would totally annihilate this privilege. Custom house officers may enter our houses when they please; we are commanded to permit them to enter, may break locks, and everything in their way; and whether they break through malice or revenge, no man, no court can enquire. Bare suspicion without oath is sufficient. \* \* \* What a scene does this open. Every man prompted by revenge, ill humor, or wantonness, to inspect the inside of his neighbor's house, may get a writ of assistance. Others will ask it from self-defence; one arbitrary exertion will provoke another, until society be involved in tumult and blood." And out of this question of personal liberty and the security of your ancestors' homes, in the language of John Adams, speaking of this event, "American independence was then and there born. The seeds of patriots and heroes to defend the *non sine die ari mosus infans*, to defend the vigorous youth were then and there sown." And shall we at this late day abandon those very principles for which our fathers enacted Lexington and Bunker Hill? Shall we deliver up into the hands of tyranny the Declaration of our Independence? Shall we surrender all that our Constitution has gained from the system of one-man power? Alas the American revolution is in vain! Did it produce no permanent policy? Has the existence of American liberty been a sweet but temporary dream? "Oh Liberty! can man resign thee. Once having felt thy generous flame? Can dungeons, bolts and bars confine thee. Or whips thy noble spirit tame?" From this spot, and on this holy day set apart in the calendar of time to the cause of liberty I would solemnly warn the Executive and his advisers, in candor and not in malice, that civil war has but just commenced in this unhappy country if they continue to pursue their present career of license and usurpation.— By the shades of the mighty dead who died for American freedom, we here swear to protect and preserve the great inheritance. But all that I have urged to-day in behalf of the integrity of the Constitution will be met by the ancient, venerable and odious plea that a necessity exists for its subversion. Shall this abomination in the sight of reason be dignified by an argument? Shall we pause to explode this thousand times exploded doctrine of despotism? Is the experience of all history lost upon the American mind? Are we deaf to the voices that issue from the tombs of ancient Republics? They all died from military necessity. This is the story of the school books, and the children of the civilized world know it by heart. But in defiance of reason and experience the usurpers of the present hour have boldly entrenched themselves in the worn out maxims of king craft, and demand the surrender of this last fortress of Constitutional liberty. "So spake the fiend, and with necessity, The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds." But let us try for a moment this doctrine false and dangerous as it is, by the results which have followed. What has been achieved by a resort to the doctrine of necessity? The people of the United States have been required to submit to the creation of this fear

ful standard as a rule of conduct in public affairs. Under it newspapers have been silenced, free speech denied, citizens of every grade and condition in life torn from their homes and imprisoned, no sex exempted, childhood punished, and all this has been borne without revolt. What have the people received in exchange for such unparalleled sufferings and forbearance? Have they a country restored to the highway of national glory? Has the evil of secession been overcome? Has this rebellion been suppressed? Has the blessed Union been restored? Are we far on the way towards that consummation so devoutly to be wished? Does the brilliant bow of promise span the future? Is the sky clear and bright over our heads to-day? Does the rising sun of this hallowed anniversary come to us with healing in its beams? The rulers of this country have had all, everything, even to lives and citizen. All has been cast at their feet. Taxation without limit; a banking system which absorbs and controls the currency; an act of conscription which demands the life of the citizen, and a bill of indemnity for past and future crimes committed against his liberty, are the work of one Congress, and constitute a measure of despotic power which, I boldly affirm in the face of my countrymen, has no parallel this day in the history of civilized nations. And what has not been seized by a bold hand. What are the returns for all this? The ear has heard the promise, but the hope has found it broken. The beautiful apples of gold set pictures of silver, which you beheld so temptingly near at the opening of this war, are Dead Sea fruit—ashes to the taste. Oh! what scalding irony the position of affairs to-day cast upon the boastful, vainglorious prophecies of two years ago. Armed with supreme power, the members of this Administration are now shaking with mortal terror in the midst of their official predictions that war would restore the Union in sixty days. The people stand by in amazement and horror, stunned by the evil fortune which pursues us. Their confidence, long abused and now dead, bereft of hope, and paralyzed by the want of a capable and honest head to the Government. And this is the result which has attended the unlimited exercise of the doctrine of necessity! Does it however surprise the student of morals, of history and philosophy? Can wrong, injustice, and crime constitute the basis of success in a righteous cause? Has it ever been so?—Ought it to be? If such was the law of human action, then evil would have stronger reasons in its favor than God ever designed it should have. No. Away with this noxious heresy. It is baneful in theory and disastrous in results. Let us do right, the earth and hell confront us. Let us follow the principles of truth and liberty though they should give us no wider home than the grave. All hail the Constitution! [The trial has been made to administer this Government independent of its aid, by a higher law. The failure is complete. The world will take notice of this fact, and think the better of the American Constitution. The American citizen everywhere, and of all parties, will engrave this great lesson on his heart, and flee in every hour of peril hereafter to the shelter of the Constitution as the house of his refuge. The worship of the golden calf in the wilderness, and the calamities which attended the sacrilege, gave the ark of the living God a firmer hold on the confidence and affections of Israel. Let the results of disobedience to the Constitution which we now behold, teach us a similar lesson. To this disobedience may be traced the "Iliad of our woes." The Constitution is strength—it is wisdom. It is love of country. It is liberty. It is Union. All this has been in times past and all this it will be again in the future to those who embrace and obey it. Thus far I have spoken of those important and overwhelming incidents of this war which have befallen the people of the loyal States—assailing us like plague and famine shaken from the wings of some baleful comet sweeping over the earth. But we do not shrink from a full consideration of the actual issues involved in the prosecution of the war itself against the seceded States. If Englishmen in the Parliament of England in the days of King George could denounce a war waged ostensibly to restore and preserve the Union of the British Empire, but in reality tending to, and resulting in its dissolution, the citizens of New Hampshire may reasonably claim similar rights. If one portion of our own countrymen can discuss their plans for the future condition of a commonwealth I shall never be able to understand why we should be silent. Common sacrifices and a common destiny beget common privileges. If Wendell Phillips shall rave, shall not the sane men of New England reason? If a committee on the conduct of the war shall bring disaster upon a great and noble army and ruin the country in order to blacken the fame and prostrate the usefulness of the brilliant and able McClellan, who shall hinder us from speaking freely our minds in this committee of the whole people on the subject of the war itself? I scorn and defy every assumption, military order, or civil mandate which is aimed at this right. My countrymen, I am content that calm and impartial history shall determine the claims of wisdom and statesmanship between those who advocated a resort to crime as a means