

P6146

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN IN MARYLAND.

SPEECH

OF

Richard Randolph McMahan,

OF

WEST VIRGINIA,

AND

Reply to Senator Conkling's Utica Letter,

DELIVERED AT

OAKLAND, GARRETT COUNTY, MD.,

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1878.

Opus adgredior opimum casibus \* \* \* ipsa etiam pace saevum \* \* \* nec minus praemia delatorum invisam quam scelera. Non tamen adeo virtutum sterile saeculum, ut non et bona exempla prodiderit.

TACITUS, Lib. 1, cap. 2.

Ita enim potentia decori gloriaeque est, si salutaris sit. Quae vero gloria est valere ad nocendum?

SENEC. 1 de Clement, c. 3.

AM 1194

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT

A PLEA

Richard Randolph Meekins

WEST VIRGINIA

Reply to Senator Goddard's Plea

DAK AND GARRETT COUNTY MD

TUESDAY OCTOBER 1 1853

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... ..

SPEECH  
OF  
RICHARD RANDOLPH MCMAHON.

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[The campaign in the Sixth Congressional District of Maryland was opened by Prof. Richard Randolph MacMahon, of West Virginia. The following is an abstract of his speech:]

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

The great aim and end of every government should be the advancement of the interests and welfare of the governed. The same may be said of parties, which are only the *machinery* for administering the powers of the government. Free governments are conducted by the action of parties which are the *agents* of the people from whom all governing power is derived.

As long as parties in their management of the government, carry out the *will* of the people it is safe to conclude that the welfare of the masses will be the result. In our country, the masses of the people are divided into two great political parties—the Republican and Democratic. Their platforms and records are before the people. The Republican party has had absolute and unchecked control in the management of the people's affairs for the last fifteen years. If the people are prosperous and happy, no man will be so unjust as to deny the credit thereof to the Republican party, or argue against its further continuance in power. If, however, the Republican party has abused the confidence of the people—if its policy has brought distress upon the land—if it has favored one class, or one section beyond others—if it has legislated in the interest of corporations or extended privileges in support of special organizations, moneyed or otherwise, then my friends, *then there ought to be a change*. A party may be useful at one time and advance the public good, and through abuse of power, corruption, and favoritism of special interests and classes, forfeit the confidence of the people at another time. The safety of the people is in not letting *any party become its master*.

[After this elaborate and logical introduction, the speaker reviewed at considerable length, the theory of party supremacy and then took up the record of the two parties.]

THE TWO PARTIES.

The Democratic party is emphatically the party *of* the people and *for* the people. It has been so in the past, it is so now and such it will be in the future. It is the party which acknowledges, reveres, and holds sacred the Constitution—the palladium of our liberty—it is the party which *adheres* to the spirit of the Constitution and gives full scope to the generous principles of American liberty; it is the party which protects every American citizen in the peaceable enjoyment of *all* his rights of person, property, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is the party of equal rights. I know our political adversaries deny this. It is their privilege to do so. Political questions are complex and obscure in their causes, and conclusions in regard to them result from an infinite variety of details which are seldom examined, verified, analyzed, or reasoned out by the great masses of the people. I am not wrong in saying that tens and hundreds of thousands adhere to party without knowing why. This is to be expected, for our Government rests upon the *will* as well as the intelligence of the people. From the very nature of our free institutions, every American citizen has the fullest measure of what is

called human freedom. It is not strange, therefore, that erroneous conclusions grow out of this freedom. What is the remedy? The remedy, my friends, must be sought in a greater intelligence of the people. A free people cannot be coerced, forced, *driven* into party lines. The fundamental principle of "popular consent" is the great normal rule of a republican government. [Loud applause.]

The Democratic party, I have said, is the party of the people. No country in the world was as prosperous as ours under the benign rule of that party. Our population doubled every twenty-five years. Florida and Louisiana were added to our possessions. The infamous alien and sedition laws were abolished. War was made upon Great Britain for the just and humanitarian freedom of the seas and the establishment of equal rights of naturalized citizens. Mexico was conquered. Our territory was extended to the golden gates of California which supplied us with a precious metal, thus adding to the prosperity of the laboring masses on the one hand and to our national wealth on the other. We opened wide our arms to liberty-loving and industrious immigrants from every quarter of Europe. State governments were untrammelled in the management of their own local affairs. Never was an executive arm interposed between the citizen and his rights. Order and security prevailed everywhere, and prosperity blessed the land. The public expenditures were reduced year by year; our Government was wisely administered. History and the statistical records of the Government furnish proofs of all these statements. I make no gratuitous assertions. The Democratic party is as old as our Constitution itself. Its father, Thomas Jefferson, was the father of the Declaration of Independence. It is the party of Madison and Monroe and Polk and Jackson.

And, my friends, this is the party which, for the last eighteen years, has been fighting a battle against corruption, official recklessness and maladministration in every branch of the Government.

It is not the *record* of the Republican party that has so long kept it in power. Long since would it have been hurled from position by the people, had it not had the support of the favored classes, and huge corporations held up its weakening arms and FORCED IT into authority over the heads of the people. The Republican party, my friends, was never understood to be a party of the *entire* people. Its whole course has been one of the grandest farces in the world. It came to life eighty-five years framing of the Constitution; it was born of accident; it flourished when the market was "high;" it grew on the sectional prejudice which it stirred up after the war, taking advantage of demoralization attendant upon the conflict to plant its talons for a firm hold and a "long stay." It acknowledged no constitution. My friends, *the Republican party never had a permanent basis* among an honest people.

[The speaker quoted *in extenso*, the most glaring portions of the record of the Republican party in its Southern rule; spoke of the disfranchising of votes, pollution of the ballot-box, the infamous suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, and then read the following letter of Senator Conkling, as a specimen of party bitterness:]

"*Utica*, August 28.—MY DEAR SIR: I have your note saying a number of Republicans will meet at Saratoga to-morrow to take counsel together. This seems to me wise and timely. The government of the country is passing absolutely into the hand of those who so lately sought to destroy, not stopping until they had filled the land with woe and burdened it with the debt and taxes which now rest so heavily upon us. This is not wise for any section. Raids on the treasury, vast in amount and without right or honesty, are mustering for the time when a solid South dominating the Democratic party, as it will and must, shall again rule the two Houses of Congress. Wild schemes of repudiation and financial chaos and revolution find encouragement on every hand and in most of the States the Democratic party is being drawn into a whirlpool of fallacious short-sighted theories. Equality before the law and political rights and liberty, which the recent amendments to the Constitution were ordained to establish, are becoming only a mockery throughout the South and free elections are not permitted in several States. New York, which is the greatest commercial State, and by far the largest taxpayer in the Union, has a vast stake in all these things and the one great reliance in regard to them all is, I believe, the Republican party. Certainly the time is fit for the Republicans of New York

to come together in earnest harmony, ignoring personal and minor issues and joining heart and hand in one high, just purpose to preserve national security and honesty and to protect human rights. I should like to meet you all as you propose, but it seems better that I remain away. I see it charged that a claim to be returned to the Senate has been set up by me. You know, but all others may not know, how far this is from the truth. I know and feel that if anyone has "a claim" on the Republican party, I am not the man. The claim is altogether the other way. I have been honored too much and too often not to feel a deep and binding sense of obligation to the party and to its members, and a sincere regret that I have been no better able to deserve and repay their confidence. No personal claim or individual interest should even seem to enter your conference. No man's will or wish deserves to be balanced for a moment against unity and success at a time like this.

"Sincerely yours,

ROSCOE CONKLING.

"To Hon. ALONZO B. CORNELL."

Whenever a political party seeks to strengthen itself by exciting the prejudices of one section against another, it proves to the world that it is totally unfit to govern this free country. Nay, more; the inevitable conclusion is, that such a party is inimical to the peace, fraternity, and happiness of the people. "The Government of the country is passing absolutely into the hands of those who so lately, sought to destroy," &c., says Mr. Conkling. Sirs, the civil war, and Mr. Conkling knows this, did not arise from the dissolution of parties, but from the division of sections. Who sought to *preserve* the Union? Did not the loyal men of every shade of political sentiment do so? Democrats, Whigs, and Republicans alike joined in the war for the maintenance of the Union. In the South, Whigs, Democrats and men of every organization, social, political and religious, united in the war for secession. It is absolutely untrue and utterly dishonest, to claim for *any* party exclusive credit for the mighty efforts and sacrifices made by all the loyal people, irrespective of party and above all parties, for the maintenance of the Union. With the Republican party, the war is not yet over. Although it arrogates to itself the exclusive credit for having preserved the Union, has it not really sought to **BREAK UP** the Union? When the rebellion ended, then vanished the danger of dissolution. The war was carried on to keep not only *States* but *individuals* within the pale of the Union, and yet the policy of the Republican party has practically tended to keep *both out of the Union*. And this very policy is made manifest at the *present day*; for who that is denied the right of suffrage is, *de facto*, a citizen of the Union—of the United States? Further than this: the Republican party held the infamous doctrine that the people of the rebellious States were mere unorganized masses of population, outside of the pale of the Constitution; that they might be dealt with at the arbitrary will and pleasure of the dominant party, regardless of every principle and limitation of organic law; that they had not only forfeited all their rights under the Constitution, but as well all the rights of freemen. A territorial form of government for the Southern States, by which a Republican Congress could have general control over them, was the aim of this despotic party. It was not satisfied with denying the Southern States the right of representation in the General Government, but it went so far as to destroy all local self-government in those States. What use of Mr. Conkling talking of "political rights and liberty, and equality before the law" when the Constitution itself which had always guaranteed and perpetuated the rights of every American citizen was trampled under foot by his party? Why, sirs, the silent but lengthening shadow of absolutism was creeping into our sacred asylum!

#### "RAIDS ON THE TREASURY!"

I am amazed that a man of Mr. Conkling's ability and good sense should talk of "raids on the Treasury." The great question before the people is not whether "raids on the Treasury" are mustering "for some future time" but it is, what raids have *already* "mustered!" Sirs, the people are not blind; they have not lost their judgment; they are not so *mad* that they should forget to scrutinize the policy, that in its full development, has robbed *them* of employment and food. No, sirs, it is now too late to turn their minds away from *living* issues by invoking the aid of bitter virulent party spirit. The gospel of hatred is preached in vain, when the crimes and follies and peculations of the Republican party have brought upon them idle-

ness, hunger, and starvation! As examination will eviscerate more of the principles upon which this Government has, for years, been administered, let us turn to the question of expenditures.

EXTRAVAGANCE.

Although the aggregate of Federal taxes actually paid into the Treasury during the time the Republicans had control of every branch of the Government nearly doubled the national debt, we find, by consulting statistical records, that they not only failed to make a proper reduction of that debt, but they did not even call in the war loans or reduce the war rates of interest. The public debt reached its maximum June 30, 1866, and was.....\$2,773,236,173  
 June 30, 1875, it was, principal.....2,232,284,281  
 Accrued interest to that date (June 30, '75.).....38,647,556  
 Total Debt, principal and interest.....\$2,270,931,837

This shows the total reduction of the debt for the ten years  
 to be only.....\$502,304,336  
 There was in the Treasury, June 30, 1875.....\$142,243,361, in cash.

This amount, if applied on the debt, leaves net debt.....\$2,128,688,726  
 The net ordinary expenses of the Government, which embrace the salaries of all officers and employees, the army, navy, civil list, foreign intercourse, pensions and Indians were not enough for the Republicans. They added an immense expenditure of an average of over \$42,000,000 per annum during the eleven years, under the convenient head of "miscellaneous." So that, from June 30, 1865, to June 30, 1876, we have:

Total expenditures.....\$2,206,505,155.

To this is to be added the interest on the public debt which, together with the interest the Government paid on the Pacific Railway bonds made an average of about \$100,000,000 per annum. This, for the eleven years, would amount to \$1,100,000,000, showing a grand total for all purposes, during these "immortal" years to be \$3,306,505,155.

For the same period, to wit, June 30, '65, to June 30, '76, there was collected and paid into the Treasury the enormous sum of \$4,262,106,241. The excess of receipts over expenditures for that time being \$956,601,086. After accounting for every payment made except the amount paid on the national debt and amount of cash on hand in the Treasury, we have:

Excess of expenditures over receipts.....\$956,601,086

Total reduction of national debt, June 30, 1865, to June 30, 1875.....502,304,336

Cash in Treasury, June 30, 1875.....141,243,361

944,547,697  
 Balance unexplained and unaccounted for.....\$311,053,389

What became of the three hundred and eleven millions, fifty-three thousand, three hundred and eighty-nine dollars? Will Mr. Conkling answer this pertinent question? Will the Republican financiers answer it? I have taken the figures from the reports of the Secretary and Register of the Treasury. The amount of taxes which the people paid and which was stolen by the "loyal" partisans before it reached the Treasury, was estimated by the civil-service commission to have been at least one billion per annum. This commission made a report stating that "one-fourth of the taxes collected are stolen."

My friends, I do not intend to go further into the extravagant record of the Republican party, nor have I time to do so. When Judge Thurman, our great standard-bearer of Democracy opened the campaign in Ohio, he gave to the country an accurate and full comparison of the Democratic and Republican records touching upon expenditures. I could add nothing to his work. You have his speech. Read the words of soberness and truth uttered by the wisest of our statesmen—a man who, when the clouds were thickening over the nation, stood like a giant oak in the storm,—stood and fought in the Senate of the United States, the entire Republican party, when it required an almost superhuman effort to stay the godless villainy, the oppression and the corruption that were taking from the American people every right, every privilege, every sacred inheritance given them by the Constitution, the safe-guard of their liberties, the emblem of their national greatness. [Tremendous applause.] This did Allen G. Thurman of Ohio. [Cheers.]

## CONTRACTION OF THE CURRENCY.

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| On January 14, 1875, there were outstanding of greenbacks in round numbers..... | \$382,000,000 |
| On June 1, 1878.....  | 346,681,016   |
| <hr/>   |               |
| Showing a decrease of.....  | 35,318,984    |
| On January 14, 1875, there were outstanding :                                   |               |
| Of National Bank notes.....   | \$351,861,450 |
| On June 1, 1878.....  | 322,515,965   |
| <hr/>   |               |
| Decrease.....   | 29,345,485    |
| Contraction of greenbacks.....  | 35,318,984    |
| <hr/>   |               |
|   | \$64,664,469  |

Over sixty-four millions. Add to this sum the \$11,550,903 of greenbacks on deposit in the Treasury for the redemption of bank notes, which are thereby withdrawn from circulation, and the contraction amounts to over *seventy-six millions* of dollars, or something over one million eight hundred thousand dollars per month.

Has there ever been in the history of the world a parallel to the financial madness of the Republican administrations, whose criminal blunderings have brought upon a patient people such indescribable miseries, wide-spread destitution, individual wretchedness—such poverty and desolation? “With desolation is the land made desolate.” The industries of the nation are prostrate. Two millions of the brave, honest freemen of America are crying out for bread and going about from city to city, and from town to country in the vain search for work to earn it. The great wonder is, not that American industries are bankrupt and American labor starving, but that they have borne such crushing burdens during all these weary years of wretchedness, poverty, and woe.

The people appealed, but their applications were drowned by the mighty voice of the money power which controlled the Government.

At last a tidal wave swept over the country in the shape of a Democratic House of Representatives, and the era of corruption and extravagance which had marked the Republican rule was at an end, so far as the House could end it. How has it fulfilled its mission? Has it not reformed and lopped off the rotten and useless machinery so long kept in operation by the radical party. Has it not lightened the burdens of the people in the face of opposition from a Republican Senate and a whole army of Federal office-holders? Has it not reduced the overgrown expenses of the Government? Has it not forced economy upon all branches of public service?

No wonder the people sought and still seek relief from their burdens in a change of rulers. The very principles of the Republican party were and are in direct opposition to their well being. The evil of the times lies not in particular cases, but in the principles of the party. Legislation cannot well reach it. It is a radical evil and the people alone can cure it. And the only way to do this is by a *change of rulers*. Drive out the Mamelukes of power—tear away the moral gangrene which has been eating into the vitals of our Republic. The Republican party had absolute control of every branch of the Government for ten years after the war. If its mission was giving the people wise and honest administration, it certainly had the fullest opportunities. Has it done so? I answer you in the words of your own eminently wise representative :

“Official life at home and abroad, scandalously corrupt; national honor tarnished under the very eyes of the administration; venal and unscrupulous leaders selling the high and sacred legislative powers of the people; the lands and the bonds of the nation voted away to huge corporations, and the venal creatures who voted them away discovered with their share of the plunder in their pockets; offices sold by men who had, or assumed to have, power to influence appointments \*

\* \* the pitiful pay of the soldier extorted from him through the machinery of vendible, high-priced post-tradership, finding its way back into the bank account of that Cabinet minister at Washington, who was especially charged by honor and duty with the soldier's welfare; even the Department of Justice \* \* \* sending out the money of the people to intimidate one class of voters, and corrupt another; officers of

the revenue in high favor with the administration combined all over the country with whisky distillers to divide the tax among themselves and political friends, and defraud the Treasury and the people; the Secretary of the Treasury and the officers and attorneys who aided him in detecting the criminals and bringing them to the bar of justice, all dismissed, (Bristow, Wilson, Pratt, Henderson, and other honest men;) the Post-Office Department robbed by a system of straw bids and the Postmaster-General, who was honestly laboring to break it up, asked to retire from the Cabinet; the little earnings of the colored people, gathered into the Freedman's Bank \* \* divided among a corrupt political ring; Federal agencies substituted for home rule governments in the States; American Legislatures overthrown by Federal bayonets; industry broken down; labor starving; taxation oppressive; interest usurious; the public departments swarming with needless Federal Office-holders; they and the bond holders the only prosperous people in the land; confidence destroyed by the general moral rottenness found in every branch and grade of official life; universal distrust, doubt, and dread of the future; all business broken down and no basis of integrity for it to start upon; social, business and political chaos."

These are the bitter fruits of the absolute rule of the radical party.

#### THE RESUMPTION ACT. •

The act of January 14, 1875, known as "An act to provide for the resumption of specie payments," was as hypocritical as it has been pernicious to every element of prosperity. Now I want to say just here, that the Democratic party is in favor of hard money and of resuming *cash* payments at the very earliest day the country is able to bring this about. But forced resumption is, of all evils, the most baneful. How did the Republican party prepare for the payment of gold in 1879? By the very policy of that party, resumption of specie payments never could be reached except through general bankruptcy: for the only way to specie payments is economy, retrenchment—abolishing corruption—cutting off every filthy excrescence and putting an end to the stealing of the people's money; for as I have shown beyond all dispute, millions of dollars were stolen year after year by the "loyal partisans" who had charge of the collections. But no; the resumption act called for no economy on the part of the Republicans. Extravagance went on; there was no attempt made at reformation; the poor grew poorer and the rich grew richer; the circulating medium contracted below the wants of the people; what followed? Poverty, hunger, starvation, wretchedness in every shape. Look around you. Can you not see these things? Do you not feel them? Are you satisfied that no wrong has been done you? Behold the countless multitudes who are thronging our thoroughfares with nothing to do; no work, no hope, no bread. Forced resumption! It is a crime. It is nothing short of murder! [Tremendous applause].

(The Professor spoke at considerable length on this question of resumption, then took up the Demonetization of Silver and reproached the Republican party for having debased silver "which" he said "had always been recognized from the foundation of our Government as the coin of our country, under the Constitution." He then took up—)

#### THE BILL TO REPEAL THE RESUMPTION ACT.

This bill, my friends, passed the House Representatives on the 23d of November, 1877. Its passage was *demand*ed by the great mass of an impoverished people. The Republicans voted—"aye" 28, and "No" 92, more than three to one against it. The Democrats voted—"no" 29, and "aye" 104, more than three to one in its favor. Passing the House, it was sent to the Senate, with a Republican majority and there it remained. It had been repealed in a former session of the House and the repeal was rejected by the Senate.

#### THE REPUBLICANS AND THE UNION SOLDIER.

Much has been said of the love borne by the Republican party, for the Union soldier. The Union soldier! How much lachrymose eloquence, what gems of poetry and prose have we not had in consecration of the gallant deeds of the brave men who fought our battles! The *thesaurus* of the English language has been exhausted in behalf of the Union soldier. "*Probitas laudatur et alget*" says Juven-



al. Very true. The poor soldier starved tho' his "praises were sung o'er and o'er." Let us consult the record of the Republican party, inasmuch as it relates to the Union soldier. From 1865 to 1875—ten years—they controlled the House. Why did they not pass the bill for the equalization of bounties! They made a pretense of passing it, but General Grant vetoed it, after it had gone through the Senate by the casting vote of Vice-President Wilson. It was brought up in the Forty-fourth Congress and passed the House—the "Confederate" House. Ah! my friends, when the "Confederate" House came to deal with the Union soldier, they knew what the soldier deserved of his country. They knew—these malign'd "Confederates" knew, this. The fate of war was to them a sad experience, but the lesson brought with it a love for the Union. Brave themselves, they honored the brave, gallant, noble men who fought for the preservation of the Union. [Loud applause.] Another fact. When the bill for pensioning the soldiers of the war of 1812 was reported to the House, *twenty-five* Republicans voted against it. But it passed by a unanimous Democratic vote. The last Congress—the Democrats of the last Congress endeavored to pension the soldiers of the Mexican War. That was opposed by the Republicans, although the bill was so framed that no one whose political disabilities had not been removed, could come within the provisions of the bill. Who passed the bill for the payment of arrearages of pensions? The Democratic House. That gallant soldier, Gen. Rice, of Ohio, labored untiringly in its behalf. And your own Representative, Hon. William Walsh, argued in language eloquent, grand, and patriotic, the justice of the bill. It went to the Republican Senate, and there it died. In the Congress before the last, the Democratic committee reported favorably to the House two hundred and seventy-seven private pension bills. Nearly all of these were passed by the Democratic House. Not one in five was passed by the Senate. Again. The Forty-fourth Congress passed a bill which became a law in February, 1877, increasing the pension of soldiers who had lost one hand and one foot, from \$24 to \$36 per month. The Committee on Pensions, of the last House, reported a bill to increase the pensions of all persons who have lost both eyes, or both hands, or both feet, to the sum of \$72 per month, the original bill providing for a little over \$30 per month. And yet Mr. Conkling thinks we are breaking up the Union. [Applause.]

I might quote other instances to prove the duplicity, the hypocrisy, and the "gushing," but meaningless love of the Republican party for the Union soldier. How the party wept over the soldier! "*O! et præsidiū et dulce decus meū!*" *O! lachrymæ.* How Artemus Ward wept at the tomb of Adam! [Great laughter.]

There are many other things which I would like to say to you, my friends, but I have made a lengthier speech than I expected to make. I wished to speak to you of the act, entitled "An act to strengthen the public credit"—that infamous outrage—and say some words on the tariff, on the greenback doctrine, but I yield to my distinguished friend, (Hon. Montgomery Blair,) who is far more capable of making a good speech than I am. He can tell you how Presidents are made and unmade. (Laughter.)

#### CONCLUSION.

Well has Jefferson said that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." The supreme necessity of the hour demands of the American people an unceasing watchfulness. Their eyes have been opened. They have seen the dangers which surrounded them. They have seen administrations setting aside every sacred principle of the Constitution, overthrowing the popular will made manifest through the ballot-box, disregarding all law, defying all power, and abashed by no crime. It remains for them to put an end to the era of corruption, to restore the Government to its pristine purity, to secure full and equal liberty to every member of this great American Union, to inaugurate such changes and reforms as will bless the land once more with happiness, industry, and prosperity, to which it has long been a stranger.

Mr. President. I have a full and abiding faith in the wisdom of the people. Their love of virtue and liberty is not dead. They are turning away from the false leaders who brought on them distress, poverty, and shame. Their indignation has been aroused. In their full majesty, as American freemen, they are rising up to hurl from them forever the Mamalukes of power who have been disgracing them and their Government before the nations of the earth. And if the history of the world guides us aright, they will never again take up with them, for dishonesty in the management of the people's affairs sinks the managers into oblivion for all time to come.





