

ADDRESS OF COL. HUGHES AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION AT LYNCHBURG.

The following is a careful condensation of the masterly address delivered by Col. Hughes, at Lynchburg, Va., on the occasion of his nomination for Governor by the Republican Convention, which met there on Wednesday last :

"The flag of the Republican Party is the flag of the nation. Abroad, it is the symbol of a continental government, conducted with success and renown, upon the basis of liberty and equal rights to all. At home, it is the emblem of national supremacy, founded in fraternity between races and sections. Whether floating over a national army or a national party it is, under God, the talisman of victory. Virginia has a joint inheritance in this flag with the proudest States in the Union. I am proud that it floats again supremely honored over the length and breadth of her sacred soil. It was the faith of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson—it was the faith of the fathers of the Republic—that the American Union was God-ordained and God-upheld. The whole tenor of American history teaches the same inspiring truth ; and the incidents and results of the great civil war confirm the gracious fact. We, therefore, who plead for loyalty to the nation and friendship between races and sections—we, who deplore the hatreds and prejudices which have brought so much ruin upon the country—we have the consciousness that our cause is not only right, but sacred. When we look around us we need not be told that the spirit of sectionalism engenders distraction, hatred, and material and political decay ; that the spirit of nationalism harmonizes, builds up, and prospers. Hatred, intolerance, and proscription are not among the characteristics of the national party of the State or country. They are attributes which our political adversaries monopolize, and which constitute their platform and tactics. The flag under which our party rallies represents the national idea. It typifies all that is glorious in our career, all that is expanded in our patriotism, all that is hopeful in our destiny as a people. It repels no class, no creed, no race, no section, but attracts all in the bonds of a fraternal citizenship and a common nationality. Good-will, toleration, fraternity are the attributes of the party which rallies under its folds. The opposite are the qualities of the party which hates and spurns it. The platform of our party is as sound as its flag is sacred. I thank God that he has put it into the hearts of the American people to adopt the three amendments of the National Constitution which embody the principles of our party. One of these amendments gives liberty to all men in the land ; another gives citizenship ; the third insures equality of civil rights to all citizens in every State of the Union. These measures—simple, comprehensive, thorough—were intended to settle the angry controversy of thirty years' duration concerning the relations of the white and black races. They do settle these relations on the enduring basis of equal rights under the law for all. No evil to the material interests of the country has attended their adoption. But the noble fact is developed that the colored laborers of the South produce as large crops of the great staples of cotton and tobacco in a state of liberty as they did in a state of bondage. This fact settles the whole question of reconstruction. But there is a class in the land who rebel against this settlement, and have inaugurated in this State a political campaign on the basis of hostility to it. Their efforts are vain. The settlement cannot be disturbed, for it is the miraculous work of a higher power than man. Our adversaries have set out in this campaign, which occurs at a time when all classes and interests of the State should concert together for the common good, on the line of hatred, intolerance, and proscription toward the negro citizen and those who unite with him in supporting the noble principles of the Republican Party. We are not to consider which party has given relief to the people, and which other has heaped oppression upon the suffering classes. We are not to inquire whether help can be obtained from Congress for our school system, and what party is most likely to secure that help. We are not to ask whether the completion of the canal will be undertaken by the National Government, and what party has control of that Government. We are not to inquire which party is for educating the children of the people, and which opposed to it ; which party is for elevating the laboring man, and which for degrading him ; which party is for teaching him the duties of citizenship, giving him a home which nothing can turn him out of. We are to consider none of these practical questions, but our opponents have opened the campaign with the imbecile pretense that the State is in danger of falling under negro control ; and with the unworthy cry—'*Virginia for White Virginians.*'"

1. The pretense is grossly hypocritical. Those who make it have no fear of negro ascendancy. As rational men, it is impossible that they can entertain such an apprehension. The whites in the State are 712,000 in number, and the colored people only 512,000. The whites have, according to the full registration of 1869, 150,000 voters, while the blacks have only 120,000. The whites have practical majorities in sixty counties of the State, the blacks in only ten counties. The Conservatives have cheated the colored people out of even their rightful strength by an outrageous gerrymander. To twenty-five counties having 171,141 people, chiefly white, are given twenty-five delegates in the General Assembly, while to twenty-five other counties having 307,864 people, chiefly black, are given only twenty-five delegates. The Conservatives have so contrived as to require an average voting population of 35,500 in the Republican Senatorial districts, while a voting population of only 21,035 is required in the Conservative Senatorial districts. These disgraceful contrivances and palpable facts explode the pretense that Virginia is in danger of falling under negro rule.

2. This appeal to the prejudices of race is unchristian. The spirit of Christianity teaches that all mankind are of one brotherhood. To incite, therefore, a conflict of one race against a brother race is to rebel against the ordinations of God, to reject the precepts of Christianity, and to curse the land with the bitterest of all strifes and fiercest of all antagonisms. There must be peace between races for the sake of the material and moral welfare of the Commonwealth, and there can be no peace except by the triumph of Republican principles.

3. This agitation against the colored population is in flagrant violation of the act of our General Assembly, which condemns to the penitentiary those 'who incite the white population of the State to make insurrection by acts of violence or war against the colored population,' and the reverse. What violence can be more flagrant short of open war than the fierce incitement of whites against blacks on political questions, and bringing to bear for this purpose all the machinery of insult and exasperation employed in a political campaign such as that which our opponents have inaugurated ?

4. The clamor against the negro is unjust and unprovoked. Such a loyalty as his was to the white man has had no parallel in the history of human affairs. During the late civil war the fortunes of the Confederacy could have been terminated at any time, in a single day, by an outbreak of the slaves. But the African servant remained loyal to the condition in which the laws of his country held him, and waited patiently for the only deliverance which he would accept—the deliverance of the law. His freedom is not his own achievement. It is the gift of powers superior to criticism and clamor. He was guilty of no disloyalty in acquiring it. Even now he exercises his legal and political rights with meekness and reserve. In every instance in which he has been deprived by fraud, violence, or threats, of his privilege of voting, (and they are shamefully numerous,) not only is the offense punishable by indictment, but the law gives him an action by civil suit for heavy damages. As United States Attorney, I have often told colored men, when they have consulted me about redress, of the heavy money penalty which the Enforcement act allows them. But I say, to their honor, that, although there are hundreds of cases in this judicial district where suits would lie for heavy damages on account of election wrongs, there has been no one in which an action has been brought. They have rejected all idea of pecuniary compensation. They have demanded only the protection of their rights under the laws of their country. There has, in fact, been nothing in their conduct to justify the brutal crusade of which they are made the victims.

IT IS DESTRUCTIVE TO THE STATE.

5. This war upon an unoffending class of citizens is destructive to the State. Already has it driven away thousands of stalwart laborers from our fields and forests, producing a loss which cannot be supplied. We have the best laboring class in the world. It is more efficient, more tractable, and more in sympathy with the employing class, than any other on the globe. Our plain interest is to foster this population ; to give it fixed and happy homes ; to educate its children ; and, by being ourselves its friends, to make it our own friends and assistants in developing the public prosperity.

Such are the sentiments of our great party on the leading subjects of nationality and citizenship. They are self-evidently just ; and the Republican Party cannot be combatted on the score of its principles. These are unassailable. Even our political adversaries have rendered them the homage of their approval by having 'accepted' them in 1869, and by having stoken and promulgated them as their own in 1872. But our political adversaries, at fault in finding any legitimate objection to the Republican Party, make opposition to us that our organization is composed of ignorant negroes and non-natives, whom they call carpet-baggers, and the whites who dare to advocate Republican principles in company with the colored people. I have no apology for these office-holders, whose only tenure of residence in the State has been their tenure of office. Unquestionably we had too many of this sort during the period of reconstruction. But they are gone ; and those non-natives who remain rightly claim to have become acclimatized and domiciliated. They are able to plead the five years' Statute of Limitations to any indictment which may be brought against them for vagrancy ; and, as Virginians, we are bound to sustain the plea, for we ourselves are the most universal carpet-baggers in the known world. Our best young men have gone abroad since the war in search of employment,

and by no people have they been received with a more generous hospitality than by the people of the North, to whom they have borne letters of introduction from our much-abused carpet-baggers at home. But how shall I meet the other objection of our opponents, who complain that the negroes flock in a mass to our party and make up the majority of its membership ? Is the mere fact of humble station a sufficient objection to the man in a land of free institutions ? Study the character of the laboring population all over the world, and where will a laboring class anywhere be found so exemplary in their conduct or so elevated in their morale, all things considered, as the negro population of Virginia ? When a people of such approved character flock in a body to a political party, is that an argument against that party or for it ? It is a credit to our party that the poor, humble, helpless members of society nestle to its side, and seek there that relief from misfortune and aid in distress which they are hopeless of obtaining from any other source. I always feel a sense of pride when I hear the Republican Party denounced as a negro party, because the denunciation implies that the down-trodden negro man looks up to it as his friend and benefactor. It is the glory of our party that the laboring class everywhere leans upon it, and upon it alone, for support. That the poor cling to it in their weakness and the rich eschew it in their power, is a pregnant argument to its honor and their dishonor.

I come now proudly to affirm that the Republican Party has in all things been a friend to Virginia and her people. It has been guilty of no offense against them, even in its great work of reconstruction, except what may have attended the execution of its determination to establish the principles of the three amendments upon an impregnable basis. Admit that the process was a harsh one upon the sensibilities of the white people ; yet the work was necessary, and it has been performed with all the considerateness which the case would admit of. The Republican Party has been in all things a benefactor, and in nothing an oppressor, to the people of Virginia. Contrast the present condition of the Commonwealth with what it was in April, 1865, when this party assumed authority, in a State surrendered at discretion and abjectly at its mercy. What rights had we then under a Constitution which we had repudiated ? I will not dwell upon the picture which the people of Virginia presented : Stripped of all subsistence by their own armies ; denuded of every political right by the folly of their own blind statesmen ; presenting the sad spectacle of blind leaders of the blind, both fallen together in the last ditch. Who fed them ? Who lifted them up from the earth ? And who in time has clothed them with every constitutional right and privilege enjoyed by the most favored people ? Was any man's property confiscated ? Was any man's life or liberty exacted in atonement to the insulted majesty of the nation ? Was a single act committed in malevolence ? Was a single benefaction omitted that a generous statesmanship could suggest ? The answer to these questions will sound through after ages as an eternal anthem of praise to the Republican Party of our day.

THE SECTIONAL PARTY A CURSE TO VIRGINIA.

I might turn upon our accusers and demand to know what the sectional party has done for the restoration of the State from the ruin wrought by their own folly. What single act have they performed for the relief of a distressed people ? I affirm broadly, but I affirm truly, that all the measures of the sectional party have tended to impoverishment and oppression ; that all the measures of the Republican Party have wrought relief to the people and restoration of prosperity to the State.

Who but a Republican State Convention and the Republican Party gave its present Constitution to the State—the wisest it ever knew, and the most just it ever enjoyed ? Who gave the homestead to the people ? The object of the Republican Party in that measure was to relieve from the sacrifice of their homes the old land-holding class of the State who had devoted themselves honestly to the Confederate service, and had lost all by their devotion. It is true that this humane design was defeated by a decision of the State Court of Appeals. But it is also true that a Republican Congress has done all in its power to correct the mischief of this decision by requiring the national courts to allow the homestead to bankrupts against Confederate war debts.

Who gave the bankrupt law to the brave men of the country, North and South, whose services in camp and battle-field cost them their patrimonies at home ? Strange to say, the persons making most embittered opposition to that measure of liberty and disenthralment are the politicians who were most strenuous during the war in conscripting the men of the State into the armies of the Confederacy. These are the same persons also who, ever since the war, have been most relentless in pursuing the people with suits and executions. Who but the Republican Party gave the school system to the children of the people, and who but it is compelling its administration from a party in power, three-fourths of which would tear it from the Constitution if they dared so far to defy the Republican sentiment of the country ? Who but the Republican Party inserted that provision in the State Constitution forbidding any increase of the State debt, and thus saved Virginia from the scandalous financial legislation which has afflicted other Southern States ? Who but the Republican Party has made it a constitutional requirement that all property should be taxed according to its value, relieving special and small properties from the disproportionate burdens which they had always borne before ?

Let the reflecting man consider what the Republican Party has accomplished in these respects, and weigh the results of its policy as practically displayed before his eyes. Then let him imagine what would have been the condition of the State if the bigoted vindictiveness and barbarous race-hatred of the sectional party had full action ; and he will pray God to spare our good Commonwealth forever from its pernicious domination.