LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE
OF
HON. J. A. GARFIELD
AND
GEN. C. A. ARTHUR,
AND
THE PLATFORM
ADOPTED BY THE
REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION.
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LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE OF GENERAL JAMES A. GARFIELD.

MENTOR, OHIO, JULY 12, 1880.

DEAR SIR: On the evening of the 8th of June last I had the honor to receive from you in the presence of the committee of which you were chairman, the official announcement that the Republican National Convention at Chicago had that day nominated me as their candidate for President of the United States. I accept the nomination with gratitude for the confidence it implies, and with a deep sense of the responsibilities it imposes. I cordially endorse the principles set forth in the platform adopted by the convention. On nearly all the subjects of which it treats, my opinions are on record among the published proceedings of Congress. I venture, however, to make special mention of some of the principal topics which are likely to become subjects of discussion.

Without reviewing the controversies which have been settled during the last twenty years, and with no purpose or wish to revive the passions of the late war, it should be said that while Republicans fully recognize and will strenuously defend all the rights retained by the people, and all the rights reserved to the States, they reject the pernicious doctrine of State supremacy which so long crippled the functions of the National Government, and at one time brought the Union very near to destruction. They insist that the United States is a nation with ample power of self-preservation; that its Constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof are the supreme law of the land; that the right of the
nation to determine the method by which its own Legislature shall be created cannot be surrendered without abdicating one of the fundamental powers of Government; that the national laws relating to the election of Representatives in Congress shall neither be violated nor evaded; that every elector shall be permitted freely and without intimidation to cast his lawful ballot at such election and have it honestly counted, and that the potency of his vote shall not be destroyed by the fraudulent vote of any other person.

The best thoughts and energies of our people should be directed to those great questions of national well-being in which all have a common interest. Such efforts will soonest restore perfect peace to those who were lately in arms against each other; for justice and good-will will outlast passion. But it is certain that the wounds of the war cannot be completely healed, and the spirit of brotherhood cannot fully pervade the whole country until every citizen, rich or poor, white or black, is secure in the free and equal enjoyment of every civil and political right guaranteed by the Constitution and the laws. Whenever the enjoyment of these rights is not assured discontent will prevail, immigration will cease, and the social and industrial forces will continue to be disturbed by the migration of laborers and the consequent diminution of prosperity. The National Government should exercise all its constitutional authority to put an end to these evils; for all the people and all the States are members of one body, and no member can suffer without injury to all. The most serious evils which now afflict the South arise from the fact that there is not such freedom and toleration of political opinion and action that the minority party can exercise an effective and wholesome restraint upon the party in power. Without such restraint party rule becomes tyrannical and corrupt. The prosperity which is made possible in the South by its great advantages of soil and climate will never be realized until every voter can freely and safely support any party he pleases.

POPULAR EDUCATION.

Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained. Its interests are intrusted to the States and to the voluntary action of the people. Whatever help the nation can justly afford should be generously given to aid the States in supporting common schools; but it would be unjust to our people and dangerous to our institutions to apply any portion of the revenues of the nation, or of the States, to the support of sectarian schools. The separation of the Church and the State in everything relating to taxation should be absolute.

THE NATIONAL FINANCES.

On the subject of national finances, my views have been so frequently and fully expressed that little is needed in the way of additional statement. The public debt is now so well secured and the rate of annual interest has been so reduced by refunding, that rigid economy in expenditures and the faithful application of our surplus revenues to the payment of the principal of the debt will gradually but certainly free the people from its burdens, and close with honor the financial chapter of the war. At the same time the Government can provide for all its ordinary expenditures, and discharge its sacred obligations to the soldiers of the Union, and
to the widows and orphans of those who fell in its defense. The resumption of specie payments, which the Republican party so courageously and successfully accomplished, has removed from the field of controversy many questions that long and seriously disturbed the credit of the Government and the business of the country. Our paper currency is now as national as the flag, and resumption has not only made it everywhere equal to coin, but has brought into use our store of gold and silver. The circulating medium is more abundant than ever before; and we need only to maintain the equality of all our dollars to insure to labor and capital a measure of value from the use of which no one can suffer loss. The great prosperity which the country is now enjoying should not be endangered by any violent changes or doubtful financial experiments.

THE TARIFF.

In reference to our custom laws, a policy should be pursued which will bring revenues to the Treasury, and will enable the labor and capital employed in our great industries to compete fairly in our own markets with the labor and capital of foreign producers. We legislate for the people of the United States, and not for the whole world; and it is our glory that the American laborer is more intelligent and better paid than his foreign competitor. Our country cannot be independent unless its people with their abundant natural resources possess the requisite skill at any time to clothe, arm, and equip themselves for war, and in time of peace to produce all the necessary implements of labor. It was the manifest intention of the founders of the Government to provide for the common defense, not by standing armies alone, but by raising among the people a greater army of artisans whose intelligence and skill should powerfully contribute to the safety and glory of the nation.

INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Fortunately for the interests of commerce, there is no longer any formidable opposition to appropriations for the improvement of our harbors and great navigable rivers, provided that the expenditures for that purpose are strictly limited to works of national importance. The Mississippi river, with its great tributaries, is of such vital importance to so many millions of people that the safety of its navigation requires exceptional consideration. In order to secure to the nation the control of all its waters, President Jefferson negotiated the purchase of a vast territory, extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. The wisdom of Congress should be invoked to devise some plan by which that great river shall cease to be a terror to those who dwell upon its banks, and by which its shipping may safely carry the industrial products of 25,000,000 of people. The interests of agriculture, which is the basis of all our material prosperity, and in which seven-twelfths of our population are engaged, as well as the interests of manufacturers and commerce, demand that the facilities for cheap transportation shall be increased by the use of all our great water-courses.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

The material interests of this country, the traditions of its settlement and the sentiment of our people have led the Government
to offer the widest hospitality to emigrants who seek our shores for new and happier homes, willing to share the burdens as well as the benefits of our society, and intending that their posterity shall become an undistinguishable part of our population. The recent movement of the Chinese to our Pacific Coast partakes but little of the qualities of such an immigration either in its purposes or its result. It is too much like an importation to be welcomed without restriction; too much like an invasion to be looked upon without solicitude. We cannot consent to allow any form of servile labor to be introduced among us under the guise of immigration. Recognizing the gravity of this subject, the present administration, supported by Congress, has sent to China a commission of distinguished citizens, for the purpose of securing such a modification of the existing treaty as will prevent the evils likely to arise from the present situation. It is confidently believed that these diplomatic negotiations will be successful without the loss of commercial intercourse between the two powers, which promises a great increase of reciprocal trade and the enlargement of our markets. Should these efforts fail it will be the duty of Congress to mitigate the evils already felt and prevent their increase by such restrictions as, without violence or injustice, will place upon a sure foundation the peace of our communities and the freedom and dignity of labor.

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

The appointment of citizens to the various executive and judicial offices of the Government is perhaps the most difficult of all duties which the Constitution has imposed on the executive. The convention wisely demands that Congress shall co-operate with the executive departments in placing the civil service on a better basis. Experience has proved that with our frequent changes of administration no system of reform can be made effective and permanent without the aid of legislation. Appointments to the military and naval service are so regulated by law and custom as to leave but little ground for complaint. It may not be wise to make similar regulations by law for the civil service, but without invading the authority or necessary discretion of the executive, Congress should devise a method that will determine the tenure of office, and greatly reduce the uncertainty which makes that service so unsatisfactory. Without depriving any officer of his rights as a citizen, the Government should require him to discharge all his official duties with intelligence, efficiency and faithfulness. To select wisely, from our vast population, those who are best fitted for the many offices to be filled requires an acquaintance far beyond the range of any one man. The executive should therefore seek and receive the information and assistance of those whose knowledge of the communities in which the duties are to be performed best qualifies them to aid in making the wisest choice.

The doctrines announced by the Chicago convention are not the temporary devices of a party to attract votes and carry an election; they are deliberate convictions resulting from a careful study of the spirit of our institutions, the events of our history and the best impulses of our people. In my judgment these principles should control the legislation and administration of the Government. In any event, they will guide my conduct until experience points out a better way.
If elected it will be my purpose to enforce strict obedience to the Constitution and the laws, and to promote, as best I may, the interests and honor of the whole country, relying for support upon the wisdom of Congress, the intelligence and patriotism of the people, and the favor of God.

With great respect I am very truly yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

To the Hon. GEORGE F. HOAR, Chairman of the Committee.

GEN. CHESTER A. ARTHUR'S ACCEPTANCE.

DEAR SIR: I accept the position assigned me by the great party whose action you announce. This acceptance implies approval of the principles declared by the convention, but recent usage permits me to add some expression of my own views. The right and duty to secure honesty and order to popular elections is a matter so vital that it must stand in front. The authority of the National Government to preserve from fraud and force elections at which its own officers are chosen is a chief point on which the two parties are plainly and intensely opposed. Acts of Congress for ten years have, in New York and elsewhere, done much to curb the violence and wrong to which the ballot and the count have been again and again subjected—sometimes despoiling great cities, sometimes stifling the voice of a whole State, often seating, not only in Congress, but on the bench, and in legislatures, numbers of men never chosen by the people. The Democratic party, since gaining possession of the two houses of Congress, has made these just laws the object of bitter, ceaseless assault, and, despite all resistance, has hedged them with restrictions cunningly contrived to baffle and paralyze them. This aggressive majority boldly attempted to extort from the Executive his approval of various enactments destructive of these election laws by revolutionary threats that a constitutional exercise of the veto power would be punished by withholding the appropriations necessary to carry on the Government. And these threats were actually carried out by refusing the needed appropriations, and by forcing an extra session of Congress, lasting for months, and resulting in concessions to this usurping demand, which are likely, in many States, to subject the majority to the lawless will of a minority. Ominous signs of public disapproval alone subdued this arrogant power into a sullen surrender for the time being of a part of its demands. The Republican party has strongly approved the stern refusal of its representatives to suffer the overthrow of statutes believed to be salutary and just. It has always insisted, and now insists, that the Government of the United States of America is empowered and in duty bound to effectually protect the elections denoted by the Constitution as national. More than this, the Republican party holds, as a cardinal point in its creed, that the Government should, by every means known to the Constitution, protect all American citizens everywhere in the full enjoyment of their civil and political rights. As a great part of its work of reconstruction, the Republican party gave the ballot to the emancipated slave as his right and defence. A large increase in the number of members of Congress, and of the Electoral College, from the former slaveholding States, was the imme-
diate result. The history of recent years abounds in evidence that in many ways and in many places—especially where their numbers have been great enough to endanger Democratic control—the very men by whose elevation to citizenship this increase of representation was effected have been debarred and robbed of their voice and their vote. It is true that no State statute or constitution in so many words denies or abridges the exercise of their political rights; but the modes employed to bar their way are no less effectual. It is a suggestive and startling thought that the increased power derived from the enfranchisement of a race now denied its share in governing the country—wielded by those who lately sought the overthrow of the Government—is now the sole reliance to defeat the party which represented the sovereignty and nationality of the American people in the greatest crisis of our history. Republicans cherish none of the resentments which may have animated them during the actual conflict of arms. They long for a full and real reconciliation between the sections which were needlessly and lamentably at strife; they sincerely offer the hand of good will, but they ask in return a pledge of good faith. They deeply feel that the party whose career is so illustrious in great and patriotic achievement, will not fulfill its destiny until peace and prosperity are established in all the land, nor until liberty of thought, conscience, and action, and equality of opportunity shall be not merely cold formalities of statute, but living birthrights, which the humble may confidently claim and the powerful dare not deny.

The resolution referring to the public service seems to me deserving of approval. Surely no man should be the incumbent of an office the duties of which he is for any cause unfit to perform, who is lacking in the ability, fidelity, or integrity which a proper administration of such office demands. This sentiment would doubtless meet with general acquiescence, but opinion has been widely divided upon the wisdom and practicability of the various reformatory schemes which have been suggested, and of certain proposed regulations governing appointments to public office. The efficiency of such regulations has been distrusted mainly because they have seemed to exalt mere educational and abstract tests above general business capacity, and even special fitness for the particular work in hand. It seems to me that the rules which should be applied to the management of the public service may properly conform, in the main, to such as regulate the conduct of successful private business. Original appointments should be based upon ascertained fitness. The tenure of office should be stable. Positions of responsibility should, so far as practicable, be filled by the promotion of worthy and efficient officers. The investigation of all complaints and the punishment of all official misconduct should be prompt and thorough. These views, which I have long held, repeatedly declared, and uniformly applied when called upon to act, I find embodied in the resolution, which, of course, I approve. I will add that by the acceptance of public office, whether high or low, one does not, in my judgment, escape any of his responsibilities as a citizen or lose or impair any of his rights as a citizen, and that he should enjoy absolute liberty to think and speak and act in political matters according to his own will and conscience, provided only that he honorably, faithfully, and fully discharges all his official duties.
The resumption of specie payments, one of the fruits of Republican policy, has brought the return of abundant prosperity and the settlement of many distracting questions. The restoration of sound money, the large reduction of our public debt and of the burden of interest, the high advancement of the public credit, all attest the ability and courage of the Republican party to deal with such financial problems as may hereafter demand solution. Our paper currency is now as good as gold, and silver is performing its legitimate function for the purposes of change. The principles which should govern the relations of these elements, of the currency are simple and clear. There must be no deteriorated coin, no depreciated paper. And every dollar, whether of metal or paper, should stand the test of the world’s fixed standard.

The value of popular education can hardly be overstated. Although its interests must of necessity be chiefly confined to voluntary effort and the individual action of the several States, they should be encouraged, so far as the Constitution permits, by the generous co-operation of the National Government. The interests of the whole country demand that the advantages of our common school system should be brought within the reach of every citizen, and that no revenues of the nation or of the States should be devoted to the support of sectarian schools.

Such changes should be made in the present tariff and system of taxation as will relieve any overburdened industry or class, and enable our manufacturers and artisans to compete successfully with those of other lands.

The Government should aid works of internal improvement national in their character, and should promote the development of our water-courses and harbors wherever the general interests of commerce require.

Four years ago, as now, the nation stood at the threshold of a Presidential election, and the Republican party, in soliciting a continuance of its ascendency, founded its hope of success, not upon its promises, but upon its history. Its subsequent course has been such as to strengthen the claims which it then made to the confidence and support of the country. On the other hand, considerations more urgent than have ever before existed forbid the accession of its opponents to power. Their success, if success attends them, must chiefly come from the united support of that section which sought the forcible disruption of the Union, and which, according to all the teachings of our past history, will demand ascendency in the councils of the party to whose triumph it will have made by far the largest contribution.

There is the gravest reason for apprehension that exorbitant claims upon the public Treasury, by no means limited to the hundreds of millions already covered by bills introduced in Congress within the past four years, would be successfully urged if the Democratic party should succeed in supplementing its present control of the national legislature by electing the Executive also.

There is danger in intrusting the control of the whole law-making power of the Government to a party which has in almost every Southern State repudiated obligations quite as sacred as those to which the faith of the nation now stands pledged.

I also doubt that success awaits the Republican party, and
THE PLATFORM.

The Republican party, in national convention assembled, at the end of twenty years since the Federal Government was first committed to its charge, submits to the people of the United States this brief report of its administration:

It suppressed a rebellion which had armed nearly a million of men to subvert the national authority, [applause; ] it reconstructed the Union of States with freedom instead of slavery as its cornerstone, [applause; ] it transformed 4,000,000 human beings from the likeness of things to the rank of citizens, [applause; ] it relieved Congress from the infamous work of hunting fugitive slaves, and charged it to see that slavery does not exist, [applause; ] it has raised the value of our paper currency from 38 per cent. to the par of gold, [applause; ] it has restored, upon a solid basis, payment in coin of all national obligations, and has given us a currency absolutely good and equal in every part of our extended country, [applause; ] it has lifted the credit of the nation from the point where 6 per cent. bonds sold at 86, to that where 4 per cent. bonds are eagerly sought at a premium, [applause; ]

Under its administration railways have increased from 31,000 miles in 1860 to more than 82,000 miles in 1879. [Applause. ] Our foreign trade increased from $100,000,000 to $1,150,000,000 in the same time, and our exports, which were $20,000,000 less than our imports in 1860, were $235,000,000 more than our imports in 1879. [Applause, and cries of "Good!"] Without resorting to loans, it has, since the war closed, defrayed the ordinary expenses of Government besides the accruing interest on the public debt, and has disbursed annually more than $30,000,000 for soldiers' and sailors' pensions. It has paid $830,000,000 of the public debt, and, by refunding the balance at lower rates, has reduced the annual interest charge from nearly $150,000,000 to less than $89,000,000. All the industries of the country have revived, labor is in demand, wages have increased, and throughout the entire country there is evidence of a coming prosperity greater than we have ever enjoyed.

UPON THIS RECORD

the Republican party asks for the continued confidence and support of the people, and this convention submits for their approval the following statement of the principles and purposes which will continue to guide and inspire its efforts:

1st. We affirm that the work of the Republican party for the last twenty years has been such as to commend it to the favor of the nation; that the fruits of the costly victories which we have achieved through immense difficulties should be preserved; that the peace regained should be cherished; that the Union should be perpetuated, and that the liberty secured to this generation should be transmitted undiminished to other generations; that the order
established and the credit acquired should never be impaired; that the pensions promised should be paid; that the debt so much reduced should be extinguished by the full payment of every dollar thereof; that the reviving industries should be further promoted, and that the commerce already increasing should be steadily encouraged.

2d. The Constitution of the United States is a supreme law, and not a mere contract. [Applause.] Out of confederated States it made a sovereign nation. Some powers are denied to the nation, while others are denied to the States, but the boundary between the powers delegated and those reserved is to be determined by the national, and not by the State tribunal. [Cheers.]

3d. The work of popular education is one left to the care of the several States, but it is the duty of the National Government to aid that work to the extent of its constitutional ability. The intelligence of the nation is but the aggregate of the intelligence in the several States, and the destiny of the nation must be guided, not by the genius of any one State, but by the average genius of all. [Applause.]

4th. The Constitution wisely forbids Congress to make any law respecting the establishment of religion, but it is idle to hope that the nation can be protected against the influence of secret sectarianism, while each State is exposed to its domination. We, therefore, recommend that the Constitution be so amended as to lay the same prohibition upon the Legislature of each State, and to forbid the appropriation of public funds to the support of sectarian schools. [Cheers.]

5th. We reaffirm the belief avowed in 1876 that the duties levied for the purpose of revenue should so discriminate as to favor American labor, [cheers:] that no further grants of the public domain should be made to any railway or other corporation; that slavery having perished in the States its twin barbarity, polygamy, must die in the Territories; that everywhere the protection accorded to a citizen of American birth must be secured to citizens by American adoption. That we deem it the duty of Congress to develop and improve our seacoast and harbors, but insist that further subsidies to private persons or corporations must cease, [cheers:] that the obligations of the Republic to the men who preserved its integrity in the day of battle are undiminished by the lapse of fifteen years since their final victory. To do them honor is and shall forever be the grateful privilege and sacred duty of the American people.

6th. Since the authority to regulate immigration and intercourse between the United States and foreign nations rests with the Congress of the United States and the treaty-making power, the Republican party, regarding the unrestricted immigration of Chinese as a matter of grave concernment under the exercise of both these powers, would limit and restrict that immigration by the enactment of such just, humane, and reasonable laws and treaties as will produce that result.

7th. That the purity and patriotism which characterized the earlier career of Rutherford B. Hayes in peace and war, and which guided the thoughts of our immediate predecessors to him for a Presidential candidate, have continued to inspire him in his career as Chief Executive; and that history will accord to his Administration the honors which are due to an efficient, just, and court-
We charge upon the Democratic party the habitual sacrifice of patriotism and justice to a supreme and insatiable lust for office and patronage; that to obtain possession of the National Government and control of the place, they have obstructed all efforts to promote the purity and to conserve the freedom of the suffrage, and have devised fraudulent ballots, and invented fraudulent certification of returns; have labored to unseat lawfully elected members of Congress to secure at all hazards the vote of a majority of States in the House of Representatives; have endeavored to occupy by force and fraud the places of trust given to others by the people of Maine, rescued by the courage and action of Maine's patriotic sons; have, by methods vicious in principle and tyrannical in practice, attached partisan legislation to appropriation bills upon whose passage the very movement of the Government depended; have crushed the rights of the individual; have advocated the principles and sought the favor of the rebellion against the nation, and have endeavored to obliterate the sacred memories and to overcome its inestimably valuable results of nationality personal freedom, and individual equality.

The equal, and steady, and complete enforcement of the laws, and the protection of all our citizens in the enjoyment of all privileges and immunity guaranteed by the Constitution, are the first duties of the nation. [Applause.]

The dangers of a "Solid South" can only be averted by a faithful performance of every promise which the nation has made to the citizen. [Applause.] The execution of the laws, and the punishment of all those who violate them, are the only safe methods by which an enduring peace can be secured and genuine prosperity established throughout the South. [Applause.] Whatever promises the nation makes the nation must perform. A nation cannot with safety relegate this duty to the States. The "Solid South" must be divided by the peaceful agencies of the ballot and all honest opinions must there find free expression. To this end the honest voter must be protected against terrorism, violence, or fraud. [Applause.]

And we affirm it to be the duty and the purpose of the Republican party to use all legitimate means to restore all the States of this Union to the most perfect harmony which may be possible, and we submit to the practical, sensible people of these United States to say whether it would not be dangerous to the dearest interests of our country at this time to surrender the administration of the National Government to a party which seeks to overthrow the existing policy under which we are so prosperous, and thus bring distrust and confusion where there is now order, confidence, and hope. [Applause.]

The Republican party, adhering to the principles affirmed by its last national convention of respect for the constitutional rules governing appointments to office, adopts the declaration of President Hayes that the reform of the civil-service should be thorough, radical, and complete. To this end it demands the co-operation of the legislative with the executive departments of the Government, and that Congress shall so legislate that fitness, ascertained by proper practical tests, shall admit to the public service.