# THE NEW YORK HERALD.

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## THE BANQUET TO EX-GOVERNOR YOUNG,

AT THE

## Irving House, Saturday, Jan. 18, 1850.

### Important Expose of Parties and Principles.

### THE POLITICS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

### Sewardism Anatomized, and the Constitution Vindicated.

On Saturday evening, a dinner was given at the Irving House to ex-Governor Young, by his friends and admirers. In order to clearly explain the object of this movement, we subjoin the invitation and the reply:—

TO THE HON. JOHN YOUNG.

NEW YORK, January 8, 1851.

Sir—A large number of your political and personal friends, desirous to testify their regard to you, and their sense of your long and varied services, have appointed us a committee to request your acceptance of an invitation to meet them at a festival to be given in honor of you, at the Irving House, on any day of the present month that may suit your convenience. We take pleasure in announcing to you this deserved compliment from your fellow citizens, and earnestly hope for a favorable answer from you. The time and all the circumstances seem to us suggestive of this entertainment, and we trust that the occasion, and its incidents, and results, will verify our judgment.

We have just issued from an annual election, remarkably important and interesting in its consequences. This election has resulted in the continuance of that ascendancy of the whig party in the great State of New York, which began with your election as Governor, in 1846.

We wish to renew our obligations to that period; and, while we are not unmindful of the struggle which has resulted in the election of the second of your whig successors in that high office, and indulge the hope of a long unbroken continuance of the succession, to associate with the grateful thought of present success, a just remembrance of the arduous and faithful labors, which raised the whig party in this State from the deepest depression it had ever known, to a triumph which was the beginning of a series that has survived the divisions and overthrow of the victorious party then opposed to it.

The memorable contest of 1844, in which you faithfully and unpretendingly labored with us, resulted in a defeat so great and completej as to leave many of the most sanguine, sagacious and able of our party in utter despair. It was just after that defeat that you entered the Legislature of the State as one of the feeble whig minority. Your previous services in two Congresses of the United States, as well as in the Legislature, naturally indicated you as the leader of the whig minority.

You had able and judicious supporters in the Legislature. Your well conceived and well directed attacks on the popular majority; your foresight, and your adroit management of the desponding forces of that small minority of the Legislature of 1845 and 1846, rived asunder the two factions of the democratic party, and revived in every true whig heart the hope of a triumph before despaired of, and which could never have been realized but under your direction. To your exertion of the powers thus committed to you the people of New York owe their present revised and improved constitution, with the subsequent and consequent improvement of their laws And while you gave us this by a consentaneous action with one section of your opponents, you, by a like co-operation with the opposite section, secured a resumption of the suspended public works, which gave this State its imperial eminence in the Union and throughout the world, and by which this great city maintains, and long will maintain, its place as the chief medium of communication between the two continents of the globe.

That you should be, in 1846, the whig candidate for Governor of this State, was a matter of course. You had an unwilling competitor for that nomination. He did not desire it, and his name was used without his wish, because, sated with labors and honors in the public service, he only sought repose and the welfare of his State and country, in honorable retirement.

But Providence had other and higher purposes, unconceived by him. We knew that no man in the State was better pleased with your nemination, or with your election.

He is now President of the United States. Your antagonist in that election was Silas Wright, and the only and the last man that could have maintained in power and union that mighty democratic party which elected him to the high office from which you displaced him. Over his lamented death and honored grave, many patriotic hearts, long divided by party spirit, unite in silent yet eloquent testimony of a republican people's gratitude for faithful and diligent public services, and of the brief, changeful and evanescent character of those distinctions which, from time to time, separate from each other, in partisan strife, the children of our common mother—our one whole country from the Lakes to the Gulf, from Ocean to Ocean. Many who will unite or sympathise with us in this testimonial of your merits, may have opposed your nomination in 1846; and many others of them may have opposed your election; and some we know, who advocated both, will not be with us now. If it be so, it but shows that men and their merits, and the memory of them, will ever as now, survive personal malice and detraction, and party distinction and names.

We should be misled from our purpose by our feelings, if we should attempt farther to trace your public career.

We desire now to meet you in social festivity, as friends with a friend whose distinguished public services we admire and appreciate, and whose many personal excellencies we are proud and happy now to know from intimate association.

You came among us, less than two years since, comparatively a stranger, notwithstanding the high offices you had occupied.

In that brief period, to a high name and distinction in public and political service, you have added attachments which spring from personal esteem, strengthened by personal worth.

It is to refresh our spirits by a recurrence to the ever remembered and glorious toils and triumphs of the political labors we have shared with you—to stir anew the full and healthful currents of unity and nationality, that should run through all whig hearts in the State and nation—as well as to evince a sincere and cordial recognition of a community of citizenship between us in this great metroplis, that we tender you this expression of our sentiments personally towards yourself, and ask your presence on this festive occasion.

We remain, with high respect,

Your friends and fellow citizens,

DAVID GRAHAM,
JAMES VAN NOSTRAND,
C. S. WOODHULL,
JAMES S. THAYER,
HENRY SUYDAM, Jr.,
MARSHALL O. ROBERTS,
EDMUND GRIFFIN,
ROBERT C. WETMORE,
JOHN F. BUTTERWORTH
} Cor. Committee.

THE REPLY OF MR. YOUNG.

NEW YORK, Jan. 11th, 1851.

GENTLEMEN:—I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 10th inst., inviting me to meet my whig friends at a dinner in New York, at an early day, and requesting me to designate such day.

I am profoundly sensible of the honor you have done me, and of the partial kindness evinced by your too flattering allusion to my conduct in the various positions to which, by the generous confidence of the whig party, I had been assigned.

The pleasure of meeting you, gentlemen, and those most likely to be with you on such an occasion, I could scarcely at any time forego; and I more readily yield to your request at this time, because I am led by your commendation to anticipate a meeting at which all may freely interchange their views and sentiments, not only upon the subjects noticed in your letter, but upon other important questions that now possess the public mind.

Allow me, gentlemen, to suggest the 18th inst. as the day on which my public duties will most properly permit me the leisure which my acceptance will demand.

With the assurance of my high regard,
I am your obedient servant,
JOHN YOUNG.

The attendance was large and respectable, comprising many of our leading whig politicians, and among the company we recognised some of the most distinguished men of the democratic party—for instance, George Law, proprietor of the Southern line of the United States mail steamers.

David Graham, presided, and at his right hand was ex-Governor John Young; at the extreme right was Judge Paine. On the left of the chair were Senator S. P. Hall, of Binghampton, the Hon. Mr. McLean, and the Hon. Robert Treat Paine.

The Vice President's were:—Dr. James R. Wood, first Vice President; Marshall O. Roberts, second, do; John H. Butterworth, third, do.; Ald. Edmund Griffin, fourth, do; J. H. Hobart Haws, fifth, do.

A good substantial dinner was on the table at six o'clock, served up in the best style of the Irving House. The table was adorned with the following ornaments:—Castle Garden, as it appeared Dec. 30th, 1850, on the occasion of the great Union meeting—American Prosperity; Washington Monument; Chinese Tower; Goddess of Liberty; American Steamship; Negan Flower Baskets; The Freemen of America; Fountain of Health; Peace Offering; Fruits of Industry, and Union Temple. The last, which was very tasteful and suggestive, was on the head table before the President and the guest of the evening. The room was beautifully lighted with magnificent chandeliers.

Ample justice having been done to the long bill of fare, and the wines, which were of the choicest description, the cloth was removed, preparatory to the commencement of the intellectual part of the proceedings. Just at this moment Dodworth's band struck up "Here's to you Harry Clay," which produced such an outburst of enthusiasm as we have rarely witnessed. The whole assembly rose to their feet, cheering most vehemently, and waving their handkerchiefs for several minutes. Whenever any allusion was made to the great Kentuckian, during the evening, the same intense excitement was produced, just as if his name were a talisman that could conjure up at will the deepest emotions of the human heart.

DAVID GRAHAM, the president of the evening, then rose, and addressed those assembled as follows:—

Fellow citizens—I need hardly say that I rise to perform one of the most agreeable duties which has ever, in the course of my political career, devolved on me to perform; and I can only regret that the physical prostration under which I am laboring, renders it necessary for me to draw much more largely on your indulgence than under other circumstances I would have desired to do. We are assembled on the present occasion to do honor to one who has long been identified with principles and with professions, which, in times past, have rendered themselves dear to the whig party of this country. We are assembled here, fellow citizens, to pay no idle compliment. We are assembled here, not to bow our knee to power, but to remember, in the gratitude of our hearts, one dear to us as a brother—dear to us as a neighbor, and dear to us as a fellow citizen. On an occasion like this, fellow citizens, it is fitting to recur to the circumstances which have called us together—to the fidelity in the performance of duty which we are here to commemorate, and the merits of the man whom we are here to honor. And in the remarks which I shall have occasion to make on these subjects, while I shall endeavor to be as brief as possible, I shall feel it to be my duty to call your attention to some points in the history of the politics of this State, which may not be familiar to all of you. You all recollect, fellow citizens, the triumph of 1840. You all remember the joy with which the heart of the whig party—not only of this State but of the whole country—beat on that occasion, and you all have the best reason to remember the suddenness into which that triumph, so full of hope and rejoicing, was turned into a cup of bitterness and sorrow. As one of the fruits of that sorrow—as one one of the circumstances of that bitterness—you cannot but turn with gladness and pleasure to the services of a man eminent in the history of nations, eminent beyond any, perhaps, in the whole political history of our country, with the exception of the Twenty-seventh Congress. You cannot, fellow citizens, but remember that in that body the State of New York was represented by some of her boldest and most eminent sons, and you cannot have forgotten that among the most distinguished in point of patriotism—who, amid all the confusions of the whig party—amid all the dismay that surrounded our cause and its champions—that the distinguished gentleman who is our guest on this occasion was one of the most prominent. I advert to this, gentlemen, not as one of the prominent points to which I desire to call your attention, but as one in connection with the history of our distinguished guest, which it would be improper for me to omit alluding to. I intend to direct your attention to other matters more immediately connected with ourselves, and with the services rendered by that distinguished gentleman. The events which followed the death of General Harrison—the treachery in the administration of the general government which immediately followed—the history of the action of Congress and the various other measures connected with the political affairs of the country during that period, are fresh in the recollection of you all. And you cannot have forgotten that as a necessary result of those circumstances, the whig party of this State and of the Union was broken up and prostrated. You cannot have forgotten, that during the whole of that administration there seemed to be no ray of hope to the whig party of the country, and that everything which surrounded us foreboded gloom, disappointment and defeat. In the course of time, however, fellow citizens, the whig party of the Union again rallied in its might, and in 1844, broken up and divided as we had been by the treachery of an administration which we called into power—dismayed as we were by the action of that administration—the whig party of the Union, under its great and chosen leader, under the gallant champion of its cause, again marched forward, as it hoped, to victory; but unfortunately it proved otherwise. In 1844, the whig party, under the great champion of its principles, Henry Clay, of Kentucky, (tremendous outbursts of applause) were defeated; and it is a source of bitter recollection to the whig party of the Empire State, that it was the faltering of that State which resulted in the defeat of our candidate on that occasion. We all remember that then the whig cause and its principles seemed forever doomed. The boldest, the most valiant among us; those who for years fought in the front of our battles; those who for years had been most undaunted champions of our principles, quailed. They thought that all was lost—they despaired of success—it seemed that everything must be given up as lost. It was at this stage of the history of our party—at this period of defeat and reverses to which we were doomed—that it became our duty to turn our eyes to the distinguished gentleman who is our guest on this occasion, and who, undaunted and undismayed, stood forward as our champion in the Legislature of our State, and there again raised aloft the whig banner, to float in triumph, eventually, over the whole country. (Great applause.) In the Legislature of 1845, after the disasters to which I have referred—after the whigs of the whole country seemed dispirited and desponding—Mr. Young, at the head of a small minority, planted himself on the integrity of the principles of the whig party, and proclaimed there what was so soon to be realized in his own person, the success and triumph of those principles. (Applause.) He found then, fellow citizens, a party large in numbers, flushed with triumph and success; but yet he dared to march against them, and, in the face of the enemy, to lift again the flag which had been so recently, but not ingloriously, defeated. The events, gentlemen, which occurred in that Legislature, are worthy of recollection by us all. They are worthy of remembrance by us, not merely as whigs, but as citizens of this great State, and interested in its prosperity and progress. It was the desire of the democratic party, as it is termed, that measures which had engaged the attention of former legislatures should pass, and become amendments to the constitution; but it was the desire of those who represented the interests, not only of the whig party, but of the people of this State, that measures radically tending to the relief of the people, and radically adapted to the prosperity of this State, should be adopted in their stead. On that occasion, Mr. Young, as leader of the whig minority, stepped forward. He said that although the democratic party was strong in recent triumph, and the whig party were weak from recent defeat, although there was confidence to be placed in the integrity and intelligence of the people of this State, and that on an appeal to them, such amendments to the constitution could be effected as would restore to the people their just rights, and break up the power of the party at Albany, which bound down the State for years preceding. (Applause.) As the recognised leader of the whig minority—as the recognized leader, not merely of that minority, but as the exponent of the sentiments of the great mass of the people of this State—he proposed to that Legislature a reform of the constitution of the State. He had seen, as we all had seen, that the strength of the party against which we all had contended, lay in the concentration of power in the hands of a few in Albany, and he had seen that the only way in which the wand of the magician could be broken, was to give to the people the exercise of those franchises which had been exercised by a few at the capital, professing to represent the people. The result, fellow citizens, was, as you all remember, that after the close of that session, having discovered, as he had discovered, the weakness of our opponents, he was enabled to induce the Legislature of the State to adopt a law which called together the convention by whom the constitution under which we are now living was adopted. (Applause.) I need only direct your attention to the general features of that constitution to induce you to join with me in believing, that the man who is entitled to the authorship of that measure, may claim to be the greatest benefactor that the State of New York has ever seen within her borders. (Applause and clapping of hands.) Through the patronage of the State, distributed as it had been in Albany, the people, if not corrupt, were at least rendered supine in reference to their interests. That great measure broke up the central power in Albany; it gave back to the people the rights which belonged to them; it adopted the principle of responsibility by representatives to their constituents. For these great measures, adopted in the constitution of our State—if there were no others in it—the people of this State might well raise a voice in praise of the distinguished gentleman who occupies the position of our guest on this occasion. (Cheers.) If we view those measures merely as principles—if we regard them without reference to loftier or more patriotic views—let me ask you whether there is a debt of gratitude too great for us to pay to the author of reforms so great as these? The strength of the democratic party consisted in the concentration of power at the capital, and so long as it possessed that strength, they were, as a party, invincible within our State; but the instant that power was broken up—the moment it was sent back to the people, and the responsibility was thrown on them—the ward of the magician was broken, and as a result, the whig party became, as it has been since, triumphant in the Empire State. (Great applause and cheering.) For these measures, fellow citizens, you may thank our distinguished guest. (Three cheers for Governor Young.) I have the authority of his political opponents—I have the authority of history. I have the authority of the political historian of New York! the late Judge Hammond—for the assertion, that it was to his efforts, and that alone, that the people of this State are indebted for this great and glorious consummation; and when I see him now, as I have seen him within the last few weeks, the object of denunciation in certain quarters, I almost feel, fellow citizens, as if I could blush to own the name of whig, that such ingratitude could be rendered for such great services as these. (Tremendous applause.) Fellow citizens, it will be a matter of no surprise to you to recollect, that after the services which had been rendered by Governor Young, in the promotion of the measures to which I have only incidentally alluded, that in the very next canvass for the executive chair of this State, he should have been designated by the unanimous voice of the whig party, as their candidate for the gubernatorial chair. Long before the formality of a convention—long before the formality of primary meetings for the election of delegates to constitute that convention—the whig heart had throbbed with gratitude towards that man, and there was not found within our borders the first whig to utter any other sentiment than that John Young should be intrusted with the administration of the affairs of this State, the government of which he had been the means of reforming through the constitution. The result, fellow citizens, you all remember: the democratic party, with all its strength, the democratic party, flushed with its success in 1844—the whig party, dismayed by its defeats in that year—the contest of 1846 came on, and although a man was presented as a candidate against our distinguished guest, who was deemed invincible, our guest was chosen by a tremendous majority, to administer the government of our State. (Great applause and cheering.) Yes, my friends, though the name of Silas Wright—a name, which I trust, will never be mentioned without respect and veneration—though the name of that great man assisted and strengthened the party against which we contended and although Mr Young was almost unknown, personally to the great body of the people of this State, so strongly had he identified himself with popular interests and the rights of the people, and so strongly had he endeared himself to the whig party, that by a majority of over ten thousand, he conquered the greatest man that the adverse party could bring against him. Surely, in this, fellow citizens, is to be found some evidence of the worth of our distinguished guest—surely, in this is to be found some evidence of the intelligence of the people of our State; and surely in this is to be found some proof, that on the present occasion you are engaged in paying worthy homage to virtue, both public and private, in one whom we have reason to deem a benefactor of our State. (Great applause.) Upon entering upon the administration of the executive government, he found himself in a new and untried position. The organic law of the State had undergone a great change. Our habits of thought, the customs of our people, as far as their political rights were concerned, had undergone a great and serious change. In this condition of affairs, he was called upon to administer our executive government. Let us for a moment look at the course which he marked out, and the line of conduct which characterised his administration of our executive affairs. You are undoubtedly familiar with his official communications to the Legislature of our State; and you cannot be ignorant of the fact, that in every one of them, with a manliness belonging to his character, which he evinced while contending with the cohorts of the adverse faction—with a manliness and honesty belonging to a whig—he asserted every principle of the whig party of this State. There was no compromise of measures with him. There was no intention on his part to yield one jot or title of the policy which he believed to be right; and with a firmness and manliness highly honorable, he presented to the Legislature a programme of action perfectly in keeping with the creed of the whig party of New York. The great question of internal improvements as a national question and as a State question, the question of currency, the curtailment of executive patronage, and every other question which had been advocated by whigs from time immemorial, were presented by Governor Young to the Legislature for their adoption in their legislative capacity. But, gentlemen, there was one doctrine emphatically and peculiarly a doctrine of the whig party, for which, as a whig, from the bottom of my heart I think him, and for which I know I may thank him in your name, that, come what may, the supremacy of the constitution and the laws of the land must be upheld. (Tremendous cheering.) And I may be permitted to refer to extracts from Governor Young's messages, to shew that he has been maligned by those who wish to malign and betray you, and to show that, on this doctrine, he was ever true on a principle which will be ever maintained by the whig party of the country. In speaking, fellow citizens, of the question which agitated the State at the time of his accession to power, in reference to manorial titles (and I need only mention this to call to your mind the slanders which have been heaped upon him, not only by his opponents, but by whigs) he says:—

"It is the first duty of government to enforce a strict observance of the laws, and to punish their infraction with unshaken firmness. If it should be found, at any time, that they are not adapted to the wants and interests of the people for the government of whom they are made or provided, they should be amended or repealed; but so long as they remain the laws of the country, they are to be enforced, whatever their character, or however they may affect individuals or communities."

Let me call your attention to another extract from the same message, which related to a subject on which the sense of the whig party was by no means unanimous, but on which Governor Young, in the fulness of his patriotism, and in strict compliance with his oath of office, did not hesitate to declare to the Legislature of the State. I refer to the Mexican war; (applause.) in relation to which the humble individual who now addresses you had occasion, at an early period, to express his opinions to his fellow citizens, assembled in New York. Governor Young says:—

"The power to declare war is vested in the Congress of the United States; and when once engaged in war, either under a declaration by Congress, or into which we have been involuntarily plunged by the aggression of a foreign government, the power to make peace rests with the President of the United States and the Senate; and that doctrine which teaches obedience to municipal laws, whatever their character, until they are modified or repealed, requires of us, as citizens of the United States, and in our corporate capacity as one of the members of the confederacy, to some up to the help of the government against a foreign enemy, however we may have been involved in the war, and whatever its causes or objects."

And yet, fellow citizens, will it be believed that there are within the borders of the State men professing to be whigs, who have denounced Governor Young for the expression of sentiments so patriotic and so whig as these?

VOICES—"Down with them! down with them!"

It was on these principles, fellow-citizens, that, during the administration of Governor Young, the executive department of our government was conducted; and I call on you to remember—and I challenge any opponent of Governor Young, whether within or without the whig party of this State—to point to a single act of his which was in betrayal or in neglect of those principles thus promulgated. (Great applause.) The government of this State, gentlemen, under the new constitution, to which I have referred, was moulded into form under his administration—under a Legislature convened while he was Governor. The acts which were rendered necessary by that constitution were passed, and the experiment which that constitution pointed out was carried into full and complete effect, under his administration. Is there a man within this State—I will not say, is there a whig or a democrat—but is there a man, of any party, within this State, who will hesitate to say that that instrument was carried out under the administration of Governor Young, and carried into complete effect? At length, gentlemen, his administration came to an end. At length, having entitled himself to the meed of approbation—"well done, thou good and faithful servant!"—he retired from the cares with which he was honored, and sought enjoyment in the bosom of domestic associations. Within a short time he was called on by the general government of the country to fill the duties of an important office, not of a legislative or executive character, but full of responsibility, and involving, on the part of those who conferred it on him, the highest confidence in his integrity and honor. As far as his representative, or legislative, or executive character is concerned, he may be considered as having passed into retirement from the close of his term as Governor of this State. At the end of that term he became a resident of this great metropolis—(applause); and it is not the least of the gratification which we enjoy on this occasion, that while we pay proper homage to his public virtues, and acknowledge the manner in which he performed his duties, with praise, that we meet him as a brother, a neighbor, and a friend. (Great applause, which lasted for some moments.) But, fellow-citizens, retiring as he has done from the agitations of public life, he has yet performed the highest and most responsible duties of a citizen. He has not felt himself at liberty, when the interests of his country called upon him, to refuse the expression of his opinion, or the exertion of his influence, in behalf of his country. And because he has done this like an American freeman and like a true whig, he has been met in certain quarters, which, I regret to say, presume themselves to be whig quarters, with denunciation, unmerited as it is unjust, undeserved as it is uncharitable. (Applause.) Our distinguished guest has always believed in the principle that the whig party of the country is a great, broad, comprehensive, and glorious national party (great applause); that it is a party not limited to sections in its interest, its attachments, its duties, or its principles; but that its design and object are to promote the perpetuation of our glorious constitution, and to transmit unimpaired to remote generations, the institutions by which we ourselves have been blessed. (Great applause.) There are fellow-citizens, among us—and among us whigs, too, I am sorry to confess, men who do not believe in those broad and comprehensive principles. There are among the whig party, men who would engraft on our great and glorious standard the narrow and contracted issues of sectional policy. But, fellow-citizens, I know and believe I am addressing whigs of the city of New York, with whose sentiments I profess to be familiar—and I know and believe there is not one among us here—and that without the limits of this meeting there are but few—who are willing to admit that such issues should be brought within the great whig party of our country. (Good, good.) We stand, gentlemen, on the great principles to which I have already referred—the great and broad principles of the supremacy of the constitution and the laws of the land (tremendous applause), and come what may, ill or weal, to the party of which we are members, I am sure I am not assuming too much when I say, that this is the only principle which we will recognise or admit. (More cheering and applause.) On this principle stands the gentleman whom we have assembled here to honor; and because he is unwilling to bow the knee to Baal—to forego his ancient pledges—he has been made the subject of denunciation; and it is because he has been made so, that we are here to-night to sustain him with an approving voice, and to tell him that he has our warmest support and thanks for the honest performance of his duties. (Great applause.) I know there is in store for you, fellow citizens, a treat far beyond what it is in my humble power to give you; and I know there are principles which will be placed before you in much stronger and better language than mine, which you will approve. On your behalf, unworthily honored in the position in which I am placed, physically unable to perform its duties, I can only, in conclusion, thank you for the attention you have given to me, confident that you will render to Governor Young due homage for the fidelity with which he has espoused and maintained the great principles of our party. And to you, my friend, (shaking hands with Governor Young,) to you, sir, in the name of those by whom I am here surrounded—to you, sir, as the exponent and champion of the true principles of the whig party of this State—in the name, not only of those who are here assembled, but in the name of the whigs of the city of New York, I bid you a cordial, a generous, and a sincere welcome to the hearts and homes of the people of the Empire City. (Tremendous applause.)

Mr. Graham then sat down, and three cheers for Governor Young, of the most flattering kind, were given.

Ex-Governor Young then arose, amidst loud and enthusiastic cheering. He said:—I beg you to be assured that I fully appreciate the position I occupy this evening, and the honor you intended to confer; and if I should be wanting in set phrase to render the acknowledgements which belong to the occasion, I trust your kind consideration will supply the deficiency. I am scarcely with you yet; though I am eighteen months in your city, I am but little acquainted, by association, with the people of New York; but I know enough of them to know that they breathe an atmosphere in which unfounded prejudices readily melt away. (Cheers.) I have come among you with the full conviction that your prejudices would be overcome by the light of truth and reason; and I am not disappointed. You have fully appreciated my motives, and have given me credit for higher merits than I possess. In your letter of invitation, you have adverted to an epoch in the politics of this State more interesting to me than any other portion of our history; and you, Mr. President, have also referred to those transactions. I am glad you have done so. You have said that in 1845, after the great party struggle, the whigs were completely prostrate. In this you have only said what we must all admit. I know that our leader on that occasion was estimated as he deserved, if, indeed, Harry Clay could be fully estimated. (Loud cheers.) You have said we were vanquished—overthrown. We were. The causes of our defeat are not interesting now. It has been said that traitors lurked around the camp, and that treason bore its part in the discomfiture of our forces. In view of the character of the great leader, I refrain from any minute details that would expose the treachery that stabbed in the dark. But we were overthrown, as I have said. The friends of Governor Bouck were overwhelmed with defeat, and Silas Wright was triumphant. I do not speak of the occasion with a view to make mention of the part I took in those transactions, but, as we are all in the heyday of life, that we may profit by a recurrence to the past. The whig party had no hope. Their spirits were crushed. They numbered 44 members in the House and four Senators; but they were men. Possessed of that qualification, courage, which is valuable alike in war and in legislation, they came there to meet the consequences of previous disaster—to fight a battle with a party flushed with success and elated with power. There is not a circumstance connected with those events that is not as the images that cluster around the recollections of early childhood. What was to be done in this great emergency? It was not enough to preserve the integrity of the whig party. We had not numbers to retrieve our defeat. Additional strength must be acquired. To do that it was not necessary that we should abandon any of those principles that we professed, but that we should become popularized—republicanized. I believed then, as I do now, that the whig doctrines are the true republican doctrines of the country, and all that was wanted was to present them in a popular form. An observing man, in view of the difficulty of accomplishing it, would ask, how is this to be obtained? The channels in which the people were accustomed to go were worked deep and wide, and unless there was some organic change to divert the current of the water, it was idle to attempt to struggle against its resistless power. There seemed but one way to the attainment of that object, and that lay through a revision of the constitution, and at an early day in the session. I declared it to be my intention to advocate a convention for that purpose. Then, as now, it was said that my purpose was to break up the whig party, and that my object was personal power and personal position. It was said that the people had not come up with their petition for a convention. But we assumed we came from them, and bore their memorial. The party opposed to us were not entirely united in sympathy and feeling, and they were almost equally divided upon the question of a convention. Among the important changes wrought in the constitution were those that related to the Judiciary. The Senate constituted a major part of the court of last resort, and it was idle to expect that two-thirds of that body would wish to part with that power. We could not, therefore, expect to procure the amendments desired by legislative action. A committee of one from each Senatorial district had been appointed. They stood four to four, and consequently no report could emanate from them. But the popular sentiment was making progress, and on the 2d of April, 1846, an event occurred that laid the foundation for all the political power that the whigs have since obtained, both in the State and nation. I remember what occurred on that day, as distinctly as if it were yesterday. I was in the Supreme Court, when I received a note from a distinguished member from Ontario, saying the time had come for action. I went down to the House, and the people there assembled also seemed to think the time had come. I never saw so dense a mass, or so much excitement, as prevailed in and around the galleries and lobbies of the House. A resolution to amend the constitution had been reported, and a motion had been made to refer, and the member from Ontario had moved to amend by instructing the committee to report the bill for a convention of the people of the State. In the ranks of our political opponents, it was known there were as many in favor of the measure as there were opposed to it. Yet not a single vote could be found in favor of compelling a report. The hour of twelve o'clock came. The accomplished Speaker, for whom some of you have recently voted, was opposed to the bill, and at once announced the special order of the day. I moved to postpone that order. The members representing the native American party, who had been raised to power in the city of New York, came to our aid, and the vote was 51 to 47. I recollect well the silence that pervaded that body, and those lobbies, and that gallery, when the Speaker announced this vote. The people had caught the inspiration, and the feeling was as intense in the gallery as on the floor. Every man held in his breath, and when the Speaker declared the vote to be 51 to 47, these men lived again. There was not a loud shout, but a voice that told the public sentiment had sustained us. (Vehement cheers.) A motion was made to reconsider the vote. The numbers were 51 to 51. The resolution was not reconsidered. It was adopted; and when the sun went down on that day, we saw that progress had been made; that principle had made some progress, and everything about us had put on a new aspect. (Applause.) You know the rest. The bill passed; and at the first election under the revised constitution, the whigs returned ninety-three members of the House, and twenty-four Senators. Will you pardon me if I advert to one feature in this portion of our history, as instructive to those who will participate largely in politics hereafter? For myself, my path lies in another way. The passage of the bill for a convention defeated Gen. Cass, and elected Gen Taylor. (Cheers.) I say nothing of his administration. And it has placed in the Presidential chair his successor, in my opinion the wisest man that has been there since the days of Washington. (Cheers.) How has it done so? Upon the accession of Governor Wright, one of the ablest men this country has ever seen, he found his party divided and distracted. He adopted the policy of supporting both sections, instead of crushing either. He first assisted one, and then the other. President Polk came into power, and adopted the same rule. The consequence was that he preserved equally the strength of both divisions of his party. I do not know that it was in the power of Governor Wright and President Polk to have united their party. But they could have done much towards an end so desirable to them. If they had selected one or the other of these great divisions, they would have swelled it up from the ranks of the other division till it became the party; and they would have defeated the passage of the bill and kept us just where we had been years before, in a small minority. We came to Albany (the men I have mentioned) not to advance the interests of any particular faction, but the interests of the country, by straightforward legislation. Then there was no cabal. There was no need of one. (Laughter.) We had no power or patronage to divide. The senior editor of the influential organ of the party—the *Evening Journal*—had left the country for the session, and placed in charge of his paper a young man who believed he discharged his duty faithfully by publishing correct statements of what occurred. There was no person then to intrigue and publish things that never occurred, while things that did occur were carefully suppressed. (Roars of laughter.) To this circumstance, we are in no inconsiderable degree indebted for success. In the remarks you have made, Mr. President, you have spoken of some portion of my official conduct as Governor of the State. I have never taken the trouble to contradict the statements of certain newspapers on this subject, nor would I advert to the matter now, but that I deem it due to you, as you have mentioned the fact that was alleged to have taken place during my administration. It was alleged that prior to the election, I had expressed an opinion that those persons convicted of the anti-rent riots ought to be pardoned. They said I had never denied the charge. This opinion or pledge I was supposed to have expressed in a letter to Mr. Harris, previous to 1846. That gentleman has since contradicted the allegation, in his place in the Senate. (Cheers.) He said I had expressed no such sentiment. I would now say (not because I wish to retract anything I ever said) that I never gave any intimation to any man, living or dead, that these men ought to be pardoned, for the offence of which they were convicted. (Cheers.) The pardon itself was, I think, fully justified by the circumstances of the case. There eighteen men had been convicted of offences which could not be regarded in any other light than as political offences, by any candid and unprejudiced mind. In the districts of country where the offences were committed there were probably three thousand who participated, more or less, in the commission of these offences. In every civilized country, offences of a political character have been treated with great tenderness and prudence. The most remarkable exception to this rule, in modern times, was that in which the best blood of Hungary was shed by the Austrian government. Will you pardon me if I attach sufficient importance to an article in a morning paper yesterday, to refer for one moment to another topic. When I went into the Legislature in 1845 the peace of the State was disquieted by what was called the manor difficulties, or anti-rent excitement. We had hardly taken our seats when that question was brought up before us. Scarcely did a single day pass that it did not present itself before us like Banquo's ghost. But, whenever the question was tested there was always a marked majority to protect the rights of acquisition and property. There was not a single recorded vote in which you will not find this to be the case. As for myself, I took a single position—the only one for an honest man. It was this—while the laws exist, they must and shall be maintained. (great cheering) and whatever enactments were necessary to protect the rights of person and property, had my cheerful and hearty support and vote. (Cheers.) I know that you have not all understood my course. I have been misrepresented by a portion of the press—I will not say intentionally. Their only fault, if any, consisted in talking of what they did not understand. (Laughter.) I stand before a New York audience, with all the prejudices of accumulated property. Yet I have no hesitation in saying that proprietorship in land is necessary to the prosperity of the country. This was my opinion then; it is my opinion now; and I think I shall grow old before I conceal any opinion of mine on the rights of person and property. (Loud cheers.) I call upon any man to lay his finger upon any part of my history, where I have expressed any disregard for the rights of property. At the time to which I have referred, there were 180,000 acres of land occupied by 250,000 inhabitants, held under leases, some of which were for long terms of years, and others in perpetuity. Dissaffection prevailed among them; and it is the duty of every government not only to preserve the rights of property, but to inquire into grievances, and, if possible, redress them. I would not say in the Third District aught that I feared to say before the assembled people of the city of New York. Reference has been made to the fact that I differed with you as to the propriety of supporting Mr. Clay for the Presidency, in '48; will you permit me to say that no man has at all times held the great Kentuckian in higher estimation than myself. I have appreciated and venerated him, as you have. I have worshipped with you at the same shrine. I have sacrificed upon the same altar; and if my worship had taken an earthly shape, it would have been the great commoner of Kentucky. If there has existed in any age or country, a man to whom I would point as a model for my children, it is Harry Clay. (Cheers.) Yet I differed with you as to the propriety of presenting his name to the people in '48. I left nothing undone in '44, to promote his election. It failed; and when the time came to choose a candidate for the Presidential chair, I fixed upon another man than Mr Clay. It was then said that I wanted to break up the party. My object, however, was to sustain and unite the whig party. The battles on the Rio Grande had been fought, and the attention of the country had been directed towards General Taylor. There is no man here who will say that he would not have been elected if he had been nominated by our political adversaries. He was not nominated at the Baltimore convention, because we had previously appropriated him. Had he been nominated by that convention, is there any man in this room, any man in the United States, who would maintain that he would not have been elected? We nominated him, and you have seen the result. I do not wish to speak of General Taylor's administration. He brought honesty of purpose to it; but I do not choose to say more. When the historian writes the history of General Taylor, he will write of the camp and the field. He will take his readers to the Rio Grande and Monterey, and to Fort Harrison, and he will rest long at Buena Vista. (Loud cheers.) Good men will linger round his last resting place. Their tears will fall fast; but they will fall on a soldier's grave. I will not speak of his cabinet. It is a thing of the past. We have now a President of whom I wish to speak as he is—in "nothing extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice." I ask you, if in the chair of State there has been before so much of profound and practical wisdom, since the days of Washington? (Cheers.) His first act evinced the character of the man. The arduous duties of the Presidential office were placed in his hands. The whole country, the wide world, pointed to the Senator from Massachusetts as the person most eminently qualified for the State Department. His fitness was peculiar. He had not only the capacity but the learning and experience for the office. This was the man chosen by President Fillmore. (Cheers.) A distinguished gentleman from Louisiana was appropriately appointed over the War Department. In the Navy Department was found the best blood of North Carolina. Shall I speak of Kentucky? Need I name the colleague of Henry Clay? Virginia is there—Western Virginia, with her undeceived chivalry. What shall we say of the Treasury? Who that looks to Ohio does not fix his eye upon one point? Who that turns to Ohio and the sister States of the Northwest, does not look to one man, Thomas Corwin, the wagoner? (Great cheering)? Who does not speak of him as a man of not only unrivalled ability, but as possessed of a freshness and progress in keeping with the age in which we live? (Cheers.) Now, Mr. President, thus surrounded, who will doubt how this administration will end? The President you all have known—I will not speak of him. I have not spoken of him because he holds the place which he now occupies. I have spoken of him without respect to his position, and without regard to the common feeling of lauding whoever holds high position, and who may possess high political power. Now, these are some of the fruits of the election of 1848. You, no doubt, think we could have been bettered. I wish I could think with you. I cannot. You, no doubt, think if we had nominated Henry Clay we would have been successful. Pardon me if I say I do not think so.

VOICES—I don't; I don't.

On this, gentlemen, I do not propose to differ with you, but to express my convictions independent of party considerations, as I did in reference to the Mexican war. We were involved in that war. Whether it was just or not, or whether it was brought on by the enemy or not, was a question unimportant in reference to our position. We were engaged in a controversy with a foreign country, and my position was that the government must be sustained, and that our arms must be sustained, whether the war was right or wrong. (Applause.) There has been a disposition to misunderstand me in this particular, and the strong expressions I have used have been stated as a disregard of the grounds on which the country should engage in a war. I beg of you to allow me to say if you will read my language in this connection, you will see that my position is entirely different. I did not intend to assume or to speak of the boundaries of Texas. My argument was that as the general government was engaged in war, no matter how it was commenced, it was our business, as an independent State or corporation of the country, to sustain the general government, and I intended to go no farther. We live under a constitution and laws, and both must be maintained, whether we think them just or not; and whatever we may think of the measures of government—whether we think them improper or not—the principle of maintaining the constitution and the laws must be supported. Allow me to say one word more in this connection. It was apparent at the time that the length of the war with Mexico depended upon the tone of public opinion in this country. If Mexico could be assured that there existed in this country divisions of opinion that would weaken our power in prosecuting that war, it was apparent to every observer that it would perpetuate the war. It is a matter of history that accounts of differences of opinion in the United States, in regard to that war, were read by Mexican generals to their army, and that they gave strength to the enemy. Now, gentlemen, I know I have suffered in the estimation of some by the course which I took on that question; but, if it tended to shorten that war one hour, I have been fully compensated. If one drop of blood has been spared, by any position that I took in reference to that war, I have been fully compensated. If one sister's sobs were spared; if one mother's tears were saved, I am fully compensated. Now, gentlemen, I have referred to these matters in which I suppose I have differed, to some extent, with the people of New York. I have not intended to argue these propositions with the view of inducing you to agree to them. I have referred to them in vindication of myself. I do not now