

*Don't Pitch your Tent among the Dead."*

# AN APPEAL TO YOUNG MEN.

Conclusion of a Speech Delivered at Cleveland, Ohio,

BY

**JAMES A. GARFIELD,**

*\*On the Saturday Night before the Ohio-  
Election of 1879.*

Now, fellow-citizens, a word before I leave you, on the very eve of the holy day of God—a fit moment to consecrate ourselves finally to the great work of next Tuesday morning. I see in this vast audience tonight a great many young men—young men who are about to cast their first vote. I want to give them a word of suggestion and advice. I heard a very brilliant thing said by a boy, the other day, in one of our north-western counties. He said to me, "General, I have a great mind to vote the Democratic ticket." That was not the brilliant thing. I said to him, "Why?" "Why," said he "my father is a Republican, and my brothers are Republicans, and I am a Republican all over; but I want to be an independent man, and I don't want anybody to say, 'That fellow votes the Republican ticket just because his dad does,' and I have half a mind to vote the Democratic ticket just to prove my independence." I did not like the thing he suggested, but I did admire the spirit of the boy that wanted to have some independence of his own.

Now, young man, don't vote the Republican ticket just because your father votes it. Don't vote the Democratic ticket, even if he does vote it. But let me give you this one word of advice, as you are about to pitch your tent in one of the great political camps. Your life is full and buoyant with hope now, and when you pitch your tent, I beg you to pitch it among the living and not among the dead. If you are at all inclined to pitch it within the lines of the Democratic party, let me go with you for a moment while we survey the ground where I hope you will not shortly lie. It is a sad place, young man, for you to put your young life into. It is far more like a grave-yard than like a camp for the living. Look at it! It is billowed all over with the graves of, dead issues, of buried opinions, of exploded theories, of disgraced doctrines. You cannot live in comfort in such a place. Why, look here! Here is a double mound. I look down on it and read: "Sacred to the memory of Squatter Sovereignty and the Dred Scott Decision." A million and a half of Democrats voted for these, but they have been dead fifteen years—died by the hand of Abraham Lincoln, and here they lie. Young man, that is not the place for you.

But look a little further. Here is another mound, a black tomb, and above it towers to the sky a monument of four million pairs of human fetters taken from the limbs of slaves, and I read on its grim face: "Sacred to the memory of Human Slavery." For forty years of its infamous life the Democratic party taught that it was divine—God's institution. They defended it, they stood around it, they followed it to its grave as mourners. But here it lies, dead

by the hand of Abraham Lincoln; dead by the power of the Republican party; dead by the justice of Almighty God. Don't camp there, young man.

But here is another—a little brimstone tomb—and I read across its yellow face, in lurid, bloody lines, these words: "Sacred to the memory of State Sovereignty and Secession." Twelve millions of Democrats mustered around it to keep it alive; but here it lies, shot to death by the million guns of the Republic. Here it lies, its shrine burned to ashes under the blazing rafters of the burning Confederacy. It is dead! I would not have you stay a moment, even in this balmy night air, to look at such a place.

But just before we leave I discover a new-made grave, a little mound—short. The grass has hardly sprouted over it, and all around I see torn pieces of paper with the word "fiat" on them, and I look down in curiosity, wondering what the little grave is, and I read: "Sacred to the memory of the Rag Baby;" nursed in the brain of wild fanaticism; rocked by Thomas Ewing, George H. Pendleton, Samuel Carey, and a few others throughout the land. But it died on the 1st of January, 1879, and the one hundred and forty millions of gold that God made, and not fiat power, lie upon its little carcass to keep it down forever.

Oh, young man, come out of that! It is no place in which to put your young life. Come out and enter this camp of liberty, of order, of law, of justice, of freedom, of all that is glorious under these night stars.

Is there any death here in our camp? Yes! yes! Three hundred and fifty thousand soldiers, the

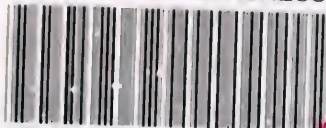


noblest band that ever trod the earth, died to make this a camp of glory and of liberty forever. But there are no dead issues here. There are no dead ideas here. Hang out our banner from the blue sky this night until it shall sweep the green turf under your feet. It hangs over our camp. Read away up under the stars the inscriptions we have written upon it, lo! these twenty-five years.

Twenty-five years ago the Republican party was married to Liberty, and this is our silver wedding. A worthily married pair love each other better on the day of their silver wedding than on the day of their first espousal; and we are truer to Liberty to-day and dearer to God than when we spoke our first word of liberty. Read away up under the sky across our starry banner those first words we uttered twenty-five years ago: "Slavery shall never extend over another foot of the territory of the great West!" Is that dead or alive? Alive, thank God, for evermore! And truer to-night than it was the hour it was written. Then it was a hope, a promise, a purpose. To-night, imperishable as the stars—it is immortal history, immortal truth.

Come down the glorious folds of our banner. Every great record we have made we have vindicated with our blood and our truth. It sweeps the earth and it touches the stars. Come into this camp, young man, and put in your young life where all is living, and where nothing is dead but the heroes that defended it. I think these young men will come.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 789 622 9

Soc.

t. Y.