

# THE BROOKLYN MAYORALTY

## MR. RIPLEY ROPES NOMINATED AT A CITIZENS' MEETING.

A MOVEMENT WHICH THE MACHINE CAN  
NOT IGNORE—ADDRESSES BY THE REV.  
HENRY WARD BEECHER, GEN. BARNES  
SIGISMUND KAUFMANN, AND OTHERS.

There was a large and eminently respectable gathering of citizens of Brooklyn in the Rink, on Clermont-avenue, last evening, to indorse the movement recently started in favor of the candidacy of the Hon. Ripley Ropes for Mayor at the approaching municipal election. A petition signed by several thousand citizens of Brooklyn—mostly Republicans—had been addressed to Mr. Ropes asking him to permit the use of his name in connection with the Mayoralty, and the meeting last evening was designed to give emphasis to this request. And that the meeting did emphasize the request there can be no doubt, for the spacious building was crowded to its utmost capacity by intelligent and representative men, who evinced a very emphatic approval of the movement in favor of Mr. Ropes. At 8 o'clock the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, Gens. Barnes and Christensen, and several other gentlemen took the seats reserved for them on the stage. Among the more prominent gentlemen present were Sigismund Kaufmann, L. S. Burnham, A. A. Low, George A. Nichols, Assistant District Attorney W. C. Beecher, Jeremiah P. Robinson, Henry E. Pierrepont, John A. Taylor, Seth Low, W. H. Wallace, Richard S. Roberts, George I. Seney, John T. Van Nostrand, John T. Martin, and John Reynolds. Mr. W. J. Coombs called the meeting to order and nominated for Chairman of the meeting Gen. Alfred C. Barnes, and for Secretary D. H. Houghtaling, and these gentlemen having been chosen unanimously, Gen. Barnes was introduced and made a brief address. He said in substance, "We are assembled to-night by an impulse that seems to be almost spontaneous. A very large number of people desire to call to the chief magistracy of our city one who will adorn the office and one who is inspired by good principles and pure motives. We are not disposed to ignore the great political parties, but we want to point out to the leaders of the organizations the wishes of the people in this matter, and, if possible, we desire to influence the action of one of the great parties. The next Mayor will be clothed by the new city charter with extraordinary powers. It is well that it is to be so, for now the people of Brooklyn will know where to place the responsibilities for the administration. During the past era of divided responsibility our local officers have stood around and pointed at one another whenever any question of responsibility came up. In such a crisis as the present, public attention is concentrated on a citizen who has lived many years among us. He has never sought aggrandizement, but has taken an active and honorable interest in public affairs. A Spartan in honesty and possessing principles of the most incorruptible nature, he will be true to every trust and he is the man for the hour." Gen. Barnes, in closing, expressed the hope that the administration of public affairs in Brooklyn might become honest, pure, and above suspicion. His remarks were loudly applauded.

The Secretary read the following resolutions, which were warmly applauded by the audience. The name of the Hon. Ripley Ropes was received with tumultuous applause:

*Whereas*, The Mayor to be elected by the citizens of Brooklyn on the 8th of November next will have the absolute power of appointing all heads of departments, except the Controller and the Auditor, also all Assessors and members of the Board of Education as their terms expire; and

*Whereas*, With this power, untrammelled by the necessity of seeking confirmation at the hands of the Board of Aldermen, the Mayor can give practical shape to the whole administration of City affairs; therefore

*Resolved*, That the welfare of the tax-payers, the development of our manufacturing and business interests, and the prosperity of the whole community, the poor and the rich alike, demand at this crisis the election, as Mayor of Brooklyn, of a man who shall take his seat free from obligations to political leaders, in order that, as Mayor, he may be free to administer his great trust in the interest of the people; and

*Resolved*, That this meeting sees in the Hon. Ripley Ropes the man in our community best qualified in this emergency for the Mayor's office; a man at once acquainted with city affairs and in all local matters free from the trammels of party machinery; a man of sound common sense, of good business judgment, of spotless integrity, and of unflinching courage, and we, therefore, commend to our fellow-citizens without distinction of party the Hon. Ripley Ropes as the citizens' choice for candidate for the office of Mayor.

After the adoption of the resolutions Gen. Barnes introduced the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, who as he stepped forward to speak was greeted with an unusually enthusiastic burst of applause, which continued several moments. When the demonstration had subsided Mr. Beecher, referring to his introduction as "a clergyman," said, with a smile, that he came forward not as a clergyman, but as a citizen, to show the affection he felt for all that pertained to the welfare and success of the city, and to exemplify his belief that it was the duty of citizens to meet together as counselors to secure good government. I trust, said he, that the presence of ladies here is but a harbinger of that time when mothers will attend such assemblies as this to hear what the speakers have to say to their voting sons. The assemblage of the evening, he considered, was not so much an illustration of party fervor as the expression of a personal interest on the part of citizens, irrespective of party, in the welfare and prosperity of their city. It shows, he continued, that the people are united in the demand, "Give us the best, the very best, man for the position." True Republicans and true Democrats seem to be united, and it is a wholesome thing for parties sometimes to coalesce, and have what, if I understood the game of cards, I should call a "new deal." To my mind this city deserves such service at our hands. We have a population larger than that of many States in the Union. Brooklyn, as a fair estimate, has probably 600,000 people. And we have not seen its best days either. It is a city not ignoble for its moral and intellectual development, for the beauty of its public buildings, and for its schools and churches. It is further spread over a territory peculiarly adapted for the construction of palatial residences, fine avenues, and other ornaments to the Commonwealth, and I regard the day as not far distant when it will rank second to none in intelligence, good order, and wealth. And if New-York will enter into competition with us as to which shall be the best governed and noblest city of the two, I think it will be a grand and beneficial rivalry. It may occur to many that such movements as this revolutionize parties. Parties exist at mutual guardians of the people's interests, and their existence depends on organization, and organization necessitates a "machine." An organization without a machine is like an army without organization. There should be a "machine" to keep the party in order, and if there is a machine, of course there must be men to run it. But the tendencies of all power is, as we know, to lose sight of the end of all government and concentrate all thoughts upon governing, and the continuance in control of the same men from year to year has the same demoralizing effects in its tendencies as grow up under an imperial or monarchical system of government. It makes men selfish, and overbearing, and despotic. No machine, therefore, should exist except in this tempering atmosphere of the people themselves. Two methods suggest themselves as likely to be successful in attaining this end. Where the machine has set up candidates selected simply for personal and partisan reasons, when we know managers will dicker and bargain, it is the right of the Commonwealth to set aside all caucuses and call their own candidates out of their own ranks, saying, "We want you whether you want us or not." I believe, in short, in the doctrine of election in a sense John Calvin never dreamed of. When it becomes known that if the politicians do not nominate candidates who shall be selected for their fitness, and not for selfish and partisan purposes, the people themselves will make the nominations. I believe that that knowledge will have such a restraining effect upon the politicians that I do not despair of seeing within the bounds of the millennium a pure administration of public business. What is there in the 20 men who now govern us that renders them better able than ourselves to govern us? It is our right. We have never given it up. It is our right to rise, as a body of citizens, and say to the politicians, "appoint the men we want or we will break your machine." And when the politicians protest that we revolutionize and destroy the party in doing so, we will reply, conduct yourselves as you ought and we won't destroy you. The duty of a citizen does not end with the casting of his vote. I have heard it said that I held that the discharge of the duty of a citizen was next to godliness. Why, I believe it to be a part of godliness, and when we pray "Our Father who art in heaven," I think we should pray also "Our Father and our Fatherland." A citizen's duty to that Fatherland is part of his duty to his God. When the need comes for such action, as it has now, there ought to be tumultuous uprisings of the people to dictate to the machine what they want and who they want. I would, in short, have public matters so conducted that the people shall discipline all party movements which are operated by the machine, and have the public sentiment so omnipotent as to control the excesses of that machine and direct the manner in which it shall work. The politicians may be the engineers, if you will, but you must make them feel that you are the Captain. By this course we may reach the ideal of true democratic government. It will be, in truth, the government of the people, for the people, and by the people. This new system of government which is to be begun after the coming election is one which ought to be tried. I believe in concentrated responsibility for the sake of accountability. Let us select the man we want, give him the instruments he needs in his work, and hold him responsible for what he does. Why, it is as much as a man's life is worth

now to find out who is responsible in Brooklyn municipal government. It is like the doctors who know that a patient is sick, but don't know where the seat of his disease rests. Under the new charter we shall know who is responsible and where to lay the blame when things go wrong. The whole matter is reduced to a nutshell and to that simplicity, unity, and accountability that we have heretofore always lacked and always needed. The duty of the new Mayor will be to sweep out the departments and to tell the delinquent public servants to go. Here Mr. Beecher pleaded eloquently for the extension of the schools, as the poor man's own institutions, and, referring to the recent defalcations in the Board of Education, he declared the new Mayor would find this department was one which particularly needed to be locked into and cleansed. But there were other departments where investigation and reform were necessary, and the people should make strong efforts to amend them. Mr. Beecher next eulogized Mr. Ropes in glowing terms as an honest, capable, sagacious man and patriotic citizen, and in a powerful appeal declared that if Mr. Ropes should be the man whom the people of Brooklyn shall ask the convention to nominate for Mayor, whoever divided or split asunder the unity of public opinion put upon himself a responsibility which he (Mr. Beecher) should not like to carry. And when the time came and the voice of the Commonwealth shall be heard, it was his design to vote for that man whom the people shall call. The time had come, to the speaker's mind, to attend to these things on business principles. They wanted the right man in the right place. An eloquent peroration brought to a close the speech, which was hailed with a great burst of enthusiastic applause.

Mr. Sigismund Kaufmann was next introduced. He said: When such a popular uprising of citizens occurs as the present one, the machine politicians may well be alarmed. The gentleman proposed for Mayor by the independent Republican citizens of Brooklyn is very objectionable to the "machine" because he is incorruptible and cannot be managed in the interests of any clique or faction. Mr. Ropes, the speaker said, never had manipulated any primaries, and had never made any political bargains, and he was not the kind of a man to make any bargains if he should chance to be elevated to the Mayoralty. The people alone were to blame for the corruption that existed in both parties, and the speaker regarded that large audience as an indication that the better class of people were determined to secure a reform. He was not in favor of dictating to the regular convention of either of the parties, but he believed that if the people became thoroughly aroused in behalf of the movement in Mr. Ropes's favor, the Republican convention would be influenced to nominate him by acclamation. The Republicans of Brooklyn do not want a Mayor elected by their votes to go into office as an exponent of the cohesive power of public plunder, but rather as the embodiment of all that is honest and upright. In conclusion, the speaker formally nominated the Hon. Ripley Ropes for Mayor of Brooklyn. The nomination was received with enthusiastic applause.

Mr. William H. Fleeman, in seconding the nomination, said that he had been with the Hon. Ripley Ropes in public affairs, and had watched him in his efforts to purify local politics. The speaker knew that Mr. Ropes was a man in every way qualified to discharge the duties of the important office of Mayor, and he hailed it as a good omen that there should be a popular movement in favor of such a man. He warmly seconded Mr. Kaufmann's motion, which was put by Gen. Barnes, and carried unanimously.

Mr. John A. Taylor, Commissioner of Elections in Brooklyn, moved that a committee of three be appointed to notify Mr. Ropes of his nomination. The motion prevailed, and Messrs. Kaufmann, Oliver, and Coombs were appointed as such a committee. They at once retired in quest of Mr. Ropes. Mr. Taylor made a stirring speech in favor of the candidacy of Mr. Ropes. He said that he appeared before the audience as an office-holder, but he held that the duties of citizenship were greater than the duties of a politician to his particular organization. He believed that there was a strong feeling in favor of the selection of the Hon. Ripley Ropes as Mayor, and he felt certain that if the latter would consent to become a candidate he could be elected by an overwhelming majority.

After music by the orchestra, Gen. Barnes called attention to the fact that there were several well-known Democrats in the audience, and he cordially welcomed them to participation in the movement in favor of Mr. Ropes. He then introduced Gen. John B. Woodward. The latter said it was true that he was a Democrat, but he did not attend the meeting as a Democrat. He was there as a citizen and a tax-payer, and he was deeply interested in the cause of reform in the municipal government. Under the new charter the machinery of the Brooklyn City Government was likely to be very much changed, and it was essential that a good man should be selected to start that new machinery right and run it right. Gen. Woodward thought that the Hon. Ripley Ropes was just the man to take charge of affairs at this crisis, and while he did not propose to cease to be a Democrat, he was willing to pledge his support to any movement designed to place Mr. Ropes in the Mayor's chair.

While the orchestra was playing another selection the Hon. Mr. Ropes entered the hall in company with the committee and Senator Schroeder. When their presence became known the entire audience arose and cheered lustily, and the band changed its music to "Hail to the Chief." Gen. Barnes shook hands with Mr. Ropes, and, turning to Senator Schroeder, requested him to introduce "the next Mayor of Brooklyn" to the audience. Senator Schroeder, in complying with this request, said he was satisfied that if Mr. Ropes would consent to be an independent candidate for Mayor, he would be elected in spite of all machines. It was some time before the applause subsided sufficiently to enable Mr. Ropes to address the meeting. He then said: This is indeed an inspiring occasion, and it has a significant meaning. It is an omen that the people are becoming aroused to their rights and duties as citizens. The redemption of public morals rests alone with the people. Every man should learn well the lesson that there are certain duties of citizenship which should be performed at any sacrifice. The speaker had hoped that another than himself might be selected to lead this movement. There were many others, he said, who were abler and better fitted than himself. [Numerous cries of "No! no! no!"] He had privately asserted his wish to be exempted from the prominent place in this movement that had been tendered him, but his sense of duty had finally prevailed, and he could not disregard the tremendous appeal from his fellow-citizens. He would accept their trust. [Loud and prolonged applause.] If he was elected to the important office of Mayor he would endeavor to discharge his duty with an eye single to the interests of the public. The people who were assembled before him also had a great duty to perform, and they should not grow weary in their work. The success of this people's movement rested entirely with the people themselves. Their efforts were the only means of securing positive success. The brief speech of Mr. Ropes was rapturously applauded, and at its close hundreds pressed forward to clasp his hand and congratulate him. Just prior to the adjournment of the meeting committees were appointed by the Chair as follows:

Finance.—D. H. Houghaling, C. T. Christensen, W. A. White, John F. Frothingham, and Seth Low.

Campaign.—Alexander Forman, John B. Woodward, John A. Taylor, George E. Fisher, W. H. Freeman.

To Notify the Republican City Convention of Mr. Ropes's Nomination.—John J. Van Nostrand, L. S. Burnham, and S. D. Luryea.

To Notify the Democratic Convention of Same.—John B. Woodward, John T. Martin, and Jeremiah P. Robinson.