

our record of the war, has been made to me, and will be duly submitted for your inspection. I recommend that this valuable document be printed and a sufficient number of copies ordered to supply all proper demands. The affairs of this office, from the beginning of the late war to the present time, have been conducted with distinguished ability, and have reflected great credit upon the officer in charge.

CONCLUSION.

Other subjects I might have presented, but space will not permit. What has been omitted, however, your individual intelligence and collective wisdom will readily supply.

Accepting this high office at a critical juncture in public affairs, the duties which devolved upon me were grave and difficult. In the discharge of these duties I have endeavored to advance the public welfare, and my conscience acquits me of any motive incompatible with the honor of the State. Whatever errors may have occurred are mitigated by the reflection, that the State has emerged from its vicissitudes, and enters upon a new period, with its finances and institutions unimpaired, with a name high on the roll of fame, and its people prosperous and contented. With these auspicious omens to cheer us, and no cloud above, the helm passes to another.

In a broader field great events have transpired. The power of treason has been crushed, although its spirit still lingers in the land. Freedom has been exalted, and a gigantic nation redeemed. From shore to shore of the great Oceans, from the Lakes to the Gulf, strong arms and resolute hearts are uniting to strengthen the institutions of liberty and perpetuate a government which their valor and blood have defended.

Will this nation pause at the threshold of destiny, and forget its noble army of martyrs? Shall the progress of the revolution started amid the carnage of war and the agonies of men, be thwarted by a perfidious arm? Iowa answers, with a voice emphatic as the thunder of her guns: No!—NEVER! NEVER!

As there is but one Throne before which all can bow, so may there exist but one form of government for all, extending its blessings, under the providence of God, until they encircle the whole brotherhood of man.

WILLIAM M. STONE.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

HON. SAMUEL MERRILL,

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF IOWA,

TO

BOTH BRANCHES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

TWELFTH SESSION,

JANUARY, 1868.

DES MOINES:
F. W. PALMER, STATE PRINTER,
1868.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives:

With gratitude to the people of Iowa for an election to the responsible office of chief magistrate of the State, I appear before you to take the solemn obligations prescribed by the Constitution, and to give assurance of fidelity to the interests of the Commonwealth.

The period in which we meet is distinguished with peculiar favor. The labors of the husbandman have been crowned with plenty; Pestilence and Want have not visited us; a spirit of good will and fraternal regard has prevailed throughout all our borders. Let us gratefully acknowledge the beneficent Author of these blessings and recognize our obligations of obedience and love.

The prospects of our State were never more hopeful. The finances are in a sound and healthful condition. Notwithstanding the heavy burdens of the war, we find ourselves untrammelled with debt and free from exhausting taxation. Our seasons are kindly, and harvests abundant. The useful and mechanic arts have not been neglected in the development of our resources. Never in our history has the spirit of internal improvements exhibited such strength of purpose as to-day, and energy and enterprise are everywhere striving to promote the commercial facilities of the State. Especially is this manifest in the rapid development of our railway communications. In 1859 the number of miles of railway in operation was three hundred and ninety; in 1865 it was seven hundred and ninety-three; while at the present time it can not be less than twelve hundred and as this estimate embraces but a fractional part of chartered lines, we see how hopeful, how full of promise is our future in this particular. The growth of our cities and towns; the spread of our commerce; the multiplication of schools and colleges in our midst, are evidences of a substantial and progressive prosperity.

The representations of the condition of the State in its details by my predecessor have given you a favorable introduction to its varied interests, and I bespeak for his recommendations your careful consideration. To again consider the topics which have been so recently and so well presented would seem unnecessary upon the present occasion. Hereafter I may deem it my duty to invite your attention to some particular subjects of legislation, and therefore I shall be pardoned if I now turn to the more extended field of national affairs.

In the war for preserving the unity of the Republic, the people of Iowa bore a leading and brilliant part. Well may we congratulate ourselves, therefore, that the labors in which we have shared, the sorrows in which we have participated, the hopes and anxieties which we have felt in common with loyal hearts all over the land, have established it upon firmer foundations than ever before. The pernicious dogma of "State Rights" perished with the sword which was drawn in its defense. It is one of the first fruits of victory that we are not a Republic of corporations, but a Republic of the people, and that in questions affecting the interests of all the States, the ultimate arbiters are the people of the United States. While the rights of none are to suffer encroachment, and the prerogatives of each are to be jealously guarded by the power of the whole, the popular will must be the great expounder of the Constitution. The cry has been raised that in establishing and fortifying the powers of the nation, the people are in danger of losing their liberties. History has been cited to show that we are imitating the unhappy policy of other free governments, in which, first the spirit, and then the form, of their institutions perished. But it is forgotten that men have never before attained a freedom worthy of the name, and that if they failed they failed because they were unworthy.

Our own experience has more meaning lessons for us than any examples of former success or ruin. Disclaiming the heresy that the nation is every thing and the State nothing, let us at the same time rejoice that we have established so firmly the paramount sovereignty of the Union over all its parts, that in the hour of great national exigency, we shall never again be compelled to listen to the declaration that "there is no power in the general government to coerce a sovereign State." Centrifugal must yield obedience to centripetal law, or our system perishes. And yet neither can be

spared from the perfection of our theory. With the idea that the authority of the whole is supreme, must be coupled the principle that the States have a sphere of action, limited to be sure, but nevertheless a distinct sphere, which the general government has neither the power nor wish to invade.

To vindicate the integrity of the Union required a large expenditure. Happily for us and for the success of our cause, the credit of the nation was equal to the great emergency which called it into exercise. In times of unprecedented difficulty and when our financial ability seemed the pivotal point of triumph or defeat, it proved an unfailling rock of supply. To maintain that credit constitutes our most sacred duty; and whatever responsibilities it may impose upon us, the highest standard of national good faith will command the verdict of the American people. The citadel of financial honor can not be guarded too sacredly. I should reprobate as the most calamitous of misfortunes any legislation on the part of Congress, tending to invalidate the plighted, or even the fairly implied, faith of the nation.

It has become the conviction of some that a part of the national bonds could be redeemed in currency, without fraud upon the holder.

The advocates of this policy base the righteousness of such redemption upon the fact that the bonds themselves contain no stipulation of payment in specie. A more subtle, insidious, and, at the same time, deadly attack upon the public credit, could not have been made. Apart from the fact that gold is the recognized currency of the world and the standard of value, and that we can not exempt ourselves from the operation of this law, there was, in this instance, an implied understanding with both parties to the covenant, that loans to the Government should be paid in specie. The Secretary of the Treasury placed this interpretation upon the contract at the time the loan was being negotiated. All the cotemporaneous acts and sayings of the men who framed the law are explicit in the assurance that no other intention lurked in the purposes of the Government. The scheme of repaying the public loans in an irredeemable paper issue, was a cunningly devised afterthought—the offspring of a desire to evade the payment of our obligations in accordance with the rules of common honesty.

The ability of the American people to pay the utmost farthing of their indebtedness, the least sanguine have never questioned. At the present ratio of increase, in twenty-five years, our wealth and population will double themselves; in the year 1900 our valuation can not be less than four hundred and fifty billions. Mines are opening, farms multiplying and property increasing upon the inventory faster than in any other nation on the globe.

In the very face of this unquestioned ability, we are met by the fact that no civilized nation pays so high premiums upon its loans as ours.

Where are we to look for the grounds of this humiliation? In part, perhaps, to the sophistries which have been promulgated for evading the spirit of our obligations, and in part to our delay in the resumption of specie payments.

Disclaiming to represent the opinions of others, I would urge the authoritative announcement of some definite time when such resumption shall take place. Let the time be fixed, with the idea that the earliest possible moment will best secure a healthful condition of our finances. I am forced to the conclusion that such a policy would tend to realize in our circulation the perfect currency, in which notes could be exchanged for coin and would command equal respect in the markets.

Meanwhile the public service should be distinguished for the most rigid economy. The increase of money has deluded us with the erection of *apparent* wealth, and in the train of this delusion have followed extravagance and lavish expenditure. Let us then refrain from every outlay which *actual* wealth alone could justify. Economy will promote the public credit, better than the ripest theory. Retrenchment is the evidence of an honest purpose to meet our obligations. Faith in the intention of the Government to preserve both the form and spirit of its contracts inviolate is the only foundation for our financial prosperity. Beware of the earliest steps tending to weaken or impair it.

The downfall of the rebellion did not terminate the danger arising from the action of the Southern people. Where the appeal to arms was ended, the task of statesmanship began, and an experience of

two years has demonstrated that it is a work quite as full of difficulty as that which we crowned with success upon the field. Let us not forget that we have merely ascended to another scene in the struggle. It has passed from the battle-field to the forum, but it is the same combat, waged for the same purposes, and animated by the same ambition. The spirit of the rebellion is still alive and strong; strong in the influence of its controlling minds; strong in the devotion and numbers of its followers; strong in the social distinctions which gave it birth. The hope that forbearance and healthful reflection would soon baptize its votaries into loyalty and love for the national flag has been disappointed.

In the light of this fact our government has devised a plan of reconstruction, establishing a temporary military government in the South, to remain until its people shall ask for admission to the councils of the nation upon the basis of equal rights and political equality.

In this policy I heartily concur. Power undoubted and plenary is in our hands to prescribe the terms of restoration. When it is urged then, that the application of military law to the refractory people of the South is despotic, it is forgotten that an appeal to arms involves a compliance with its bloody decision.

They who, with long years of intrigue, boastfully and arrogantly, challenged the nation to the sanguinary field, empowered us to work our will upon them, restrained only by our duties as statesmen and Christian men. To deny this principle, severe though it be, would be to deny the correctness both of history and reason. To declare that its adoption in the present instance is impolitic and unnecessary, would be to set the seal of untruth upon every report that reaches us from that misguided people, and brand with falsehood the utterances of tried lovers of our Republic. No government can secure respect at home or abroad, which does not protect its citizens.

The magnanimity of the American Republic in dealing with treason is unparalleled in history. Its spirit was declared in the words of its noblest martyr, "Malice towards none; charity for all." Indemnity for the past has been forgotten in the task of

erecting guarantees for the future. Content with establishing barriers against probable danger, busied with the work of compacting and solidifying the principles revealed by the war, the sword of the law has been withheld from its deserving sacrifices, and the sacred altar of Justice will probably not be stained with the blood of a single victim. To what extent this may have been questionable leniency, I will not presume to say. How far the legal and traditional punishment for treason should have been extended, patriotic men may well have differed in determining. That some retribution should have been visited upon the wicked chiefs, a punishment sufficient to have made "treason odious," and to have stood as a warning monument of the danger of like unhallowed ambition, I have no hesitation to declare.

Deprecating the arrogance of victory we have accepted our responsibilities with no desire to be vindictive or exacting. The consciousness that the Southern States were a part of our own territory, and their inhabitants a part of our own people, whose well-being must contribute to the future glory of our country, has been the light in which the work of reconstruction has thus far progressed. At the same time, we have felt bound to insist that those States should concede whatever guarantees are essential to the future safety of the Union. We can not permit the truths established by the war to relapse into a state of doubt, nor the fruits of victory to be swallowed up in a magnanimity which neglects its own salvation. We can afford to be generous, but we must not be unjust.

In restoring the Southern people to rights within the Union, let no discrimination be made against the black man. Fidelity to the Government should be a passport to the high privilege of suffrage. The public welfare must not be imperiled by entrusting its control to hands of doubtful loyalty, much less to hands whose open hostility has only been avoided by their weakness. If any voice comes from the tomb of the past six years, it proclaims: *Beware of placing doubtful guardians over the palladium of your liberties. Secure the safety of the government beyond a doubt. Let all loyal men share in the heritage which has been purchased with loyal blood.* The caprice of men fresh from their carnival of treason must not be allowed to

deprive us of the co-operation of four millions of people whose votes and acts would interpose the most formidable obstacle to the designs of seditious men. To refuse to stay up the hands of the Union men of the South, who resisted secession in its inception, and maintained their opposition to it, through all the trying extremities of war, by making the alliance of the black man available, would be as ungrateful to them as perilous to ourselves.

The theory of our government awards to the individual the largest measure of political trust consistent with the public safety. It declares that "Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Consistency, therefore, requires that emancipation should be followed by the right of suffrage, for equality is a cardinal principle of the American Constitution.

To the negro himself the ballot is a necessity. Without it freedom will be to him an undefended fortress. Give him a vote and you at once invest him with a panoply which his recent owner will have neither the power nor wish to assail. The sentiment of mankind will approve such a policy, and our justice will be repaid by the presence of a loyal army of defenders of our Constitution in every Southern State.

Many profess to see danger from this extension of the elective franchise. In these apprehensions I have no share. Away with distrust of a people who braved the lash and bloodhound to shelter the soldier of the Union, or guide him to the protection of his flag! Let their ignorance be forgotten in the remembrance that it never beguiled them into the subtleties where Refinement fell. The solemn responsibilities of suffrage can be as safely entrusted to the heroes who charged at Fort Wagner and Port Hudson as to the cultured aristocracy who raised the flag of rebellion at the behests of personal ambition. An honest instinct is worthier than a perverted intelligence. Entitled to our gratitude for their unwavering attachment to the national cause, and for the heroic courage they contributed to its defense, and challenging our respect for their judicious use of the privileges of freedom, let us invite them to share in the blessings which they have helped preserve.

Our own State has already taken the initiatory steps toward the abolition of all distinction of race and color from the Constitution. Let us not fail at this session to advance the work inaugurated by our predecessors, of giving to our colored population the enjoyment of those political privileges which have hitherto been denied to them. They have demonstrated their manhood in the stern realities of war, and in this enlightened Commonwealth no longer let any prerogative of manhood be denied to man. That others falter and cower before the seeming difficulties of this measure, should be no discouragement to us. Let us not emulate their cowardice nor share in their dishonor. Let the alacrity with which we concede the privilege equal the readiness with which we gave them our flag and sent them forth to fight our battles. Let those who nobly volunteered and gallantly defended the flag of the Union—who stood between the foe and our heritage of a common country never have cause to charge Iowa with lack of courage to do justice to her colored soldiers and residents.

Gentlemen of the Assembly: I can not neglect the opportunity to congratulate you upon the favorable auspices under which you enter upon your duties. War with its stern necessities no longer trenches upon the industrial interests of the State. While these responsibilities have ceased with the overthrow of the rebellion, other and more substantial fields invite your effort. Our State is yet in its early manhood. But twenty-nine years have elapsed since the first law-making body of the "New Purchase" assembled in a sister city. Hardly a single generation has passed away, since the few scattered colonies upon the banks of the Mississippi, whose abiding faith in the future seemed even then to foreshadow the glorious reality, have grown to the vigor and strength of an inland empire. The achievements of the past will be succeeded by other advances, no less wonderful. Her sons are but the pioneers of the millions who shall yet find a home on her prairies. The abundant harvests upon which we now congratulate ourselves, are but an earnest of the marvelous resources of a region, richer even than our thought or hope.

The eye of discovery has revealed the presence of a variety of mineral wealth whose possibilities may prove a great reservoir of power

for the demands of civilization. The streams which divide its surface must be made to roll the wheels of machinery and mould the products of our care into the fabrics of trade. Regions hitherto undeveloped are to be bound to our commercial centres by links of railway communication. Worthy industries are to be encouraged and internal improvements of every kind zealously promoted by the judicious patronage of the State.

Let it be our boast and pride that we fear nothing so much as ignorance and artificial distinctions between man and man. Let us establish our power firmly upon the foundations of intelligence and liberal ideas, making manhood our only title of nobility, and believing in nothing so hopefully as an educated public opinion.

But one-sixth of our lands are yet enclosed. Our hopes for the settlement of the millions of acres whose wealth is yet in reserve are largely affected by the character of our institutions. Immigration gravitates toward social order, free schools and equal laws. Our population is largely enriched every year by the tide which reaches us from other and less favored lands. They seek, under the beneficent patronage of our institutions, their privileges as farmers, mechanics, merchants and professional men—transplanting to our soil that love of liberty which impelled them from their old homes. We have nothing to fear from their presence. The sturdiest defenders of freedom are those who have felt its loss.

In the guardianship of the sacred trust which has been reposed in us, the good of the State should be our ruling motive. A just sense of our responsibilities will forbid us to harbor the spirit of partizanship or balance the claims of section or party against the good of the whole. However cherished may be our political convictions, let us remember that we are not the representatives of particular interests or favored classes, but are the servants of the whole people, and that, in our keeping, the rights of majority and minority should be equally sacred.

Full of hope in the future of our State, whose past has been so favored of Providence, and whose present is so rich in prosperity,

let us apply ourselves with zeal and fidelity to the advancement of her interests. If we should not summon to our aid the wisdom of statesmanship, let us, at least, meet our responsibilities with faithfulness, integrity and earnest devotion to the Commonwealth; and may the God of Wisdom and Justice guide us in His own appointed ways.

SAMUEL MERRILL.