

THE INAUGURATION.

WASHINGTON, Wednesday,
March 4, 1857.

The procession started for the capitol about noon. It was very long and presented a beautiful appearance. The military of the district and our community were fully represented.

Messrs. Buchanan and Breckinridge rode in an open carriage, surrounded by the Keystone Club, preceded by the military and a representation by a lady of the goddess of Liberty mounted on a high platform, drawn by six horses, and followed by a model of a ship of war of considerable size, made by the mechanics of the Washington navy yard.

Then followed the various clubs, engine companies, &c.

Mr. Buchanan reached the capitol about 1 p.m., and proceeded to deliver his inaugural address.

The crowd was tremendous, and the cheering very enthusiastic.

Twenty-four military companies, seven clubs and associations, and several fire companies participated in the procession.

The oath was administered to Mr. Buchanan after the reading of the inaugural.

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Fellow Citizens: I appear before you this day to take the solemn oath that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. In entering upon this great office, I must humbly invoke the God of our fathers for wisdom and firmness to execute its high and responsible duties in such a manner as to restore harmony and the ancient friendship among the people of the several States, and to preserve our free institutions throughout many generations.

Convinced that I owe my election to the inherent love for the Constitution and the Union which still animates the hearts of the American people, let me earnestly ask their powerful support in sustaining all just measures calculated to perpetuate these, the richest political blessings which Heaven has ever bestowed upon any nation.

Having determined not to become a candidate for re-election, I shall have no motive to influence my conduct in administering the government except faithfully to serve my country and to live in the grateful memory of my countrymen.

We have recently passed through a presidential contest in which the passions of our fellow citizens were excited to the highest degree by questions of deep and vital importance; but when the people proclaimed their will, the tempest at once subsided, and all was calm. The voice of the majority, speaking in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, was heard, and instant submission followed. Our own country could alone have exhibited so grand and striking a spectacle of the capacity of man for self-government.

What a happy conception, then, was it for Congress to apply this simple rule, that the will of the majority shall govern to the settlement of the question of domestic slavery in the Territories! Congress is neither to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom; but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States as a natural consequence. Congress has also prescribed that when the Territory of Kansas shall be admitted as a State, it shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission.

A different opinion has arisen in regard to the time when a people of a Territory shall decide this question for themselves. This is happily a matter of but little practical importance, and beside, it is a judicial question, which legitimately belongs to the supreme court of the United States, before whom it is now pending, and will, it is understood, be speedily and finally settled. To their decision, in common with all good citizens, I shall cheerfully submit, whatever this may be, though it has been my individual opinion that under the Nebraska-Kansas act the appropriate period will be when the number of actual residents in the Territories shall justify the formation of a constitution with a view to its admission as a State into the Union.

But, be this as it may, it is the imperative and indispensable duty of the government of the United States to secure to every resident inhabitant the free and independent expression of his opinion by his vote. This sacred right of each individual must be preserved. This being accomplished, nothing can be fairer than to leave the people of a territory free from all foreign interference to decide their own destiny for themselves, subject only to the Constitution of the United States.

The whole territorial question being thus settled upon the principle of popular sovereignty—a principle as ancient as free government itself—every thing of a practical nature has been decided, and no other question remains for adjustment, because all agree that under the Constitution slavery in the States is beyond the reach of any human power, except that of the respective States themselves where it exists. May we not then hope that the long agitation on this subject is approaching its end, and that the geographical parties to which it has given birth, so much dreaded by the father of his country, will speedily become extinct?

Most happy will it be for the country when the public mind shall be diverted from this question to others of more pressing and practical importance. Throughout the whole pro-

gress of this agitation, which has scarcely known any intermission for more than twenty years, while it has been productive of no positive good to any human being, it has been the prolific source of great evils to the master, to the slave and to the whole country; it has alienated and estranged the people of the sister States from each other, and has even seriously endangered the very existence of the Union. Nor has the danger yet entirely ceased. Under our system there is a remedy for all mere political evils in the sound sense and sober judgment of the people.

Time is a great corrective. The political subjects which but a few years ago exasperated the public mind have passed away and are nearly forgotten; but this question of domestic slavery is of far greater importance than any mere political question, because, should the agitation continue, it may eventually endanger the personal safety of a large portion of our countrymen where the institution exists.

In that event, no form of government, however productive of material benefits, can compensate for the loss of peace and domestic security around the family altar. Let every Union loving man, therefore, exert his best influence to suppress this agitation, which, since the recent legislation of Congress, is without any legitimate object. It is an evil of the times that men have undertaken to calculate the mere material value of the Union.

Reasoned estimates have been presented of the pecuniary profits and local advantages which would result to different States and sections from its dissolution, and of the comparative injuries which such an event would inflict on other States and sections. Even descending to this low and narrow view of the mighty question, all such calculations are at fault. The bare reference to a single consideration will be conclusive on this point.

We at present enjoy a free trade throughout our extensive and expansive country, such as the world never witnessed. This trade is conducted on railroads and canals, on noble rivers and arms of the sea, which bind together the north and the south, the east and the west of our confederacy. Annihilate this trade, arrest its free progress by the geographical lines of jealous and hostile States, and you destroy the prosperity and onward march of the whole and every part, and involve all in one common ruin.

But such considerations, important as they are in themselves, sink into insignificance when we reflect on the terrific evils which would result from disunion to every portion of the confederacy—to the North not more than to the South, to the East not more than to the West. These I shall not attempt to portray, because I feel an humble confidence that the kind Providence which inspired our fathers with wisdom to frame the most perfect form of government and union ever devised by man, will not suffer it to perish until it shall have been peacefully instrumental, by its example, in the extension of civil and religious liberty throughout the world.

Next in importance to the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union is the duty of preserving the government free from the taint or even suspicion of corruption. Public virtue is the vital spirit of republics, and history proves that when this has decayed and the love of money has usurped its place, although the forms of free government may remain for a season, the substance has departed for ever.

Our present financial condition is without a parallel in history. No nation has ever before been embarrassed from too large a surplus in its treasury. This almost necessarily gives birth to extravagant legislation. It produces wild schemes of expenditures and begets a race of speculators and jobbers, whose ingenuity is exerted in contriving and promoting expedients to obtain the public money. The party, through its official agents, whether rightfully or wrongfully, is suspected, and the character of the government suffers in the estimation of the people. This is in itself a very great evil.

The natural mode of relief from this embarrassment is to appropriate the surplus in the treasury to great national objects for which a clear warrant can be found in the Constitution. Among these I might mention the extinguishment of the public debt, a reasonable increase of the navy, which is at present inadequate to the protection of our vast tonnage afloat—now greater than that of any other nation, as well as the defence of our extended sea coast. It is beyond all question the true principle that no more revenue ought to be collected from the people than the amount necessary to defray the expenses of a wise, economical and efficient administration of the government.

To reach this point it was necessary to resort to a modification of the tariff, and this has been accomplished in such a manner to do us as little injury as may have been practicable to our domestic manufactures, especially those necessary for the defence of the country. Any discrimination against a particular branch for the purpose of benefiting favored corporations, individuals, or interests, would have been unjust to the rest of the community and inconsistent with that spirit of fairness and equality which ought to govern in the adjustment of a revenue tariff—but the squandering of the public money sinks into comparative insignificance, as a temptation to corruption, when compared with the squandering of the public lands.

No nation in the tide of time has ever been blessed with so rich and noble an inheritance as we enjoy in the public lands. In administering this important trust, while it may be wise to grant portions of them for the improvement of the remainder, yet we should never

forget that it is our cardinal policy to reserve these lands as much as may be for actual settlers, and this at moderate prices.

We shall thus not only best promote the prosperity of the new States, by furnishing them a hardy and independent race of honest and industrious citizens, but shall secure homes for our children and our children's children, as well as for those exiles from foreign shores who may seek in this country to improve their condition and to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty. Such emigrants have done much to promote the growth and prosperity of the country. They have proved faithful both in peace and in war. After becoming citizens, they are entitled, under the Constitution and laws, to be placed on perfect equality with native-born citizens, and in this character they should ever be kindly recognized.

The Federal Constitution is a grant from the State to Congress of certain specific powers, and the question whether this grant shall be liberally or strictly construed, has, more or less, divided political parties from the beginning.

Without entering into the argument, I desire to state at the commencement of my administration, that long experience and observation have convinced me that a strict construction of the powers of the government is the only true as well as the only safe theory of the Constitution.

Whenever, in our past history, doubtful powers have been exercised by Congress, they have never failed to produce injurious and unhappy consequences. Many such instances might be adduced if this were the proper occasion. Neither is it necessary for the public service to strain the language of the Constitution, because all the great and useful powers required for a successful administration of the government, both in peace and in war, have been granted either in express terms or by the plainest implication.

While deeply convinced of these truths, I yet consider it clear that under the war-making power Congress may appropriate money toward the construction of a military road when this is absolutely necessary for the defence of any State or Territory of the Union against foreign invasion.

Under the Constitution Congress has power to declare war, to raise and support armies, to provide and maintain a navy, and to call forth the militia to repel invasion. Thus endowed in an ample manner with the war-making power, the corresponding duty is required that the United States shall protect each of them (the States) against invasion. How is it possible to afford this protection to California and our Pacific possession except by a military road through the territory of the United States, over which men and munitions of war may be speedily transported from the Atlantic States to meet and repel the invader?

In case of a war with a naval power much stronger than our own, we should then have no other available access to the Pacific coast, because such a power would instantly close the route across the isthmus of Central America. It is impossible to conceive that while the Constitution has expressly required Congress to defend all the States, it should yet deny to them by any fair construction the only possible means by which one of these States can be defended.

Beside, the government, ever since its origin, has been in the constant practice of constructing military roads. It might also be wise to consider whether the love for the Union which now animates our fellow citizens on the Pacific coast may not be impaired by our neglect or refusal to provide for them, in their remote and isolated condition, the only means by which the power of the States on this side of the Rocky Mountains can reach them in sufficient time to protect them against invasion.

I forbear, for the present, from expressing an opinion as to the wisest and most economical mode in which the government can lend its aid in accomplishing this great and necessary work. I believe that many difficulties in the way, which now appear formidable, will, in a great degree, vanish as soon as the nearest and best route shall have been satisfactorily ascertained.

It may be right that, on this occasion, I should make some brief remarks as to our rights and duties as a member of the great family of nations. In our intercourse with them there are some plain principles, approved by our own experience, from which we should never depart. We ought to cultivate peace, commerce and friendship with all nations, and this not merely as the best means of promoting our own national interest, but in a spirit of Christian benevolence toward fellow men wherever their lot may be cast. Our diplomacy should be direct and frank, neither seeking to obtain more, nor accepting less, than is our due.

We ought to cherish a sacred regard for the independence of all nations, and never attempt to interfere in the domestic concerns of any, unless this shall be imperatively required by the great law of self preservation. To avoid entangling alliances has been a maxim of our policy ever since the days of Washington, and its wisdom no one will attempt to dispute. In short, we ought to do justice in a kindly spirit to all nations, and require justice from them in return.

It is our glory that while other nations have extended their dominions by the sword, we have never acquired any territory except by fair purchase, or, as in the case of Texas, by the voluntary determination of a brave, kindred, and independent people to blend their destinies with our own. Even our acquisitions from Mexico form no exception. Unwilling to take advantage of the fortune of war against a sister republic, we purchased these posses-

sions under the treaty of peace for a sum which was considered at the time a fair equivalent. Our past history forbids that we shall in the future acquire territory unless this be sanctioned by the laws of justice and honor.

Acting on this principle, no nation will have a right to interfere or to complain if in the progress of events we shall still further extend our possessions. Hitherto, in all our acquisitions, the people under the protection of the American flag have enjoyed civil and religious liberty, as well as equal and just laws, and have been contented, prosperous and happy. Their trade with the rest of the world has rapidly increased, and thus every commercial nation has shared largely in their successful progress.

I shall now proceed to take the oath prescribed by the Constitution, while humbly invoking the blessing of Divine Providence on this great people.

It is Better to Give than to Receive.

"And you strip yourself of comfort for the sake of adding to this merchant's gain?"

The widow replied with a flushed cheek, "It may seem a light thing to you, but the thought that I am slowly and surely wiping every stain from my husband's honor, is my greatest earthly comfort. Mr. Milner is his last creditor, and God willing, every cent shall be paid."

Her coarser relative responded with an emphatic "fiddle-sticks," and angrily left her presence.

"At last I have it," said a silver voice; and a sweet face, glad and brilliant, brightened up the gloom.

"Only see, mother, ten dollars, all my own; ten more makes twenty; so we shall have a nice little sum for Mr. Milner."

Tears trembled on her mother's lashes and glittered on her pale cheek. "It is to be the price of thy life, my precious one," she thought. "Is the canker worm at the heart of my beautiful flower? Must I give thee up to weary toil, a sacrifice upon the altar of duty? Can it be that God requires it?"

Eva knelt at her mother's feet, where she had fallen with all the abandon of a child, her glance fastened to the shining gold.

Lifting her glance, she met that of her mother, full of anxiety, touched with sorrow. A saddened smile broke over her delicate features.

"I was only thinking of the endless things this money would buy—don't look so grave, mamma; such a beauty of a warm shawl for you, and a neat crimson cover for that untidy old arm chair; a bit, ever so little, of carpet to put down by the bed, that your feet might not touch this cold floor, and a pretty cap, besides coal, and tea, and sugar, and such nice, comfortable things, but never mind!"—and she sprang to her feet brushed back her brown curls, and drew on her neat little bonnet—"never mind, I'll may be write a book one of these days, that'll make you and I rich. And dear mother, you shall ride in your own carriage, and may be those that scorn us now, only because we are poor, may be thankful for our notice. A truce to romance," she gravely continued; "stern reality tells me to go directly up to Madison street, find Mr. Milner, give him this twenty dollars, take a receipt, and then come back and read and sing to my mother."

Hurriedly Eva passed from her own home along the narrow streets. As she went onward, street after street diverging into pleasant width and palace-lined splendor. The houses of greatness and wealth glittered in their marble beauty under the golden sunlight. Up broad steps, through portals carved and shining, passed the timid steps of Eva Sterne.

At first the pompous servant smiled a contemptuous denial, but after a moment, perhaps softened by her childish simplicity and winning blue eyes, he deemed it best not to deny her urgency; and she entered this palace of a rich man's home.

Softly her feet sank in the luxurious carpets.—Statuary in bronze and marble lined the way to the staircase. The splendor of the room into which she was ushered seemed to her inexperienced sight too beautiful for use, and he who came in with his kindly glance and handsome face, the noblest perfection of manhood she had ever seen.

"Well, young lady," he said, blandly smiling, "to whom am I indebted for this pleasure?"

"My father, sir, died in your debt," said Eva, blushing and speaking very softly. "By the strictest economy and hard work, my mother and I have been able to pay all his creditors but yourself. If you will be kind enough to receive the balance of your account in small sums—I am sorry they must be so small, sir—we can in the course of a few years fully liquidate the sum, and then—we shall have fulfilled my father's dying wish, that every stain might be wiped from his honor." She paused a moment, and said again, falteringly, "my father was very unfortunate, sir, and broken in health for many years, but, sir, he was honorable; he would have paid the last cent if it had left him a beggar."

Mr. Milner sat awhile, thoughtfully, his dark eyes fastened upon the gentle face before him.—After a moment of silence he raised his head, threw back the mass of curling hair that shadowed his handsome brow, and said:

"I remember your father well. I regretted his death. He was a fine fellow," he added musingly: "but, my dear young lady, have you the means—do you not embarrass yourself by making these payments?"

Eva blushed again, and looking up, ingeniously replied, "I am obliged to work, sir, but no labor would be too arduous that might save the memory of such a father from disgrace."

This she spoke with keen emotion. The rich man turned with a choking in his throat, and tears glistened on his lashes.

Eva timidly held out the two gold pieces; he