

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends and Citizens:* The age in which we live is the most extraordinary in the annals of the world; human knowledge and expanded thought are unequalled in perfection, while the development of mind has scarcely a limit to its wonderful results—the infant of the hour and the child of a day seem pregnant with ideas and impressions worthy of maturer years: and there is no longer a measure to the serene innocence of youth, nor a calculation of the varied phases man may be summoned to pass through before the decades of life; every being has a marked vocation, every tongue a living utility, and every language a wide sphere of action, until the accumulations of science and learning shall exercise a beneficent sway in redeeming and elevating the countless millions of the oppressed.

The events connected with the commemoration of this day form a theme more interesting than any ever enjoyed by us as a people, and in whatever light we contemplate the name of Abraham Lincoln, and the motives of that noble deed which is changing misery into happiness and darkness into light, it must be regarded as a most sublime and magnanimous act, emanating from some power beyond the agency of mortal guidance. Yes! when men and things of the past and present are forgot-

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ten, when reason shall sway her empire over the prejudice and ignorance of the land, and future generations will come along the pathway of time, wondering who to admire, the trials of the *model President* of these United States will brighten the pages of its history, and invoke the universal voice of gratitude around the brilliant achievements of his brief career.

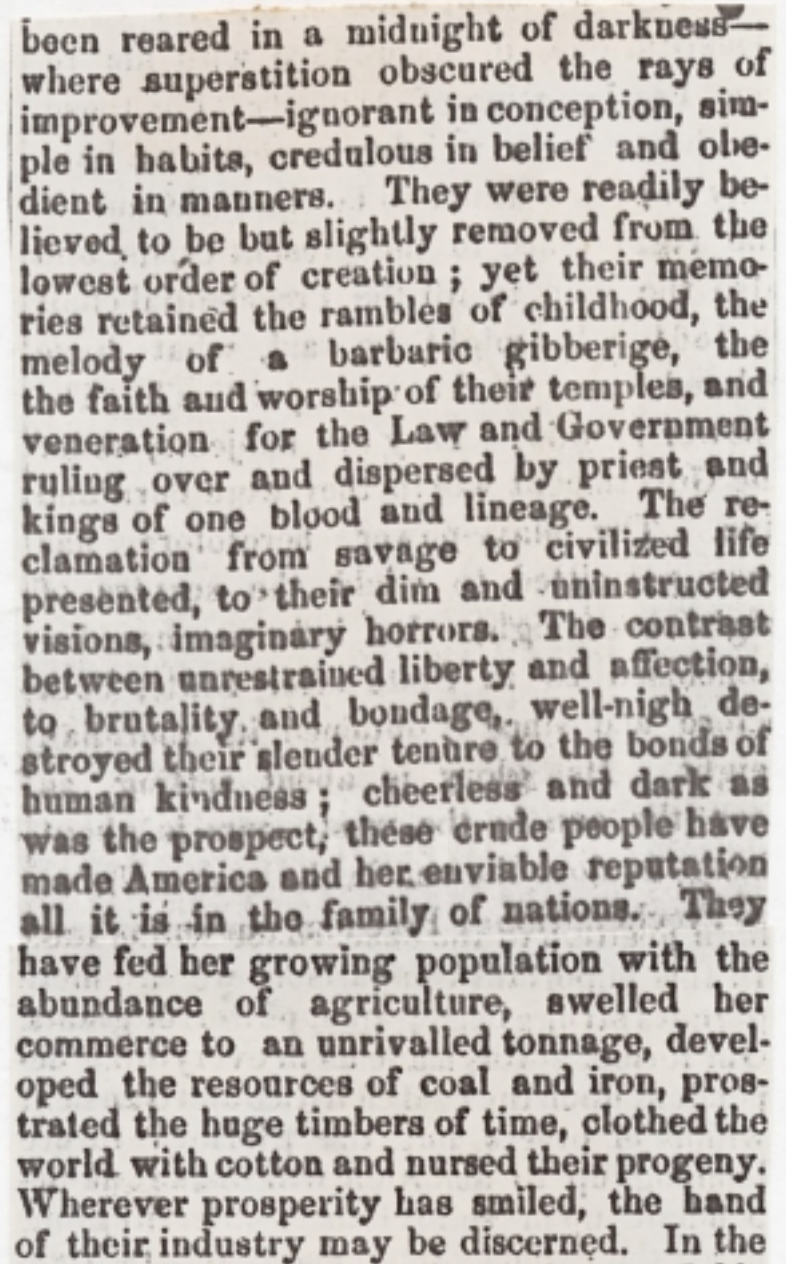
The name of an American is a symbol of perseverance and greatness; within its meaning is involved progress and liberality to all races of men. A few centuries ago, this proud distinction was only rightfully claimed by the rude and unlettered savage. Then this mighty continent was a mere wilderness; its native grandeur and primitive simplicity was only disturbed by the roar of the wild beast and the yell of the warrior; its hidden treasures, entombed in a vast mineral region, had not been penetrated; its fertile fields remained uncultivated. No sordid motives corrupted the poor aborigine's heart; no civilized customs inflamed his ambition; but migration from all parts of the old world soon changed the scene; the strong prevailed over the weak, and made them subservient to their wants, until malaria, combined with climate and toil, rendered all the victims of a common tomb. It was here that reckless cupidity necessitated the presence of the African race. They had

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been reared in a midnight of darkness—where superstition obscured the rays of improvement—ignorant in conception, simple in habits, credulous in belief and obedient in manners. They were readily believed to be but slightly removed from the lowest order of creation; yet their memories retained the rambles of childhood, the melody of a barbaric gibberige, the the faith and worship of their temples, and veneration for the Law and Government ruling over and dispersed by priest and kings of one blood and lineage. The reclamation from savage to civilized life presented, to their dim and uninstructed visions, imaginary horrors. The contrast between unrestrained liberty and affection, to brutality and bondage, well-nigh destroyed their slender tenure to the bonds of human kindness; cheerless and dark as was the prospect, these crude people have made America and her enviable reputation all it is in the family of nations. They have fed her growing population with the abundance of agriculture, swelled her commerce to an unrivalled tonnage, developed the resources of coal and iron, prostrated the huge timbers of time, clothed the world with cotton and nursed their progeny. Wherever prosperity has smiled, the hand of their industry may be discerned. In the



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rice swamps of the Carolinas, the cornfields of Maryland, amongst the tobacco plants of Virginia and Kentucky, no other sinews have furrowed the grounds, and no other tears have moistened the soil. The cotton-gin, the spindle, the knitting-needle, the hoe and plough have been the toys of their care and the alphabets of their tuition.

The American people have committed a great national wrong, and, like other Nations and individuals, are now passing through a scourge, until the transgression is atoned for. They have departed from the maxims that made Plymouth Rock and the Pilgrims memorable; they have disregarded the deeds and ignored the spirit that made the men of '76 known and revered throughout the habitable globe; they invaded the sacred ordinance of '87, and with vandal ferocity mutilated the germs of peace, by endeavoring to blend freedom and slavery together, within the jurisdiction of one people, one language and one Christianity, until the element most despotic has nearly prostrated the vitality of all that was good and beneficial. So aggressive was this fiendish power upon the spirit and design that brought the republic into existence, that immense sacrifices were conceded to appease its anger. Reflective men beheld the danger of the encroachment, but sealed

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their mouths and remained dumb, in the anticipation that the impending peril would be overcome. The transcendent genius and sagacity of the eloquent Clay in 1820, stayed the popular impulse from bursting with volcanic violence, but it was merely a postponement of the eruption. A few years rolled on, and the giant intellect of Webster, so irresistible in argument and so beautiful in illustration, came forth to instruct the masses in a new political orthodoxy, to reveal the marred beauties and inconsistency of the compromise of 1850, and to expound a constitution which had stood the storms of adversity for over 70 years, to this fluttering orb of light nearly dimmed through ambition; it mattered not that humble men, trembling women and helpless babes, had no refuge in the broad land of liberty; it mattered not that the conscience of a free constituency was lulled to sleep; it mattered not that the sanctity of home, which the immortal Burke "declared to be a man's castle," should be violated, but every tie, human and divine, was swept down the vortex of expediency; ministers of religion pondered over the injunctions of the Bible, and strained to prove the antiquity and divinity of slavery. Poetry and song were sought to lend their enchanting charms in palliating an evil, as Dryden prostituted his masterly genius in the por-

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the senses of the laboring masses in their dream of security; the dignity of independence was yielded to the supposed blessings arising from a unity with antagonistic interests; the cohesion of party appellations destroyed all sympathy for the despised negro; every court was open to establish his vassalage; every arm was ready to extinguish the spontaneous gush of freedom, misnamed insurrection; but Harper's Ferry is the Bunker Hill of coming time. The spirit of Attucks will linger around its incidents, and the blood of martyrdom will be purified in the earth by the prayers and deeds of those it was shed to save. A monument, imposing and grand, will yet be reared upon the same spot, at the same hour, and on the anniversary of the same day, to the renown of John Brown, whose immaculate intentions are cherished everywhere.

The great moral and physical revolution which is agitating the fibres of our political system, will accomplish a two-fold object, perhaps never conceived within the brain of man: the emancipation of the white race, from error and prejudice, and the regeneration and elevation of the black, from that debasement the want of intelligent contact has so long entailed. So grand an image could have emanated from no other source but that of a Creator, a God, a Ruler

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of the Universe. When these children of toil were called from nothing into existence, how Christian the spirit and tearful the gratitude with which the boon of freedom was received. No lawless outrages disgraced their actions—no loud acclaims disturbed peaceful neighborhoods. Refined and educated discernment could not have met such rapidity of change with a greater degree of moderation. Despite the rejection they were confronted with from high military officials—despite the inhuman treatment of supposed friends, who with Copperhead tenacity, returned them to slavery and retribution, they continued to pour into their midst with resistless force, offering willing sacrifices to a cause imperfectly understood. Paths through the southern wilderness untrodden by the foot of a white man, were opened to the Union armies in reaching important points, plans and maneuvers, which the rebel presumed beyond a negro's penetration, were conveyed, until all the checkmates and frustrations that afflicted that gigantic power came through the telegraphic wires of human speed and the electricity of human tongues. Small and Tilghman, ignorant of navigation, without the light of nautical skill, fearless of breakers, and uncertain of the consequences that would ensue, may justly be styled the heroes and rear-admirals of the American Navy: wherever the Stars and Stripes have floated over territory, where

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they were once the signals of persecution and distress; though its import was but feintly gleaned, benevolent old matrons and half ragged urchins vied with each other in affording relief and solace to the wounded and dying soldiers[.] When the policy of the Government decided to arm them for the conflict, no conditions were looked for, no reward asked, and no guarantee demanded, but only chance and security to hurl back the oft-repeated falsehood, that the negro's affection indissolubly bound him to the fate and fortunes of their master—when it is remembered that the heroic bravery, witnessed at Port Hudson and Milliken's Bend, proceeded from men long inured to fear and oppression, may it not be inquired what would they accomplish familiarised with the art of warfare, under the benign aspect of freedom. A perplexing problem has been solved; the question no longer arises of what shall be done with the freed man. All along the beautiful and majestic banks of the Mississippi, and upon the inviting plains of the genial South, the negroes are seen sustaining their own manhood, and returning a surplus into the lap of that guardian care, which has assisted, and is now protecting them, upon the neglected and deserted farms of rebeldom, stretched upon the waves of the mighty valley's, away

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The Bible, the Church, and the School-house are the pioneers of civilization; their facility to do good has preceded every element and the most touching feature beheld in their mission is the mingling of aged parents and tender offsprings in the common lessons of childish simplicity.

The future of America is onwards; her work is the elevation of the human race thro'out the universe; having erased wrong and injustice from her own dominions, she can enter upon the great task assigned her, with unabated zeal and conscious rectitude. The march of her reform may disturb existing empires, and necessarily disarrange systems cherished for centuries; but like the advent of Christianity amid the bigotry of Polytheism, established opinion will pass through changes, and, for a long time, the new tenets advanced will be unappreciated, because their teachings will be the universal equality of mankind; but the attitude of our country, as the light and guide of surrounding Governments, avoiding the grandeur

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of antiquity, the vainglory of the modern Era, and restraining the passions of the present, will require every available resource. The conflict of mind and matter will be so vast and enduring, the issue so momentous and striking, that all names, colors, and distinctions will sink into one grand interest. The future condition of the negro will be *essentially* different from that of the *past*: he will henceforth be the defender of his country's *rights* and the protector of her *liberties*,—no longer a serf, cowered down by oppression and disfranchised by prejudice, he will stand *erect* in his own manhood, and enjoy in its integrity all the rights of *citizenship* to which his *humanity* and *patriotism* entitle him: he has shown, by his prowess in the field, his courage and military ability; he has proven his *legislative capacity*, his *loyalty* is proverbial, and his powers of endurance have been tested in slavery, and will continue in the elevated condition of freedom: all such qualities eminently fit him for the position he must hereafter fill, and the grand spectacle of a hundred States, resting upon the pillars of republicanism, recognizing men only for their merit, will verify the contemplation of those iron men who bore the heat and burden of the revolutionary strife.

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bestowed upon the Israelite multitude of Canaan, reminds us of their unhappy failure to be guided by wisdom. In the plenitude of their prosperity, their retrogression is a warning to ourselves: this is the time of the eating of the "Senna and Manna," and with a contrite heart to God and respect for those who have remained steadfast to our cause, another obligation, imperative and essential, is imposed upon us. Wealth and education form the basis of individual and national greatness, the predominant races trace their advancement and high position to the observance of this fact. In this important comparison, we are mere pigmies struggling against powerful giants. Our former status made us in everything dependent upon the cold charities and transient whims of others, but the glorious future looming up to ambition will make us dependent upon self-reliance, intermingling in all the avenues that make others rich, creating identity of interest, however insignificant the calling, and proving the importance of our intercourse in every relation of life, not through arrogance and ignorant assumption, which engender ridicule and contempt, but through bold, manly and respectful demeanor. These things can never be attained so long as our children are cursed by ignorance and poverty. They cannot become equals or assume the condition of rank upon mere pretence, but only

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through the evidence of what they possess. The American people, who constitute the superior class, direct all the money and influence, all the seminaries of learning, all the libraries of literature and art, all the land that is worthy of tillage, all the commerce that sustains and enriches, and all the invention that adorns and instructs. Equality is the uniformity of condition; equal in rank and capacity, it demands rights and privileges without hesitation; no power can tyrannise over it, no combination can restrict its functions; it is beneficial in all its works and reciprocal in its dispensations. Are the masses of the colored people equal to the standard, or will they, through patient toil and determined will, prepare those who are to follow in their footsteps? When mind combats mind of equal ingenuity, and pecuniary independence maintains the dignity of position, there will be no more opposing difficulties to surmount. The man who will hereafter rise among our people, moved by the impulses of humanity, carefully scanning the rise and progress of our race, tracing the causes of their momentary prosperity and sudden downfall, and endeavoring to mould those with whom he is identified with higher aims and nobler aspirations, will himself become a benefactor of the people: such

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was Moses to the Jews, Confucious to the Orientals, Lycurgus to the Athenians, Solon to the Spartans, Numa to the Romans and Jefferson to the Americans. As a people emerging into the broad light of day, we should concentrate and harmonise upon every effort. We cannot control stores and counting-houses, unless there is confidence and support to each other. We can never have ships to waft the rich products of other climes to the enhancement of our own, unless we confide in the honesty of their crews, and take the chances of fortune; we can never have banks to secure our earnings, relieve our wants or augment our wealth, unless we confide in the bolts and bars of its vaults, or the fidelity of its officials. In fact, our whole social system must undergo radical changes, assisting, respecting and depending more upon each other.

The United States present a singular contrast to the other governments of the world, for the enlarged statesmanship and sagacious views of some of her rules. Washington combined the rare qualities of executive, legislative and military capacity; Jefferson penetrated the unrevealed future, and secured the perpetuity of his country's greatness; Adams carried her prosperity to an unexampled height; Madison explored the grandeur of constitutional Law, and unfolded the secret intricacies of

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its logical results; Monroe comprehended the vast designs of European intervention and checked its insatiable grasp; Jackson purified the atmosphere of corruption at home, and imparted its invigoration to other lands, but Abraham Lincoln, comparatively unknown and unheard of, comes to complete the dream of ancestry. The Government, so long prosperous and happy, greets his accession to power; torn by faction, all its machinery infected with treason, the coffers of its treasury depleted through peculation, its powerful navy designedly scattered far and wide, its army disorganized and inefficient, with a large portion of the people jealous and skeptical in regard to his policy, with an oath to administer the functions entrusted for the mutual benefit of all alike, religiously adhering to the compacts and guarantees of the past, ready to compromise and use the force of a great nation in maintaining its institutions intact—still the voice of entreaty was insultingly profaned, and the warning of necessity rashly defied—forced to assume the most stupendous duty ever allotted to man, he enunciates the grand proclamation of freedom, and after extending ample time to “sober second thought,” he determines that an edict, so important to the country and so just to the rights of humanity, shall stand through all time to the

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end of eternity. As if moved by the whisperings of some unseen angel that was wafting the glad tidings to every nook of the earth, and thence upwards to the celestial realms of paradise, he ventures a remuneration, as a partial acknowledgment of the rights of property to loyal men, and invokes the process of Emancipation as the remedy for past calamities and a certainty to future prosperity. While hesitations and doubt delays action, prejudice and ignorance seeks to deter him; he rises like a God above all mortality, and gives force to what has been declared, by investing black men as well as white with the privilege and duty of maintaining the first principles of the Constitution and the Union inviolate. Do any object to this procedure? There are the earnings of a common country to achieve the objects of a common cause[.] The domain of this mighty country, through the expediency of reconstruction, has been conferred upon the genius of anti-slavery; it may blunder in the consummation of what is most desired, but its final triumphs for progress, freedom and equality will be unmistakable, before the admiring gaze of an enlightened world.

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