

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen—

This is a memorable day. At this hour, two years ago, I landed in the Golden State. I then saw the national insignia floating from almost every dome, amid the sound of martial music, the tramp of a thousand men with glistening bayonets, and the roar of cannon. Then my spirit was depressed. I knew the demonstration was not intended to promulgate the principles of liberty and fraternity to our race. Then our citizenship was denied, and our testimony in court against the whites was refused. The bandit could enter our dwellings, despoil us of our property, and murder our wives and children, and we could obtain no redress. Behold how great a change. The law which was a relict of slavery and barbarism has been repealed. The Attorney-General of the U.S. has overthrown the murderous decision of Judge Taney, by restoring to us the boon that is as valuable as life itself. We are now acknowledged American citizens, having rights that the white man is bound to respect. (Applause.)

Let us all thank God that our lives are spared to see the ushering in of this, our national anniversary. It is the first time in the history of our race in this country that we could, with consistency and pleasure, celebrate the 4th of July. We have heretofore enjoyed only rights which the oppressor could not filch from us—that of

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beholding our mother nature, and in looking at the glittering of the stars, breathing the refreshing air of heaven, basking all the day in the beams of the light and life-giving sun, inhaling the balsamic odor of the flowery meadows, cooling our palate at the pure spring of water from the rock, appeasing our hunger with simple nourishment; whilst at our feet runs the murmuring brook shaded by the trees, the feathered songsters of the woods warbling their natural melodies, refreshing sleep delighting us with pleasant dreams, and telling us that life and liberty are still sublime. (Applause.)

Hope is the companion of doubt. Our hope has lead us through the labyrinth of life. Long crushed and down-trodden we still live. We are true to our country and to our destiny. Although broken in fragments, limb torn from limb, and our name cast out as evil, with the iron heel of the oppressor in our hearts, yet we live in a unity of being so close and entire that we will, ere long, baffle the multitudinous power of our enemies, and rousing ourselves like a legion of giants, we will conquer in the final combat. (Applause.)

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very and prejudice against color, and restore to us the inalienable right to life liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (Applause.) It is said that no regiment ever left the State that has received a more hearty "God speed." (Applause.) The chief officers of this regiment are men of wealth and of high position, who have volunteered to accept command. We cannot bestow too great eulogies upon these high-minded, liberty-caring, self-sacrificing men. The regiment embarked on board the steamer. The vessel backed into the stream. The regimental band, stationed on the quarter-deck, played patriotic tunes, and the men cheering with a will, and the majestic bearer of 1200 brave men were soon on their way for Port Royal, where they arrived in safety and in good health. They were cordially received by Maj.-Gen. Hunter, and they will render essential service when called to meet the enemy.

There has been a great change in public opinion since the war commenced. Then we were not allowed to have a word to say in the matter. Now Government is fully committed to the policy of arming colored men. The most experienced and reliable officers have volunteered their services to command our troops. The testimony in favor of negro bravery flashes across the continental wires so fast that we are unable to chronicle but a meagre

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portion of their heroic exploits. Admiral D. Porter's fleet-surgeon, an officer who has always entertained strong Southern feelings, now stationed above Vicksburg, on board the U. S. flag-ship Black Hawk, was recently interrogated to know whether the negro would fight. He answered most emphatically, "Yes." At Fort Hindman, where their storming party was formed, the first man who stepped forward for the scaling ladder was a contraband. (Loud Applause.) All of their spies are negroes. A contraband saved their expedition up Deer Creek. They sewed the dispatches in his cap, and sent him twenty miles for reinforcements; and when the surgeon saw this man, through the smoke of the enemy's fire the next day, and yelling "your people is a coming," He said his opinion of negroes went up five hundred per cent; then, he added, let a man tell me the negro is a coward, and I'll tell him to his face, he lies. (Great Applause.) I have seen enough of slavery, and am an abolitionist of the worst kind. (Applause.)

Colored men have often proved their bravery on the field of battle. Their appearance before the rebels terrifies and excites them with the greatest fear. The prisoners taken at Richmond, La., expressed their joy at being taken by white men, as they expected no quarter from the

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blacks, of whom they stand in the greatest dread since the fight at Millikens' Bend, where our men fought like tigers and would not surrender. (Applause.) I believe our race will ultimately save the Union. The antipathy against us is generally the prejudice of ignorant men, and their influence is fast fading away. I hope we may continue to be needed in the army and navy, until not only the right of bearing arms is conceded to us, but that perfect equality of law is granted to us in all the States of this Union. It will be the work of time. Our car has moved rapidly during the last two years. We have lived to see more than we expected. It is very gratifying to know that we have a Consul-General at Washington. And we have officers, engineers, corps, and surgeons, wearing the shoulder straps, and when Dr. Augustus, who has the rank of Major, was recently assailed in Baltimore by the Plug Uglies, as the white men were two years ago, while they were shot down and none to help them, our officer was defended, even with the order to fire on the first man who assailed him. (Applause.) We are making rapid progress. In the Louisiana regiments, the captains and lieutenants are colored men, and Gen. Butler offered the coloneley to a colored gentleman in New Orleans, who declined, because he was not qualified for the office.

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Colored men will be promoted whenever their ability to command is demonstrated. Colored troops will yet garrison the principal forts in the South, and a new civilization of black men will be planted along the Mississippi. A million of freedmen will settle upon abandoned plantations, and their industry will be protected by these very troops, who will form a line of defence for the whole river, and protect navigation from the hordes of guerillas that have heretofore molested it. They will have a deep interest in doing this, because their own wives and children will be included in the settlement. This will be a just retribution of Providence upon a rebellious race, that have so long oppressed our people. Thank Heaven, this new policy now meets with almost universal approbation.

This may be a long and terrible conflict, exceeding our remotest expectations, but the rebels can never conquer. Our men will fight with the stormy desperation of the ancient Scythians, and they will win as they deserve to do. (Applause.) This is a revolt of oppression against freedom, of tyranny against conscience, of despotic power against an injured and loyal people. The rightfulness of our cause is the beacon-light from which every eye is made glad, with the sublimity of a great principle, and every arm is nerved with a

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strength more enduring than that which is imparted by the fierceness of passion, or the sternness of pride. Our country is struggling for national life. Equal to half a million of volunteers have laid down their lives upon her sacred altar, and her battle-cry startles the world. "Give us liberty or give us death," is sounded through every heart. (Applause.) In the very face of death, more than 50,000 of your brave soldiers have entered the conflict, to march over fields so often hallowed by the blood of the brave. Within a year one-half of our army will consist of negroes, brave and disciplined and successful soldiers. We believe they will lead to victory. (Applause.) And God himself, in the perfect justice of our cause, is pledged for our success. We have a love of country. Our love is enthusiastic, which never slumbers nor wearies, even among the dwellers of more favored climes, where freedom makes her home, and man may live as virtue and duty dictates.

President Lincoln having proclaimed liberty and freedom, broad and unconditional to all that dark dominion of rebellion which our arms are to bring back to the sway of the sovereign rule, we will henceforth in consideration of these God-given rights, celebrate the 1st of January and the 4th of July. (Applause.) This is a new era, and is but the beginning of

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the end. The act and the theory of the Proclamation are sublime. What noble and touching words were uttered by the President, when he said "I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favors of Almighty God to sustain this act." This is the great measure of the age. It will go down to the future greatness of America, and give our chief magistrate an illustrious name throughout the civilized world. He displayed great courage in daring to strike down a canonized wrong for the sake of freedom and the Union. We are hopeful and jubilant. We must now prepare for the greatness of the social and political revolution. The policy of our government will no longer be disfigured and debarred, as it has been, by expositions and judicial decisions delivered in the interest of slavery and prejudice. They will, in future, guard the rights and sustain the freedom of a great nation. Slavery and unjust legislation are as inimical to the white man's liberty as it is to the black man's progress, and in giving freedom to the slave they assure it to the free. The whole force and virtue of freedom is now arranged against the slave power. To the 3,000,000 who have already gained their freedom, hundreds of thousands and perhaps a million more will soon be added. I believe the loyal people of this country will be compelled to destroy the root and

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branch of the monster growth, which has cursed and subverted, by intrigue and corruption, the constitution of a free government.

Our responsibilities and duties as American citizens are increasing. We may soon be permitted to occupy places of trust and emolument that require knowledge and ability. We must become proficient actors in the drama which is being performed. We must tax our utmost powers to place ourselves and our children in a position where they can command respect. Let us engage in employments that will bestow on us manliness and independence. Let us investigate thoroughly, with all possible despatch, the important situations which we may be called to occupy; and remember that on every subject which the limits of human reason can reach, and the loftiest created intellect can fathom, we should seek to aspire. Let every subject, but especially such as concern God's truth and man's destiny, be investigated calmly, with every available help, and with an earnest prayer for light from Heaven.

Our young men must learn to think and act correctly and well, if they desire to be equal to the work which lies ready at their hands. There can be no division of labor here. Every man, as far as he is able, must both think and work. There are great social, moral and political ques-

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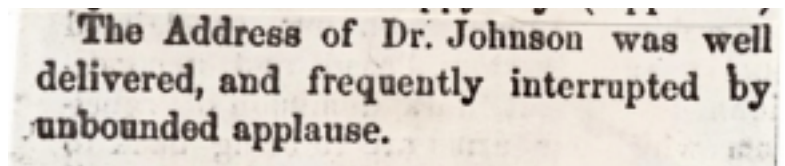
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July 11, 1863
Johnson, E[zra] R.
Pacific Appeal

[The Address of Dr. Johnson was well delivered, and frequently interrupted by unbounded applause.]



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