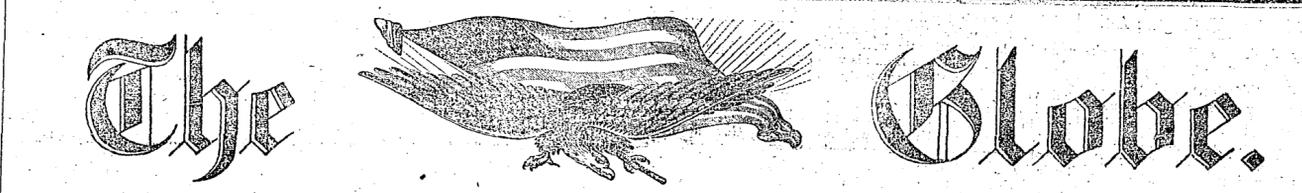


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WILLIAM LEWIS, Editor and Proprietor. —PERSEVERE.— TERMS, \$2.00 a year in advance.

VOL. XXI. HUNTINGDON, PA., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 1866. NO. 36.

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HUNTINGDON, PA.

A HIGHLY IMPORTANT SPEECH BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

He Reiterates his Views on the Reconstruction of the Union.

This Policy Intended to Restore all the States to their Original Relations.—The principal Traitors to be punished.

The following is the speech delivered by the President in Washington, on the 22d of February, 1866.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—For I presume I have a right to address you as such, I come to tender to you my sincere thanks for the approbation expressed by your committee in their report, and in the resolutions submitted by them, as having been adopted by the meeting which has been held in this city to-day. These resolutions, as I understand them, are complimentary to the policy which has been adopted by the Administration, and which has been steadily pursued since it came into power. I am free to say to you on this occasion, that it is extremely gratifying to me to know that so large a portion of my fellow-citizens approve and endorse the policy which has been adopted, and which it is my intention shall be carried out. [Great applause.] The policy which is intended to restore all the States to their original relations to the Federal Government of the U. States. This seems to be a day peculiarly appropriate for such a manifestation.—It is the day that gave birth to that man who, more perhaps than other, founded this Government. It is the day that gave birth to the Father of our Country. It is the day that gave birth to him who presided over that body which framed the Constitution under which all the States entered, and to this glorious Confederacy such a day is peculiarly appropriate for the restoration of a policy whose object is the restoration of the Union, the Father of his Country. [Applause.] Washington, whose name this city bears, is enshrined in the hearts of all who love free government. Washington, in the language of his eulogist, was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen. No people can claim him, no nation can appropriate him. His reputation is commensurate with the civilized world, and his name is the common property of all those who love free government. To-day I had the pleasure of a visit from those persons who have been devoting their efforts to the completion of the monument which is being erected to his name. I was proud to meet them, and so far as I could, to give them my influence and countenance in aid of the work they have undertaken. That monument, which is being erected to him whom I may say founded the Government, is almost within a stone's throw of the spot from which I address you. Let it be completed. [Applause.] Let those various blocks which the States and individuals and associations and corporations have put in that monument as pledges of their love for this Union be preserved, and let the work be accomplished. In this connection, let me refer to the block from my own State, God bless her! which has struggled for the preservation of this Union, in the fields and in the councils of the nation, and which is now struggling to renew her relations with this Government that were interrupted by a fearful rebellion. She is now struggling to restore those relations, and take her stand where she had ever stood since 1790 until this rebellion broke out. [Great applause.] Let me repeat the sentiment that that State has inscribed upon the stone which she has deposited in that monument of freedom which is being raised in commemoration of Washington.—She is struggling to get back into the Union, and to stand by the sentiment which is thereon inscribed, and she is willing to sustain it. What is it? It is the sentiment which was enunciated by her distinguished son, the immortal illustrious Jackson, "The Federal Union—it must be preserved." [Great applause.] If it were possible for the old man, whose statue stands before me and whose portrait is behind me, in the Executive Mansion, and whose influence has been preserved in the monument in your vicinity, to be called forth from the grave; or if it were possible to communicate with the spirit of the illustrious dead, and make him understand the progress of faction and of rebellion and treason, he would turn over in his coffin, and shaking off the habiliments of the tomb, would again stand erect, and reiterate that sentiment originally expressed by him on a memorable occasion, "The Federal Union—it must be preserved." [Great applause.] We have witnessed what has transpired since his day. In 1833, when treason and treachery, and infidelity to the Government and Constitution of the United States, stalked forth in the land, it was his power and influence that quenched the serpent in its infancy. The movement was thus stopped, but only for a time. The same spirit of disaffection continued. There were men disaffected to the Government both in the North and in the South. There was in a portion of the Union a peculiar institution of which some complained, and to which others were attached. One portion of our countrymen in the South sustained that institution while another portion in the North opposed it. The result was the formation of extreme parties, one especially in the South which reached a point at which it was pro-

pared to dissolve the union of the States for the purpose, as was said, of securing and preserving that peculiar institution. There was another portion of our countrymen who were opposed to it, and who went to such an extreme that they were willing to break up the Government in order to get rid of that institution which was peculiar to the South. I say these things because I desire to talk plainly and in familiar phraseology. I assume nothing here to-day beyond the position of a citizen—one who has been pleading for his country and the preservation of the Constitution. [Immense cheering.] These two portions were arrayed against each other, and I stand here to-day for the Union. To-day, as I stand in the Senate of the United States in 1860 and 1861 for the Union. I met there those who were making war upon the Constitution—those who wanted to break and destroy the Government—and I denounced them in my place, then and there, and exposed their true character. I said that those men who were engaged in the work of breaking up the Government, were traitors. I have never ceased on all proper occasions to repeat that sentiment, and as far as my efforts could go, I have endeavored to carry it out. [Great applause.] I have just remarked that there were two parties, one of which was for destroying the Government and separating the Union, and the other for preserving the Government and breaking up the Government to destroy slavery. True, the objects which they sought to accomplish were different, so far as slavery was concerned, but they agreed in the desire to break up the Government, the thing to which I have always been opposed, and whether disunionists come from the south or from the north, I stand now, as I did then, vindicating the Union of the States and the Constitution of my country. [Tremendous applause.] When the rebellion and treason manifested themselves in the South I stood by the Government. I said that I was for the Union with slavery—or I was for the Union without slavery. In either alternative I was for my Government and its constitution. The Government has stretched forth its strong arm, and with its physical power it has put down treason in the field. The section of the country which then arrayed itself against the national Government has been put down by the strong arm.—I said that in point of fact nearly all the powers of the Government are assumed by an irresponsible central directory, which does not even consult the legislative or the executive departments of the Government. By resolutions reported from a committee in whom it seems that practically the legislative power is now vested, that great principle of the Constitution which authorizes and empowers each branch of the legislative department, the Senate and the House of Representatives, to judge for itself of the elections, returns, and qualifications of its own members, has been virtually taken away from the two branches of the legislative department of the Government, and conferred upon a joint committee, who must report before either House can act under the Constitution as to accepting the members who are to take their seats as component parts of the respective bodies. By this rule it is assumed that there must be laws passed recognizing a State as being in the Union, or its practical relations to the Union as restored, before the respective Houses under the constitution can judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of their own members. What a position is that! You struggle for four years to put down a rebellion. You denied the beginning of the struggle that any State could go out of the Union. You said that it had neither the right nor the power to do so. The issue was made and it has been settled that the States had neither the right nor the power to go out of the Union. With what consistency, after it has been settled by the military arm of the Government and by the public judgment that the States had no right to go out of the Union, can any one now turn round and assume that they are out, and that they shall not come in? I am free to say to you as your Executive that I am not prepared to take any such position. [Great applause.] I said in the Senate in the very inception of this rebellion that the States had no right to go out. I asserted, too, that they had no power to go out. That question has been settled, and it being settled, I cannot turn around now and give the lie direct to all that I have professed, and all I have done for the last five years. [Applause.] When those who rebelled complied with the Constitution, when they gave sufficient evidence of loyalty, when they could be trusted, when they yielded obedience to the law that you and I acknowledge, I say extend to them the right hand of fellowship, and let peace and union be restored. [Tremendous applause.] I fought traitors and treason in the South. I opposed the Douglas, the Toombs, the Stidells, and a long list of others, which you can readily fill without my repeating the names. Now, when I turn round and at the other end of the line find men—I care not by what name you call them—who will stand opposed to the restoration of the Union of these States, I am free to say to you that I am still in the field. [Great applause.] I am still in favor of this great Union. I am still in favor of the preservation of the Union of these States. [Great applause.] I am still in favor of going on and filling out of our going on and filling out its destiny. [Great applause.] Voices—Give us three of these names at the other end.

The President—I am called upon to name three at the other end of the line. I am talking to my friends and fellow-

citizens who are interested with me in this Government, and I presume I am free to mention to you the names of those whom I look upon as being opposed to the fundamental principles of this Government, and who are laboring to destroy it. Voices—Name them—who are they? The President—You ask me who they are? I say Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, is one; I say Mr. Sumner, of the Senate, is another, and Wendell Phillips is another. [Long continued applause.] Voices—"Give it to Forney." The President—In reply to that I will simply say I do not waste my ammunition upon dead ducks. [Great laughter and applause.] I stand for my country. I stand for the Constitution. There I have always placed myself from my advent in public life. They may traduce, they may slander me, they may vituperate me, but let me say to you all this has no influence upon me. [Great applause.] Let me say further, that I do not intend to be overawed by real or pretended friends, nor do I mean to be bullied by my enemies. [Tremendous applause.] Honest conviction is my courage. The Constitution is my guide. I know, my countrymen, that it has been insinuated, that it has been said directly in high places, that if such a usurpation of power as I am charged with had been exercised some 200 years ago, in a particular reign, it would have cost an individual his head. [Great laughter.] Of what usurpation has Andrew Johnson been guilty? None; none. Is it a usurpation to stand between the people and the usurpation of power? Because, in a conversation with a fellow citizen who happened to be a Senator, I said that I thought amendments to the Constitution ought not to be so frequent; that if it was continually tampered with, it would lose its prestige and dignity, and the old instrument would be lost sight of altogether in a short time, and because in the same conversation I happened to say that if it were amended at all, such an amendment ought to be adopted, it was charged that I was guilty of an assumption of power that would have cost a king his head in a certain period of English history. [Great laughter.] From the same source the exclamation has gone forth that they were in the midst of earthquakes, that they were trembling and quaking; there is an grand swelling of popular judgment and indignation. [Great applause.] The American people will speak, and by their instinct, if not otherwise, they will know who are their friends and who are their enemies. I have endeavored to be true to the people in all the positions which I have occupied, and there is hardly a position in this Government which I have not at some time filled. I suppose it will be said that this is vanity [laughter]; but I may say that I have been in all of them, and I have been in both branches of the State Legislature.

A Voice—You commenced a tailor. The President—A gentleman behind me says that I began a tailor. Yes, I did begin a tailor [laughter], and that suggestion does not disturb me in the least, for when I was a tailor I had the reputation of being a good one, and of making close fits. [Laughter.] And I was always punctual to my customers and did good work. [Applause.] Voices—We will patch up the Union yet. The President—No! I do not want any patch-work of it. I want the original article restored. [Great applause.] But enough of this rillery. I know it may be said, You are President, and you must not talk about these things; but, my fellow-citizens, I intend to talk the truth, and when principle is involved, when the existence of my country is in peril, I hold it to be my duty to speak what I think and what I feel, as I have always done on former occasions. [Great applause.] I have said it has been declared elsewhere that I was guilty of usurpation which would have cost a king his head, and in another place I have been denounced for "usurping" power. I know where did I ever whitewash anything or anybody? I have been an Alderman of a town; I have been in both branches of the Legislature of my State; I have been in both Houses of the National Congress; I have been at the head of the Executive Department of my State; I have been Vice President of the United States; and I am now in the position which I occupy before you, and during all this time where is the man and where is any portion of the people who can say that Andrew Johnson ever made a pledge which he did not redeem, or that he ever made a promise which he violated. None! None! Point me to the man who acted with infidelity to the great mass of the people. [Great applause.] Men may talk about bleeding and about usurpation, but when I am beheaded I want the American people to be the witness. I do not want it done by indirect and indirect remarks, in high places; to be suggested to men who have assassination brooding in their bosoms. Others have exclaimed that the presidential obituary must be gotten out of the way. What is that but (I make use of a strong word) including to assassination? Are the opponents of the Government not yet satisfied? Are those who want to destroy our institutions, and to change the character of the Government, not yet satisfied with the quantity of blood that has been shed? Are they not satisfied with one martyr in this place? Does not the blood of Lincoln appease their vengeance and their wrath? Is their thirst still unsatisfied? Do they still want

more blood? Have they not honor and courage enough to seek to obtain the end otherwise than by the hand of an assassin? I am not afraid of an assassin attacking me where alone brave and courageous men will attack another. I only dread him when in disguise, and who has footstep is noiseless. If they want blood, let them have the courage to strike like men. I know they are "willing to wound, yet afraid to strike." If my blood is to be shed because I vindicate the Union and insist on the preservation of this Government in its original purity, let it be shed out; let an altar to the Union be first erected, and then, if necessary, take me and lay me upon it, and the blood that now warms and animates my existence shall be poured out as the last libation as a tribute to the Union of the States. [Great applause.] But let the opponents of this Government remember when it is found out that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. This Union will grow and it will continue to increase in strength and power, though I may be combed and cleaned in blood. I have already spoken to you longer than I intended when I came out. ("Go on.") I merely intended to make my acknowledgments for the honor you have done me, but before I close allow me to say a word in regard to the question of amendments to the Constitution of the United States. Shortly after I reached Washington for the purpose of being inaugurated as Vice President of the United States, I had a conversation with Mr. Lincoln in regard to the condition of affairs; we talked particularly in reference to matters in my own State. I told him that we called a convention; that we had amended the Constitution; that we had abolished slavery in that State, which was not included in his Emancipation Proclamation. All these things met his approbation, and he gave me words of encouragement; we talked then about affairs generally, and upon the subject of amendments to the Constitution of the United States; he said to me "When the amendment of the Constitution now proposed is adopted by three-fourths of the States, I am pretty near done, or, indeed, quite done, in favor of amending the Constitution, if there was one other adopted." I asked him—"What is that, Mr. President?" He said—"I have labored to preserve this Union. I have toiled during the four years I have been subjected to, to preserve these States intact under the Constitution as they were before. I asked him again, Mr. President, what amendment is that which you would propose? Why, said he, it is that there should be an amendment added to the Constitution which would compel the States to send their Senators and Representatives to the Congress of the United States. [Great applause.] The idea was in his mind that as a part of the doctrine of secession, one of the means to break up this Government was that the States, if they saw fit, might withdraw their Senators and Representatives, or refuse to elect them. He wanted even to remove that difficulty by a constitutional amendment compelling the States to send Senators and Representatives to Congress. But what do we now find? The Constitution of the country, even that portion of it which allows amendment to the organic law, expressly provides that no State, without its consent, shall be deprived of its suffrage, and it also provides that each State shall have at least one Representative in the House of Representatives; but yet the position is taken that certain States cannot be represented. We impose taxes upon them; we send our tax-gatherers into every region and portion of the States. The people are fit subjects of Government for the collection of taxes, but they ask to participate in the legislation of the country they are met at the door and told, "You must not pay taxes; you must bear the burdens of the Government, but not participate in its legislation; they are legislation which is to affect you throughout all time to come. Is this just? Is it fair? No! no!! I repeat, I am for the Union; I am for preserving all the States. I am for admitting into the councils of the nation all their Representatives who are unmistakably and unquestionably loyal. A man who acknowledges allegiance to the Government and who swears to support the Constitution must necessarily be loyal. A man cannot take that oath in good faith unless he is loyal. A mere amplification of the oath makes no difference to the principle. Whatever test is thought proper as evidence and as proof of loyalty is a mere matter of detail, about which I care nothing; but let a man be unmistakably and unquestionably loyal, let him acknowledge allegiance to the Constitution of the United States, and be willing to support the Government in its hour of peril and its hour of need, and I am willing to trust him. [Applause.] I know that some do not attach as much importance to this point as I do, but I regard it as fundamental.

One principle that carried us through the Revolution was that there should be no taxation without representation. I hold to that principle, which was laid down as fundamental by our fathers. If it was good then it is good now. If it was worth standing by then it is worth standing by now. The fundamental, and should be observed as long as the Government lasts. I am aware that in the midst of the rebellion it was said by some that the Constitution had been rolled up as a piece of parchment and laid away; that in time of war and rebellion there was no constitution. We know that sometimes in great necessities, under emergencies, unconstitutional things must necessarily be done in order to preserve the

Constitution itself. But if, while the rebellion was going on, the Constitution was rolled up and laid away; if it was violated in some particulars in order to save the Government, and all may be excused and justified, because in saving the Government you really saved the Constitution; now that peace has come, now that the war is over, we want again the benefit of a written Constitution, and I say the time has come to take the Constitution down, to unroll it—to re-read it, to understand its provisions thoroughly. And now, in order to save the Government, we must preserve the Constitution. Our only safety is in a strict adherence to and preservation of the Constitution of our fathers. It is now unfolded. It must now be read—it must now be digested and understood by the American people. I am here to-day, then, in making these remarks, to vindicate the Constitution and to save it, as I believe, for it does seem as if encroachment after encroachment is proposed upon it. As far as I can, I have ever resisted encroachments upon the Constitution, and I stand prepared to reassert the Constitution and Government of the United States. [Applause.] It is now a time of peace, and let us have peace; let us enforce the Constitution; let us live under and be obedient to its provisions.—Let it be published in blazing characters, as though it were in the heavens and punctuated by the stars, so that all can understand it. Let us consult that instrument and guided by its provisions. Let us understand them, and understanding them abide by them.

I tell opposers of this Government, come, East or West, North or South, that you are engaged in the work of breaking up the Government are mistaken. The Constitution of the United States, and the principles of free Government are deeply rooted in the American heart, and all the powers combined cannot destroy that great instrument—that great chart of freedom. Their attempts, though they may seem to succeed for a time, will be futile. They might as well undertake to look up the winds or chain the waves of the ocean and confine them within limits; they might as well undertake to repeal the Constitution, and, indeed, it seems now to be supposed that it can be repealed by a concurrent resolution [laughter]; but when these men will find that they might just as well introduce a resolution to repeal the law of gravitation; the attempt to keep this Union from being restored is just about as feasible as would be resistance to the great law of gravitation, which binds all to a common center. The great law of political gravitation will bring back these States, and replace them in all their relations to the Federal Government. Clashes and ebullitions and conspiracies and machinations, North or South, cannot prevent this great consummation. [Tremendous applause.] All that is wanted is time. Let the American people get to understand what is going on, and they will soon manifest their determination. By way of exclamation, let me say that I would to God the whole American people could be assembled here to-day as you are. I wish there was a vast amphitheatre here capacious enough to sustain the whole thirty millions, and they could witness the great struggle going on to preserve the Constitution of our fathers. They would soon settle the question if they could see how things are; if they could see the kind of spirit that is manifested in the effort to break up the real principles of free government. When they come to understand who was for them and who against them; who was for ameliorating their condition and who for elevating them by preserving their Government, if the combatants could stand before them, and there could be a regular set between the respective gladiators, in the first that might be made you would find that the enemies of the country would be crushed, and the people would sustain its friends and the friends of constitutional liberty. [Great cheering.] My fellow citizens, I have detained you much longer than I intended.—"Go on, go on!" But we are in a great struggle, and I am your instrument, and I have thought it best to express myself frankly. When I ask you, have I usurped authority? Who is there in this country I have not toiled and labored for? Where is the man or the woman, either in private life or public life, that has not always received my attention and my time? Sometimes it has been said—pardon me for being a little egotistical, but we are engaged in a friendly and familiar conversation—that JOHN JOHNSON is a lucky man. [Laughter.] They can never defeat him. [Laughter.] Now I will tell you what constitutes my good luck. It is in doing right and being for the people. [Great Applause.] The people somehow or other, although their sagacity and good judgment are very frequently underrated and underestimated, generally get to find out and understand who is for them and who is against them. They do it by instinct, if in no other way. They know who is the friend; they know in whom they can confide. So far, thank God! I can lay my hand upon my bosom, and state with heartfelt satisfaction that in all the positions in which I have been placed—and I have been placed in many that were as trying as any in which mortal man has ever been placed—I have never deserted them, nor do I believe they will desert me. [No, no, and applause.] When have I betrayed, what principle have I violated, what sentiment have I sworn to from, can those who assail me put their finger upon any

one? No, no, in all the speeches that have been made, no one has dared to put his finger upon a single principle I ever asserted from which I have departed. Have you not heard some of them at some time attempt to quote my predecessor who fell a martyr to his country's cause, but they can give no sentiment of his that is in opposition or in contradiction to anything that I have done. The very policy that I am now pursuing was pursued by me under his administration—I having been appointed by him in a particular position for that very purpose. An inscrutable Providence saw proper to remove him from this [to] I trust, a better world than I came into this place, and there is not a principle of his in reference to the restoration of the Union from which I have departed. None. Then the war is not simply upon me, but it is upon my predecessor also. I have tried to do my duty. I know that some are envious and jealous, and speak of the White House as having attractions for the President. Let me say to you, the charms of the White House have a little influence upon me as upon any individual in this country, and much less upon me than upon those who are talking about it. The little that I eat and wear does not amount to much, and the difference between what is enough to sustain me and my little family. It is very small, for I am not kin to many folks by congeniality, though by affinity I am akin to everybody. The difference between the little that suffices for my stomach and back, and more than enough, has no charms for me. The proud and conscious satisfaction of having performed my duty to my country, to my children and to the inner man, is all the reward that I ask. [Great applause.] In conclusion, let me ask this vast concourse here to-day, this sea of upturned faces to come with me, or I will go with you, and stand around the Constitution of our country. It is again unfolded. The people are invited to read and understand, to sustain and maintain its provisions. Let us stand by the Constitution of our fathers, though the heavens should fall, though factions should rage, though taunts and jeers may come, though abuse and vituperation may be poured out in the most virulent form. I mean to be found standing by the Constitution of my country. Stand by the Constitution as the chief ark of our

to it as a mariner clinging to the plank when the night and the tempest close around him.

Accept my thanks, my countrymen, for the indulgence you have extended to me while submitting to you extemporaneous, and perhaps incoherently the remarks which I have now made. Let us go away forgetting the past and looking to the future, resolved to endeavor to restore our Government to its pristine purity, trusting in Him who is on high, but who controls all here below, that ere long our Union will be restored, and that we shall have peace not only with all the nations of the earth, but peace and good will among all parts of the people of the United States. I thank you for the respect you have manifested to me on this occasion, and if the time shall come during the period of my existence when this country is to be destroyed and its Government overturned, if you will look out you will find the humble individual who stands before you there with you endeavoring to avert its final destruction.

"No visible means of support" makes a man a vagabond in the eyes of the law; but there will be no more vagabonds if they will all adopt the calling of a Frenchman who was arraigned for one.

"You are a loafer sir," said the judge; "a man without a calling."

"I beg your pardon, your honor, I have a vocation."

"What is it?"

"I smoke glasses for eclipses, but just now it is our dull season."

A V-TOE—"Pa," said an interesting juvenile the other day to his indulgent sire—"Pa, haven't I got a vote as well as the President?"

"No, my child."

"Yes, I have, Pa; my fifth toe is a V-toe, I reckon."

"Take that child to his mother—he's ruined!"

ON A LINE—"I don't like to patronize this line," said a culprit to a hangman.

"Oh, never mind this once," was the reply; "it will soon suspend its operation."

The following stanza was written on the marriage of Rouben Wisk and Matilda Cheever:

"At length she seized the proffered prize
A happy one (believe us),
For matrimony had made her wise—
Before she was Miss Cheever."

"Shall I paint your cheeks for you, wife?"

"No, husband, you have done it often enough by making me blush for you."

"It is never too late to mend," said the old lady when she sat up until 12 midnight to darn her husband's stockings.

Why is a hat made of beaver like land that always yields fine crops? Because it may be called fertile—fartile.

When the cat's away the cook finds it difficult to explain how the cold meat goes.

The pitcher goes often to well, but the latter has never been known to return the call.