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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

ANDREW JOHNSON,

OF TENNESSEE,

TOGETHER WITH HIS

SPEECH AT NASHVILLE, JUNE 10, 1864.

AND HIS

LETTER ACCEPTING THE NOMINATION

AS

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TENDERED HIM BY THE

NATIONAL UNION CONVENTION,

HELD AT

BALTIMORE, ON THE 7TH AND 8TH OF JUNE, 1864.

WASHINGTON:

PUBLISHED BY THE UNION CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE

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ANDREW JOHNSON,

THE UNION NOMINEE FOR THE VICE PRESIDENCY,

was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, December 29, 1808. When he was four years of age he lost his father, who died from the effects of exertions to save a friend from drowning. At the age of ten he was apprenticed to a tailor in his native city, with whom he served seven years. His mother was unable to afford him any educational advantages, and he never attended school a day in his life. While learning his trade, however, he resolved to make an effort to educate himself. His anxiety to be able to read was particularly excited by an incident which is worthy of mention. A gentleman of Raleigh was in the habit of going into the tailor's shop and reading while the apprentice and journeymen were at work. He was an excellent reader, and his favorite book was a volume of speeches, principally of British statesmen. JOHNSON became interested, and his first ambition was to equal him as a reader, and become familiar with those speeches. He took up the alphabet without an instructor, but by applying to the journeymen with whom he worked he obtained a little assistance. Having acquired a knowledge of the letters, he applied for the loan of the book which he had so often heard read. The owner made him a present of it, and gave him some instruction on the use of letters in the formation of words. Thus his first exercises in spelling were in that book. By perseverance he soon learned to read, and the hours which he devoted to his education were at night after he was through his daily labor upon the shop-board. He now applied himself to books from two to three hours every night, after working from ten to twelve hours at his trade. Having completed his apprenticeship in the autumn of 1824, he went to Laurens Court House, S. C., where he worked as a journeyman for nearly two years. While there he became engaged to be married, but the match was broken off by the violent opposition of the girl's mother and friends, the ground of objection being Mr. JOHNSON's youth and want of pecuniary means. In May, 1826, he returned to Raleigh, where he procured journey work, and remained until September. He then set out to seek his fortune in the West, carrying with him his mother, who was dependent upon him for support. He stopped at Greenville, Tennessee, and commenced work as a journeyman. He remained there about twelve months, married, and soon afterward went still further westward; but

failing to find a suitable place to settle he returned to Greenville and commenced business. Up to this time his education was limited in reading, as he had never had an opportunity of learning to write or cypher; but under the instructions of his wife he learned these and other branches. The only time, however, he could devote to them was in the dead of night. The first office which he ever held was that of Alderman of the village, to which he was elected in 1828. He was re-elected to the same position in 1829, and again in 1830. In that year he was chosen Mayor, which position he held for three years. In 1835, he was elected to the legislature. In the session of that year he took decided ground against a scheme of internal improvements, which he contended would not only prove a failure, but entail upon the State a burdensome debt. The measure was popular, however, and at the next election (1837) he was defeated. He became a candidate again in 1839. By this time many of the evils he had predicted from the internal improvement policy which he had opposed four years previous were fully demonstrated, and he was elected by a large majority. In 1840 he served as presidential elector for the State at large on the democratic ticket. He canvassed a large portion of the State, meeting upon the stump several of the leading Whig orators. In 1841 he was elected to the State senate. In 1843 he was elected to Congress, where, by successive elections, he served until 1853. During this period of service he was conspicuous and active in advocating, respectively, the bill for refunding the fine imposed upon General Jackson at New Orleans in 1815, the annexation of Texas, the tariff of 1846, the war measures of Mr. Polk's administration, and a Homestead bill, a measure which originated with him, upon which he has been justly termed the father of the Homestead law. In 1853 he was elected Governor of Tennessee, after an exciting canvass, in which he was opposed by Gustavus A. Henry. He was re-elected in 1855, after another active contest, the competitor being Meredith P. Gentry. At the expiration of his second period as governor, in 1857 he was elected as United States Senator for a full term, ending March 3, 1863. It was after the presidential election of 1860 that, in the Senate, he proved himself worthy of his true democratic teachings and of his early struggles with adversity, by taking ground against treason, and by braining the southern aristocrats with an audacity and an eloquence that carried consternation to their hearts, and filled the Union men with joy.

Although ANDREW JOHNSON supported Breckenridge for President in 1860, he did so in the honest belief that he was speaking the wishes of his constituents. It was this fact that rendered his antagonism to the rebellion and to the traitors during the period he remained in the Senate, as well as subsequently when he was called by the President to take the military governorship of Tennessee, when that State had been swept by false appeals and fabricated votes out of the Union, so effective, and gave

such great weight to his objections to those with whom he had been formerly connected.

It was on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 19th and 20th of December, 1860, when Governor JOHNSON saw that the traitors had determined to secede from the Union, that he broke ground against them in a speech of such power and such force that it was with great difficulty the galleries could be restrained in giving utterance to their feelings and gratitude. In order to show its effect, we annex the following letter of John W. Forney, Esq., written at the time :

"The cloud that has been hanging over the capitol and the country has lifted. The Union has found a gallant defender in the American Congress in the person of the living Andrew Jackson of the South—namely ANDREW JOHNSON, Senator from Tennessee.

"He concluded his two day's speech at half past four o'clock this afternoon. His manner and his language carried consternation to the hearts of the fire-eaters. They listened to his strong sentences with amazement. He recognized the existing Union as the greatest blessing conferred by God upon man, after the Christian religion. He argued that to increase the number of States under the present Constitution was to enlarge the benefits to humanity here and all over the world, while a diminution of them was to cause disaster and death.

"In the course of his remarks he reproduced the history of the purchase of Louisiana, Florida, and the annexation of Texas. In alluding to Florida he turned to Mr. Yulee, the Senator from that State, and reminded him that the time was when he had come to Congress imploring for the admission of his State into the American Union. He asked him, in the event of the secession of Florida, could that State set up a claim to sovereignty when the very soil of the State belonged to, and was paid for by, the Union, whose sovereignty she has recognized on her admission? If so, she could destroy the parent who gave her birth and vitality.

"Mr. JOHNSON introduced, with overwhelming effect, the Ostend manifesto, which originated in the South, and was based upon the idea that when an adjoining State became troublesome to its neighbor, and dangerous to our safety, the doctrines of natural self-preservation demanded the subjugation of that State, even by the force of arms.

"If South Carolina, a small member of the Confederacy, went out of the Union for the purpose of destroying it, plunging millions of human beings into distress, and annihilating the hopes of the friends of freedom throughout the world, she must and could be subjected, according to the terms of the Ostend manifesto, in order to save the Republic.

"His whole speech was crowded with points and facts, and when the Senate adjourned the hearts of the Union men beat proudly. The tide has been turned. The word has been spoken from the home of Jackson. Our threatened liberties have at last found a southern defender. The reign of terror, inaugurated by disappointed presidential aspirants, is fast passing away."

In concluding his speech Mr. JOHNSON said :

"I have done it in view of a duty that I felt I owed to my constituents; to my children; to myself. Without regard to consequences, I have taken my position; and when the tug comes, when Greek shall meet Greek, and our rights are refused after all honorable means have been exhausted, then it is that I will perish in the last breath; yes, in the language of the patriot Esmet, 'I will dispute every inch

of ground ; I will burn every blade of grass ; and the last entrenchment of freedom shall be my grave' Then let us stand by the Constitution, and in preserving the Constitution we shall save the Union ; and in saving the Union we save this, the greatest Government on earth."

It was not to be expected that his first great speech against the slaveholding traitors should not occasion consternation. If it had come from a northern man, even from a northern Democrat, one who had voted for Douglass or for Breckinridge, they would have disregarded it ; but when spoken by ANDREW JOHNSON, a southern Senator, who had voted for and sustained John C. Breckinridge in the immediately preceding presidential election, they saw what the effect upon the southern mind must be, and they became infuriated, and by one after the other in speeches of great ability and accrimony, the heroic JOHNSON was opposed in argument, ridiculed and attacked. This warfare lasted throughout the best part of January, 1861 ; and on the 5th and 6th of February, 1861, Mr. JOHNSON rose and made an elaborate and powerful reply, principally addressing himself to the arch traitor Jefferson Davis, and his satelite, Judah P. Benjamin.

During his administration as Military Governor of Tennessee, he has proved himself the most reliable and earnest supporter of the Administration and the cause of the Union, and also took a decided stand in favor of emancipation in Tennessee.

Grand and heroic was the action of JOHNSON when General Buell was forced to retreat before the hordes of Bragg and Kirby Smith, and was willing to surrender the city of Nashville in the hands of the enemy, JOHNSON declared that he would sooner be buried under the ruins of the city than to surrender. His energetic and determined protest had a magic effect. Buell left a small force for the defence of Nashville, whilst Buell was driven to the Ohio. Nashville was preserved.

SPEECH
OF
ANDREW JOHNSON,
AT
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE,
FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 1864.

Governor ANDREW JOHNSON, after thanking the assembly for the compliment they had bestowed on him, and a few other preliminary remarks, proceeded to say, that we are engaged in a great struggle for free government in the proper acceptation of the term.

So far as the head of the ticket is concerned, the Baltimore Convention had said, not only to the United States, but to all the nations of the earth, that we are determined to maintain and carry out the principles of free government. [Applause.] That Convention announced and confirmed a principle not to be disregarded. It was that the right of secession and the power of a State to place itself out of the Union, are not recognized. The Convention had declared this principle by its action. Tennessee had been in rebellion against the Government, and waged a treasonable war against its authority, just as other Southern States had done. She had seceded just as much as other States had, and left the Union as far as she had the power to do so. Nevertheless, the National Convention had declared, that a State cannot put itself from under the national authority. It said, by its first nomination, that the present President, take him altogether, was the man to steer the ship of State for the next four years. [Loud applause.]

Next it said—if I may be permitted to speak of myself, not in the way of vanity, but to illustrate a principle—“We will go into one of the rebellious States and choose a candidate for the Vice-Presidency.” Thus the Union party declared its belief that the rebellious States are still in the Union and that their loyal citizens are still citizens of the United States. And now there is but one great work for us to do, that is to put down the rebellion. Our duty is to sustain the Government, and help it with all our might to crush out a rebellion which is in violation of all that is right and sacred.

MR. JOHNSON ON HIS OWN POSITION.

Governor JOHNSON said he had no impassioned appeal to make to the people in his own behalf. He had not sought the position assigned him by the National Convention. Not a man in the land can truthfully say that I have asked him to use his influence in my behalf in that body, for the position allotted to me, or for any other. On the contrary, I have avoided the candidacy. But while I have not sought it, still, being conferred upon me unsought, I appreciate it the more highly. Being conferred on me without solicitation, I shall not decline it. [Applause.] Come weal or woe, success or defeat, sink or swim, survive or perish, I accept the nomination, on principle, be the consequences what they may. I will do what I believe to be my duty. I know there are those here who profess to feel a contempt for me, and I, on the other hand, feel my superiority to them.

HIS OPINION OF ARISTOCRACY.

I have always understood that there is a sort of exclusive aristocracy about Nashville which affects to condemn all who are not within its little circle. Let them enjoy their opinions; I have heard it said that

“Worth makes the man and want the fellow.”

This aristocracy has been the bane of the slave States; nor has the North been wholly free from its curse. It is a class which I have always forced to respect me, for I have ever set it at defiance. The respect of the honest, intelligent, and industrious class I have endeavored to win by my conduct as a man. One of the chief elements of this rebellion is the opposition of the slave aristocracy to being ruled by men who have risen from the ranks of the people.

This aristocracy hated Mr. Lincoln because he was of humble origin, a rail-splitter in early life. One of them, the private secretary of Howell Cobb, said to me one day, after a long conversation, “We people of the South will not submit to be governed by a man who has come up from the ranks of the common people, as Abe Lincoln has.” He uttered the essential feeling and spirit of the Southern Rebellion. Now, it has just occurred to me, if this aristocracy is so violently opposed to being governed by Mr. Lincoln, what, in the name of conscience, will it do with LINCOLN and JOHNSON? [Great laughter.]

I reject with scorn this whole idea of an arrogant aristocracy. I believe that man is capable of self-government, irrespective of his outward circumstances; and whether he be a laborer, or shoemaker, a tailor, a grocer. The question whether man is capable of self-government, I hold with Jefferson that government was made for the convenience of man, and not man for the government. The laws and constitutions were designed as mere instruments to promote his welfare. And hence, from this

principle, I conclude that governments can and ought to be changed and amended to conform to the wants, the requirements, and progress of the people, and the enlightened spirit of the age. [Loud applause.]

Now, if any of you secessionists have lost faith in man's capability of self-government, and feel unfit for the exercise of this great right, go straight to rebeledom, take Jeff Davis, Beauregard, and Bragg for your masters, and put their collars on your necks.

SLAVERY DEAD.

And here let me say that now is the time to recur to these fundamental principles, while the land is rent with anarchy, and upheaves with the throes of a mighty revolution. While society is in this disordered state, and we are seeking security, let us fix the foundations of the Government on principles of eternal justice which will endure for all time. There is an element in our midst who are for perpetuating the institution of slavery. Let me say to you, Tennesseans and men from the Northern States, that Slavery is dead. It was not murdered by me. I told you long ago what the result would be if you endeavored to go out of the Union to save slavery, and that the result would be bloodshed, rapine, devastated fields, plundered villages and cities, and therefore I urged you to remain in the Union. In trying to save slavery you killed it, and lost your own freedom. Your slavery is dead, but I did not murder it. As Macbeth said to Banquo's bloody ghost:

"Never shake thy gory locks at me.
Thou can'st not say I did it."

Slavery is dead, and you must pardon me if I do not mourn over its dead body; you can bury it out of sight. In restoring the State leave out that disturbing and dangerous element, and use only those parts of the machinery which will move in harmony.

WHY HE BELIEVES IN EMANCIPATION.

Now, in regard to emancipation, I want to say to the blacks that liberty means liberty to work and enjoy the fruits of your labor. Idleness is not freedom. I desire that all men shall have a fair start and an equal chance in the race of life, and let him succeed who has the most merit. This, I think, is a principle of heaven. I am for emancipation for two reasons: first, because it is right in itself; and second, because in the emancipation of the slaves we break down an odious and dangerous aristocracy. I think we are freeing more whites than blacks in Tennessee. I want to see slavery broken up, and when its barriers are thrown down, I want to see industrious, thrifty emigrants pouring in from all parts of the country. Come on! we need your labor, your skill, your capital. We want your enterprise and invention, so that hereafter Tennessee may rank with New Eng-

land in the arts and mechanics, and that when we visit the Patent Office at Washington, where the ingenious mechanics of the free States have placed their models, we need not blush that Tennessee can show nothing but a mouse-trap, or something of about as much importance. Come on! We greet you with a hearty welcome to the soil of Tennessee. Here is soil the most fertile in every agricultural product; a delightful and healthy climate, forests, water-power, and mines of inexhaustible richness; come and help us redeem Tennessee, and make her a powerful and flourishing State.

THE QUESTION OF RECONSTRUCTION.

But in calling a convention to restore the State, who shall restore and re-establish it? Shall the man who gave his influence and his means to destroy the Government? Is he to participate in the great work of reorganization? Shall he who brought this misery upon the State be permitted to control its destinies? If this be so, then all this precious blood of our brave soldiers and officers, so freely poured out, will have been wantonly spilled. All the glorious victories won by our noble armies will go for naught, and all the battle-fields which have been sown with dead heroes during this rebellion will have been made memorable in vain. Why all this carnage and devastation? It was that treason might be put down and traitors punished. Therefore I say that traitors should take a back seat in the work of restoration. If there be but five thousand men in Tennessee loyal to the Constitution, loyal to freedom, loyal to justice, these true and faithful men should control the work of reorganization and reformation absolutely. (Loud and prolonged applause.) I say that the traitor has ceased to be a citizen, and, in joining the rebellion, has become a public enemy. He forfeited his right to vote with loyal men when he renounced his citizenship and sought to destroy our Government.

We say to the most honest and industrious foreigner who comes from England and Germany to dwell among us, and to add to the wealth of the country, "Before you can be a citizen you must stay here for five years." If we are so cautious about foreigners who voluntarily renounce their homes to live with us, what should we say to the traitor who, although born and reared among us, has raised a parricidal hand against the Government which always protected him? My judgment is, that he should be subjected to a severe ordeal before he is restored to citizenship. A fellow who takes the oath merely to save his property and denies the validity of the oath, is a perjured man and not to be trusted. Before these repenting rebels can be trusted let them bring forth the fruits of repentance. He who helped to make all these widows and orphans who drape the streets of Nashville in mourning, should suffer for his great crime.

THE REBEL LEADERS.

The work is in our own hands. We can destroy this rebellion. With Grant thundering on the Potomac before Richmond, and Sherman and Thomas on their march toward Atlanta, the day will ere long be ours. Will any madly persist in rebellion? Suppose that an equal number be slain in every battle, it is plain that the result must be the utter extermination of the rebels. Ah, these rebel leaders have a strong personal reason for holding out—to save their necks from the halter; and these leaders must feel the power of the Government. Treason must be made odious and traitors must be punished and impoverished. Their great plantations must be seized and divided into small farms and sold to honest and industrious men.

ABUSES.

The day for protecting the lands and negroes of these authors of rebellion is past. It is high time it was. I have been most deeply pained at some things which have come under my observation. We get men in command, who, under the influence of flattery, fawning, and caressing, grant protection to the rich traitor, while the poor Union man stands out in the cold, often unable to get a receipt or a voucher for his losses. (Cries of "That's so" from all parts of the crowd.) The traitor can get lucrative contracts while the loyal man is pushed aside, unable to obtain a recognition of his just claims. I am telling the truth. I care nothing for stripes and shoulder-straps. I want them all to hear what I say. I have been on a gridiron for two years at the sight of these abuses. I blame not the Government for these wrongs, which are the work of weak and worthless subordinates. Wrongs will be committed under every form of government and every administration. For myself I mean to stand by the Government till the flag of the Union shall wave over every city, town, hill top and cross road in its full power and majesty.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

The nations of Europe are anxious for our overthrow. France takes advantage of our internal difficulties and sends Maximilian off to Mexico to set up a monarchy on our borders. The day of reckoning is approaching. The time is not far distant when the rebellion will be put down, and then we will attend to this Mexican affair, and say to Louis Napoleon, "You can set up no monarchy on this continent. (Great applause.) An expedition into Mexico would be a sort of recreation to the brave soldiers who are now fighting the battles of the Union, and the French concern would be quickly wiped out. Let us be united. I know there are but two parties now, one for the country and the other against it, and I am for my country.

I am a Democrat in the strictest meaning of the term. I am for this Government because it is democratic—a Government of the people. I am

for putting down this rebellion, because it is war against democracy. He who stands off stirring up discontent in this State, and higgling about negroes, is practically in the rebel camp, and encourages treason. He who, in Indiana or Ohio, makes war upon the Government out of regard to slavery, is just as bad. The salvation of the country is now the only business which concerns the patriot.

In conclusion, let us give our thanks, not formal, but heartfelt thanks, to these gallant officers and soldiers who have come to our rescue, and delivered us from the rebellion. And though money be expended, though life be lost, though farms and cities be desolated, let the war for the Union go on, and the stars and stripes be bathed, if need be, in a nation's blood, till law be restored and freedom finally established.

Governor JOHNSON retired amid loud and continued cheering, and the large croud dispersed to their homes.

LETTER FROM ANDREW JOHNSON.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE NOMINATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT.

The following is the correspondence between the committee appointed by the Baltimore Convention and Governor Johnson, the nominee of that body for Vice President:

LETTER TO GOVERNOR JOHNSON.

BALTIMORE, MD., June 9, 1864

Hon. Andrew Johnson :

DEAR SIR: The undersigned have great pleasure in performing the duty assigned to them of informing you of your unanimous nomination for the office of Vice President of the United States, by the National Union Convention, which closed its sittings in this city yesterday.

We enclose a copy of the resolutions, or platform of principles, unanimously adopted by the Convention, to which your attention is respectfully invited, and which we trust, will have your approval.

The committee need hardly add the assurance of their hearty concurrence in selecting you as the candidate of the great majority of the loyal people of the country for the Vice Presidency of the United States, nor of their conviction that in so nominating you the Convention but faithfully interpreted the wishes of their patriotic constituents.

Earnestly requesting your acceptance of the position to which you have been assigned, and congratulating you upon the encouraging prospects for the speedy suppression of the rebellion, and the extinguishment of its cause, we have the honor of subscribing ourselves your obedient servants,

W. DENNISON, of Ohio,
Chairman.

Joseph Drummond, of Maine; Thos. E. Sawyer, of New Hampshire; Bradly Barlow, of Vermont; A. H. Bullock, of Massachusetts; A. M. Gammell, of Rhode Island; C. S. Bushnell, of Connecticut; George W. Curtis, of New York; W. A. Newell, of New Jersey; Henry Johnson, of Pennsylvania; N. B. Smithers, of Delaware; W. L. W. Seabrook, of Maryland; John F. Hume, of Missouri; G. W. Hite, of Kentucky; E. P. Fyffe, of Ohio; Cyrus M. Allen, of Indiana; W. Bushnell, of Illinois; L. P. Alexander, of Michigan; A. W. Randall, of Wisconsin; A. Oliver, of Iowa; John Bidwell, of California; Thos. H. Pearne, of Oregon; A. C. Wilder, of Kansas; Leroy Cramer, of Western Virginia; M. M. Brien, of Tennessee; A. A. Atocha, of Louisiana; Valentine Dehl, of Arkansas; J. P. Eremes, of Nevada Territory; A. S. Paddock, of Nebraska Territory; John A. Nye, of Colorado; A. B. Slonaker, of Utah.

REPLY OF GOVERNOR JOHNSON.

NASHVILLE, TENN., July 2, 1864.

Hon. Wm. Dennison, Chairman, and others, Committee of the National Union Convention :

GENTLEMEN : Your communication of the 9th ult., informing me of my nomination for the Vice Presidency of the United States by the National Union Convention held at Baltimore, and enclosing a copy of the resolutions adopted by that body, was not received until the 25th ult.

A reply on my part had been previously made to the action of the Convention in presenting my name, in a speech delivered in this city on the evening succeeding the day of the adjournment of the Convention, in which I indicated my acceptance of the distinguished honor conferred by that body, and defined the grounds upon which that acceptance was based, substantially stating what I now have to say. From the comments made upon that speech by the various presses of the country to which my attention has been directed, I considered it to be regarded as a full acceptance.

In view, however, of the desire expressed in your communication, I will more fully allude to a few points that have been heretofore presented.

My opinions on the leading questions at present agitating and distracting the public mind, and especially in reference to the rebellion now being waged against the Government and authority of the United States, I presume are generally understood. Before the southern people assumed a belligerent attitude (and repeatedly since) I took occasion most frankly to declare the views I then entertained in relation to the wicked purposes of the southern politicians. They have since undergone but little, if any, change. Time and subsequent events have rather confirmed than diminished my confidence in their correct views.

At the beginning of this great struggle I entertained the same opinion of it I do now; and, in my place in the Senate, denounced it as treason, worthy the punishment of death, and warned the Government and people of the impending danger. But my voice was not heard or counsel heeded, until it was too late to avert the storm. It still continued to gather over us without molestation from the authorities at Washington, until at length it broke with all its fury upon the country. And now, if we would save the Government from being overwhelmed by it, we must meet it in the true spirit of patriotism, and bring traitors to the punishment due their crime, and, by force of arms, crush out and subdue the last vestige of rebel authority in every State. I felt then, as now, that the destruction of the Government was deliberately determined upon by wicked and designing conspirators, whose lives and fortunes were pledged to carry it out; and that no compromise short of an unconditional recognition of the independence of the Southern States could heretofore have been, or could now be proposed, which they would accept. The clamor for "Southern rights," as the rebel journals were pleased to designate their rallying cry, was not to secure their assumed rights in the Union, and under the Constitution, but to disrupt the Government and establish an independent organization, based upon slavery, which they could at all times control.

The separation of the Government has for years past been the cherished purpose of the Southern leaders. Baffled in 1832 by the stern, patriotic heroism of Andrew Jackson, they sullenly acquiesced, only to mature

their diabolical schemes, and await the recurrence of a more favorable opportunity to execute them. Then the pretext was the tariff, and Jackson, after foiling their schemes of nullification and disunion, with prophetic perspicacity, warned the country against the renewal of their efforts to dismember the Government.

In a letter dated May 1, 1833, to the Rev. A. J. Crawford, after demonstrating the heartless insincerity of the Southern nullifiers, he said :

“Therefore the tariff was only a pretext, and disunion and a Southern Confederacy the real object. The next pretext will be the negro or slavery question.”

Time has fully verified the prediction, and we have not only “the negro or slavery question” as the pretext, but the real cause of the rebellion, and both must go down together. It is vain to attempt to reconstruct the Union with the distracting element of slavery in it. Experience has demonstrated its incompatibility with free and republican governments, and it would be unwise and unjust longer to continue it, as one of the institutions of the country. While it remained subordinate to the Constitution and laws of the United States, I yielded to it my support, but when it became rebellious, and attempted to rise above the Government and control its action, I threw my humble influence against it.

The authority of the Government is supreme, and will admit of no rivalry. No institution can rise above it, whether it be slavery or any other organized power. In our happy form of government all must be subordinate to the will of the people, when reflected through the Constitution and laws made pursuant thereto—State or Federal. This great principle lies at the foundation of every government, and cannot be disregarded without the destruction of the Government itself. In the support and practice of correct principles we can never reach wrong results; and by rigorously adhering to this great fundamental truth, the end will be the preservation of the Union, and the overthrow of an institution which has made war upon, and attempted the destruction of the Government itself.

The mode by which this great change—the emancipation of the slave—can be effected, is properly found in the power to amend the Constitution of the United States. This plan is effectual, and of no doubted authority; and while it does not contravene the timely exercise of the war power of the President in his emancipation proclamation, it comes stamped with the authority of the people themselves, acting in accordance with the written rule of the supreme law of the land, and must therefore give more general satisfaction and quietude to the public mind.

By recurring to the principles contained in the resolutions so unanimously adopted by the Convention, I find that they substantially accord with my public acts and opinions heretofore made known and expressed, and are therefore most cordially endorsed and approved, and the nomination, having been conferred without any solicitation on my part, is with the greater pleasure accepted.

In accepting this nomination, I might here close, but I cannot forego the opportunity of saying to my old friends of the Democratic party proper, with whom I have so long and pleasantly been associated, that the hour has now come when that great party can justly vindicate its devotion to true Democratic policy and measures of expediency. The war is a war of great principles. It involves the supremacy and life of the Government itself. If the rebellion triumphs, free government—North and South—fails. If, on the other hand, the Government is successful—as I do not doubt—its destiny is fixed, its basis permanent and enduring, and its career

of honor and glory just begun. In a great contest like this for the existence of free government, the path of duty is patriotism and principle. Minor considerations and questions of administrative policy should give way to the higher duty of first preserving the Government; and then there will be time enough to wrangle over the men and measures pertaining to its administration.

This is not the hour for strife and division among ourselves. Such differences of opinion only encourage the enemy, prolong the war, and waste the country. Unity of action and concentration of power should be our watchword and rallying cry. This accomplished, the time will rapidly approach when their armies in the field, the great power of the rebellion, will be broken and crushed by our gallant officers and brave soldiers, and ere long they will return to their homes and firesides to resume again the vocations of peace, with the proud consciousness that they have aided in the noble work of re-establishing upon a surer and more permanent basis the great temple of American freedom.

I am, gentlemen, with sentiments of high regard, yours, truly,

ANDREW JOHNSON.

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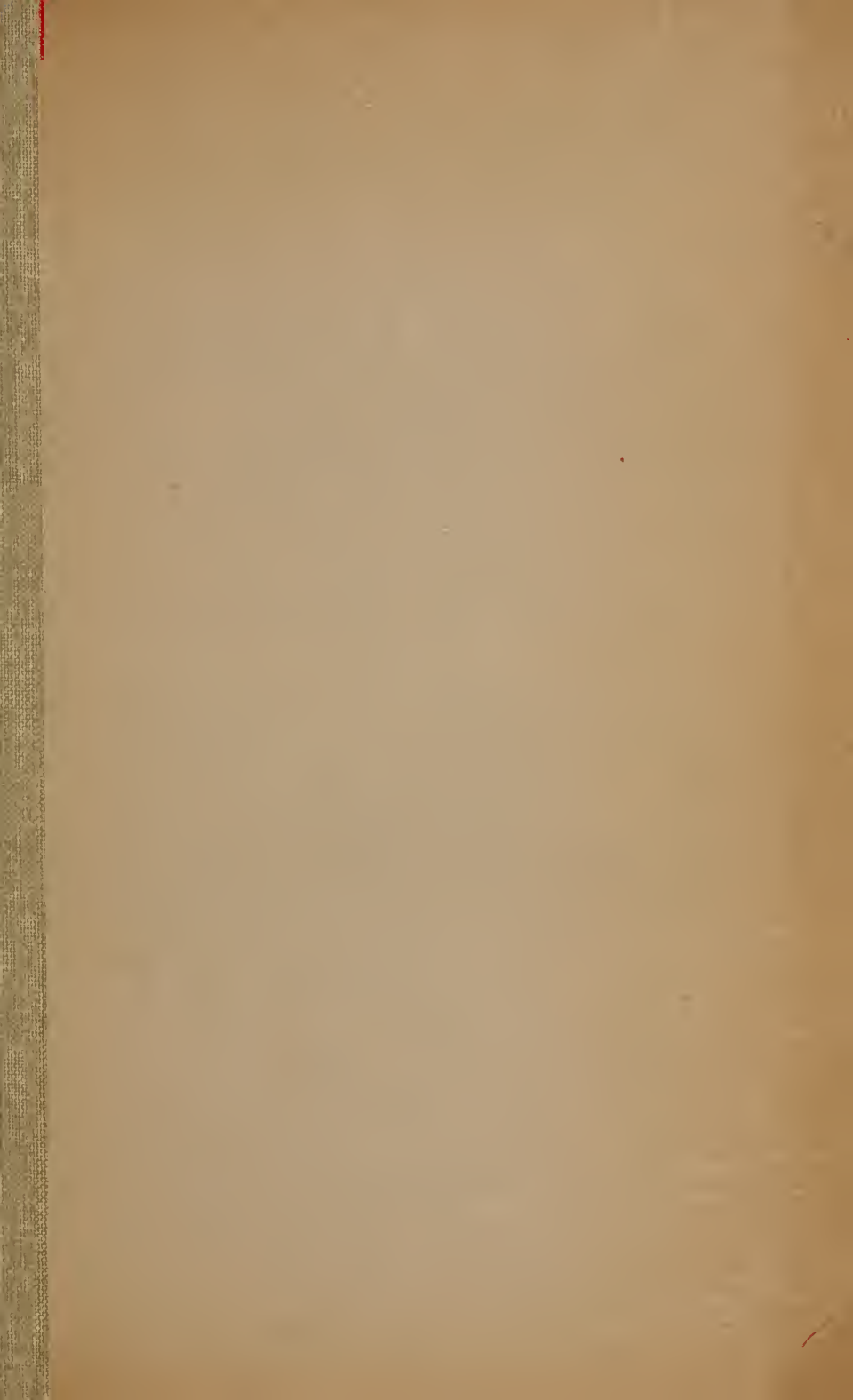
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