THE SUN.

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THE WEEKLY SUN.

SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 8, 1862.

The Inauguration of Jeff. Davis.

THE CAREER OF THE REBEL PRESIDENT.

Jefferson Davis was born on the 8th day of June, 1808, and is therefore fifty-four years of age. His birthplace was in that part of Christian county, Kentucky, which now forms part of Todd county. Soon after his birth, his father, Samuel Davis, a planter, who served during the Revolutionary war in the mounted force of the state of Georgia, removed with his family to Mississippi and settled near Woodville, Wilkinson County. Young Davis received an academical education, and was sent, at the usual age, to Transylvania College, Ky., which he left, in 1824, to enter the United States military academy at West Point, where he was graduated in 1828, and was appointed brevet second lieutenant. He remained in the army seven years, and served as an infantry and staff officer in the north-western frontier with such distinction that March 4th, 1833, he was promoted to a first lieutenantcy of dragoons, in which capacity he was employed in 1834, in various expeditions against the Camanches, Pawnees, and other hostile Indian tribes. He resigned his commission on the 30th of June, 1835, returned to Mississippi and became a cotton planter, living in retirement until 1843, when he began to take an active part in politics on the democratic side, and in 1844 was chosen one of the presidential electors of Mississippi to vote for Polk and Dallas, the democratic national candidates.

In November, 1845, he was elected a representative in the Congress of the United States, and took his seat in December of that year. He bore a most conspicuous part in the discussions of the session on the tariff, on the Oregon question, on military affairs, and particularly on the preparations for war against Mexico, and on the organization of volunteer militia, when called into the service of the United States. While in Congress, July 4, 1846, the first regiment of Mississippi volunteers enrolled for service in Mexico, elected him their Colonel. He promptly left his seat in the House of Representatives, and overtaking his regiment at the city of New Orleans, on its way to the seat of war, led it to reinforce the army of Gen. Taylor on the Rio Grande. He was actively engaged in the attack and storming of Monterey in September, 1846; was one of the commissioners for arranging the terms of capitulation of the city, and highly distinguished himself at the memorable battle of Buena Vista on the 23d of February, 1847, where his regiment attacked by an immensely superior force, maintained their ground for a long time unsupported, while Colonel Davis himself, though severely wounded, remained in the saddle until the close of the action, and was complimented for his coolness and marked gallantry, by the Commander-in-Chief, in his dispatch to the War Department, dated March 6, 1847.

At the expiration of the term of enlistment, in July, 1847, the Mississippi regiment was ordered home, and Colonel Davis, while on his return received at New Orleans a commission from President J. K. Polk, as a brigadier-general of volunteers, which he declined accepting on the ground that the Constitution reserves to the states respectively the appointment of the officers of the militia, and that, consequently, their appointment by the federal Executive is *a violation of the rights of states.* In August, 1847, he was appointed by the Governor of Mississippi, a United States Senator, to fill a vacancy, and at the ensuing session of the State Legislature, Jan. 11, 1848, was unanimously elected for the residue of the term, which expired March 4, 1851. In 1850 he was re-elected for the ensuing term, which expired March 4, 1857. In the Senate he was chosen Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, and took a prominent part in the debates on the slavery question, in defence of the institution and policy of the slave states, and was a jealous advocate of the doctrine of states' rights. In September, 1851, shortly after the beginning of his second term in the United States Senate, he was nominated candidate for Governor of Mississippi, by the Democratic party, in opposition to the Hon. Henry S. Foote, the candidate of the Union party. He resigned his seat in the Senate on accepting the nomination, and was beaten in the election by 999; a marked indication of his personal popularity in his own State, for at the "convention" election, two months before, the Union party had a clear majority of nearly 8,000 votes. After his defeat Colonel Davis remained in retirement until the Presidential election of 1852, when he took the stump in behalf of Gen. Frank Pierce, in the States of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Louisiana, where he rendered essential service to the Democratic party. In 1853 he was appointed, by President Pierce, Secretary of War, which post he held till the accession of President Buchanan to the executive chair. His administration of the war department was—unlike the redoubtable Floyd—marked by ability and energy, and was highly popular with the entire standing army of the nation. He either proposed or carried into effect, among other measures, the revision of the army regulations; the introduction of camels into America; the introduction of light infantry or rifle system of tactics; the manufacture of rifled muskets and pistols, and the use of the Minie ball; the addition of four regiments to the army; the augmentation of the sea coast and frontier defences of the country; and the system of explorations in the Western part of the continent for geographical purposes, and for the determination of the best route for a railroad direct to the Pacific ocean. Having been previously re-elected, on his retirement from the War Department, Colonel Davis, re-entered the United States Senate for the term ending March 4th, 1863. In the sessions of the Thirty-fifth Congress, he was most conspicuous in the discussions on the French Spoliation bill, which he strenuously opposed, and on the Pacific Railroad bill, for the Southern route, of which he was a zealous and most influential advocate. He remained in the Senate until the State of Mississippi seceded (?) from the Union, when he retired after making a brief speech on the right of a State to withdraw from the Union. He was subsequently elected Provisional President of the so-called "Confederate States of America," and Alex. H. Stevens, of Georgia, elected Provisional Vice President. Both were re-elected to these offices for the first regular term commencing in February, 1862, for six (?) years. "President" Davis enjoys for a brief period the same rights as our own noble Executive "Old Abe," as the head of the Southern Confederacy. His term of office is six years years but we predict it will not exist one-sixth of that time.

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

FELLOW CITIZENS: On this, the birth day of the man most identified with the establishment of American Independence, and under the monument erected to commemorate his heroic virtues and those of his compatriots, we have assembled to usher into existence the permanent government of the Confederate States. Through this instrumentality, under the favor of Divine Providence, we hope to perpetuate the principles of our Revolutionary fathers. To-day, the memory and the purpose, seemingly associated.

It is with mingled feelings of humility and pride, that I appear to take, in the presence of the people and before high Heaven, the oath prescribed as a qualification for the exalted station to which the unanimous voice of the people has called me. Deeply sensible of all that is implied by this manifestation of the people's confidence, I am yet more profoundly impressed by the vast responsibility of the office, and painfully feel my own inadequacy.

In return for their kindness I can only offer assurances of the gratitude with which it is received, and can but pledge a zealous devotion of every faculty to the service of those who have chosen me as their Chief Magistrate.

When a long course of legislation, directed not to the general welfare, but to the aggrandizement of the Northern section of the Union, culminated in a warfare on the domestic institutions of the Southern States—when the dogmas of a sectional party, substituted for the provisions of the constitutional compact, threatened to destroy the sovereign rights of the States, six of these States, withdrawing from the Union, confederated together to exercise the right and to perform the duty of instituting a Government which would better secure the liberties for the preservation of which that Union was established.

Whatever of hope some may have entertained that a returning sense of justice would remove the danger with which our rights were threatened, and render it possible to preserve the Union of the constitution, must have been disputed by the malignity and barbarity of the Northern States in the prosecution of the existing war. The confidence of the most hopeful among us must have been destroyed by the disregard they have recently exhibited for a time honored bulwarks of civil and religious liberty. Bastiles filled with prisoners, arrested without civil process or indictment duly found; the writ of habeas corpus suspended by Executive mandate; a State Legislature controlled by the imprisonment of members whose avowed principles suggested to the federal Executive that there might be another added to the list of seceded states; elections held under threats of a military power; civil officers, peaceful citizens and gentle women incarcerated for opinion's sake, proclaimed the incapacity of our late associates to administer a government as free, liberal, and humane as that established for our common use.

For proof of the sincerity of our purpose to maintain our ancient institution, we may point to the constitution of the Confederacy and the laws enacted under it, as well as to the fact that through all the necessities of an unequal struggle there has been no action on our part to impair personal liberty or the freedom of speech, of thought or of the press. The courts have been open, the judicial functions fully executed, and every right of the peaceful citizen maintained as securely as if a war of invasion had not disturbed the land.

The people of the states now confederated became convinced that the government of the United States had fallen into the hands of a sectional majority, who would pervert the most sacred of all trusts to the destruction of the rights it was pledged to protect. They believed that to remain longer in the Union would subject them to a continuance of a dispiriting discrimination, submission to which would be inconsistent with their welfare, and intolerable to a proud people. They therefore determined to sever the bonds and establish a new confederacy for themselves.

The experiment instituted by our Revolutionary fathers of a voluntary union of sovereign States for purposes specified in a solemn compact, had been perverted by those who, feeling power and forgetting right, were determined to respect no law but their own will. The government had ceased to answer the ends for which it was ordained and established. To save ourselves from a revolution which, in its silent but rapid progress, was about to place us under the despotism of numbers, and to preserve in spirit, as well as in form, a system of government we believed to be peculiarly fitted to our condition, and full of promise for mankind, we determined to make a new association, composed of States homogeneous in interest, in policy, and in feeling.

Trust in our habits of peace and our love of union, we sent commissioners to the United States to propose a fair and amicable settlement of all questions of public debt or property which might be in dispute. But the government at Washington, denying our right to self-government, refused even to listen to any proposals for a peaceful separation. Notwithstanding, left us but to prepare for war.

The first year in our history has been the most eventful in the annals of this continent. A new government has been established, and its machinery put in operation over an area exceeding seven hundred thousand square miles. The great principles upon which we have been willing to hazard everything that is dear to man have made conquests for us which could never have been achieved by the sword. Our confederacy has grown from six to thirteen States; *and Maryland, already united to us, by hallowed memories and material interests, will, I believe, when able to speak with unstifled voice connect her destiny with the South.* Our people have rallied with unexampled unanimity to the support of the great principles of constitutional government, with firm resolve to perpetuate by arms the rights which they could not peacefully secure. A million of men, it is estimated, are now standing in hostile array, and waging war along a frontier of thousands of miles. Battles have been fought, sieges have been conducted *and, although the contest is not ended, and the tide for the moment is against us, the final result in our favor is not doubtful.*

The period is near at hand *when our foes must sink under the immense load of debt which they have incurred,* a debt which in their effort to subjugate us has already attained such fearful dimensions as will subject them to burthens which must continue to oppress them for generations to come.

We, too, have had our trials and difficulties. That we are to escape them in future is not to be hoped. It was to be expected when we entered upon this war that it would expose our people to sacrifices and cost them much treasure and blood. But we knew the value of the object for which we struggled, and understood the nature of the war in which we were engaged. Nothing could be so bad as failure, and any sacrifice would be cheap as the price of success in such a contest.

But the picture has its lights as well as its shadows. This great strife has awakened in the people the highest sentiments and qualities of the human soul. It is cultivating feelings of patriotism, virtue and courage, which are the best safeguards of our security. Instances of self-sacrifice and of generous devotion to the noble cause for which we are contending are rife throughout the land. Never has a people entered upon a more determined spirit than that now animating men, women and children in every part of our country. Upon the first call the manly to arms; and wives and mothers send their husbands and sons to battle without a murmur of regret.

It was, perhaps, in the ordination of Providence that we were to be taught the value of our liberties by the price which we pay for them.

The recollections of this great contest, with all its common traditions of glory, of sacrifice and of blood, will be the bond of harmony and enduring affection among the people, producing unity in policy, fraternity in sentiment and joint effort in war.

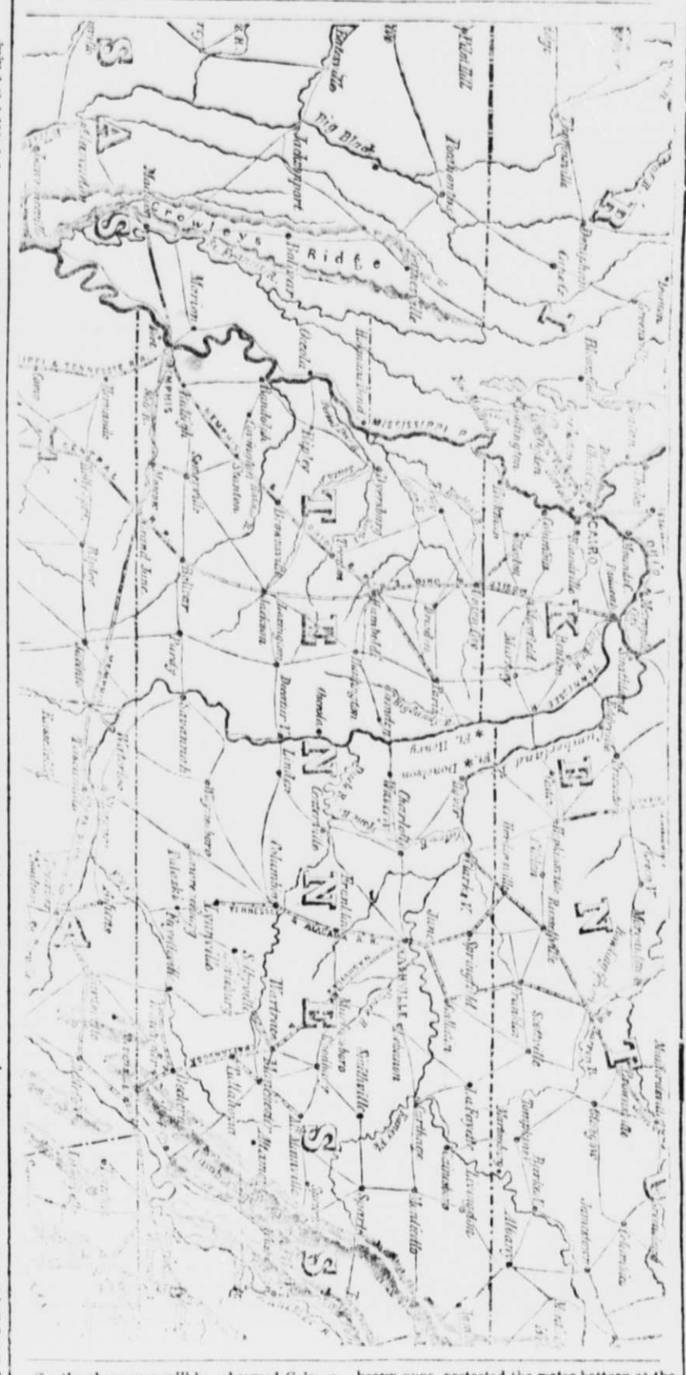
Nor have the material sacrifices of the past year been made without some corresponding benefits—*If the aid and sympathy of foreign nations is a pretended blockade has deprived us of our commerce with them, it is fast making us a self-supporting and an independent people.* The blockade, if effectual and permanent, could only serve to divert our industry from the production of articles for export, and employ it in supplying the commodities for domestic use.

It is a satisfaction that we have maintained the war by our unaided exertions. We have neither asked nor received assistance from any quarter—*Yet the interest involved is not wholly our own.*—The world at large is concerned in opening our markets to its commerce. When the independence of the Confederate States is recognized by the nations of the earth, and we are free to follow our interests and inclinations by cultivating foreign trade; the Southern States will offer to manufacturing nations the most favorable markets which ever invited their commerce. Cotton, sugar, rice, tobacco, provisions, timber and naval stores, will furnish attractive exchanges. Nor would the constancy of these supplies be likely to be disturbed by war. Our confederate strength will be too great to tempt aggression; and never was there a people whose interests and principles committed them so fully to a peaceful policy as those of the Confederate States.

With confidence in the wisdom and virtue of those who will share with me the responsibility, and aid me in the conduct of public affairs, earnestly relying on the patriotism and courage of the people, of which the present war has furnished so many examples. I deeply feel the weight of the responsibilities I now, with unaffected diffidence, am about to assume. And, fully realizing the inadequacy of human power to guide and to sustain, my hope is reverently fixed on Him whose favor is ever vouchsafed to the cause which is just. With humble gratitude and adoration, acknowledging the Providence which has so visibly protected the Confederacy during its brief but eventful career, to THEE, O GOD, I trustingly commit myself, and prayerfully invoke Thy blessing on my country and its cause.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Rebel Flight from Kentucky.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