House of Representatives, 5,000 copies.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

GOVERNOR JOSHUA L. MARTIN.

Gentlemen of the Senate,
and of the House of Representatives:

Responding to a call of the freemen of Alabama, through the ballot box, I present myself before you, to enter into the solemn obligation prescribed by the Constitution, preparatory to entering upon the duties of Chief Executive Magistrate of the State.

Pursuing the precedent established, by the course of all my predecessors, I avail myself of this opportunity, to declare the feelings with which I enter upon the discharge of my official duties; as well as the principles, which will guide me in their execution.

I feel a lively sense of gratitude to my constituents for their confidence, and for the honor they have conferred on me. I trust, however, that I may be able to make them a better requital, by the devotion of my best, though humble abilities, to the zealous and faithful performance of the difficult, arduous, and responsible duties to which they have called me.

The general economy and welfare of a great State, being involved in the decisions of our counsels, the official relations now about to be established between us, to be effective of good results, must be intimate, and marked by kindness, conciliation and confidence. This is necessary and

proper under all circumstances. Situated as we are, it is rendered doubly important, when we consider the embarrassed condition of our finances; the vast amount of State indebtedness to be provided for; our limited means of payment; the precarious condition of those means, complicated as they are, with the conflicting interests of the debtors, a large and respectable class of our fellow citizens; all requiring ability, energy, and vigilence, to prevent deterioration and loss. When these, and the various other important questions, connected with this subject are considered, the patriot heart must be aroused to the importance and necessity of the most perfect harmony in our deliberations. With the freest interchange of opinion, and the most deliberate consideration, our best judgment may well be distrusted, in the management of this difficult, and important subject; involving as it does, not only the amount to which the honest labor of our citizens is to be burdened by taxation, but the faith, and honor of our beloved State. In view of these important considerations, I appeal to the patriotism of Senators and Representatives of the people, to discard every feeling, from whatever cause produced, which may tend to divide, and distract our counsels, in the great work which the people have confided to our care. I do not ask this for my individual benefit. I should feel myself to be unworthy of my constituents if I did. I ask it for the cause of justice, and my country. When the promotion merely of a favorite is involved, we may perhaps be indulged, to some extent, in asperity and bickering; but when the honor and welfare of our State is concerned, higher and nobler sentiments are expected to govern our conduct. Our path of duty does not promise to be pleasant, or free from labor, difficulty, and painful solicitude. The exigency of our affairs requires that every man should do his whole duty. The country expects it. Less will not satisfy the reasonable expectations of our common constituents. Deeply impressed with the sense of this obligation, it shall be my constant effort to reconcile every conflict of feeling, or interest, which may threaten to disturb our harmony: and I will unite heartily in the promotion of every measure, which may promise to result in the public good.

The principles of democracy established by Mr. Jefferson, and carried out by Gen. Jackson, have formed my political creed from the earliest dawn of manhood, to the present hour. They were the tenets of my ancestors. They have been uniformly sustained by me in every capacity. They secure equal political rights to all our citizens. They teach, among other great principles, "a jealous care of the right of elections by the people," and "absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics, from which there is no appeal, but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism." They teach also, "economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burdened; the honest payment of our debts, and sacred preservation of the public faith." To their preservation I look for a continuance of our happy form of government. I have never compromised an article of this creed; and I never will—come what may.

In the administration of the affairs of the State, so far as I may be able

to influence them, it shall be my constant aim to exercise strict economy, in the expenditure of the public money; avoiding extravagance; but at the same time paying to officers and other agents, and public functionaries, just compensation for their services; holding them to a strict performance of their duties.

The cause of education, so important in our form of government, shall command my best efforts for its promotion, and diffusion throughout the whole State.

The University of Alabama, with its ample resources for usefulness, will be one great object of my care and attention—and in its direction, and management, so far as my official relation and influence extend, the most liberal and enlightened policy, which can be devised, will be adopted, imparting health and vigor to its action; extending its beneficial influence as far as possible, that it may accomplish the great object of its creation—the elevation of the moral, social, and intellectual standard of the State.

The pardoning power was never intended by the framers of our Constitution, to be governed by the individual will of the Executive; but based upon principles which should best guard and protect the innocent. In its exercise, the duty of the officer should rise above the influence of the feelings of the man. While, it is true, that every case must depend upon its own peculiar circumstances, the great principles governing each case are the same; and no legitimate exercise of this high power of pardoning can be had, in disregard of those principles. In my view of this subject, the Executive occupies in the administration of the criminal law, a position analagous to that which the Chancellor occupies in the administration of the civil law: and the rules which should govern his course of action, ought to be as distinctly marked as those which govern the conscience of the Chancellor. Any other view than this, erects a tribunal in the Executive will, controlling every sanction of the criminal law, and resting its decisions upon the mere whim and caprice of one man.

The veto power, under the limited influence given to it by the Constitution, can never work detriment to the public. In my view, it was intended as a conservative principle, to be exercised as well when the Executive disapproves the policy of a measure proposed, as when he deems it unconstitutional. Its only effect is to require a reconsideration of the measure by the two houses, after having the objections presented by the Executive. The power of perfecting the measures, is, as it should be, fully secure to the Senate and House of Representatives, without the Executive sanction—the Constitution requiring only the approval of a bare majority of the members of each body to make it a law. If the Executive errs, the representatives of the people will correct his error, and secure the benefits of the measure, by its adoption. If, however, his objections be sound, having been overlooked, whether they apply to the constitutionality, or the expediency of the measure, mischief to the State may be prevented.

The Penitentiary should be so organized, as to embrace every improvement in the control of its inmates, which may promise to accomplish the beneficent design of its creation, and the management of its

finances should be so guided by the necessary guards and checks against extravagance, as to secure economy. A rigid accountability should be required of its officers and managers.

Upon the all absorbing subject of our Banks, I shall favor the adoption of that policy which shall promise to collect the largest amount of the debts due them; and which (keeping the great object of collections steadily in view,) shall bring them to the earliest final adjustment and close, of which their extensive and complicated affairs are susceptible. In the attainment of these great objects, and in view of the large expense, and inefficiency of the present system of their management, I shall recommend the adoption of a different system, by which the expense may be retrenched, and the inefficiency may be reformed.

In regard to the indebtedness of the State, I shall recommend to your consideration such measures as will place beyond contingency, if possible, the punctual payment of the interest, as it may become due, according to our obligation, and secure the most speedy liquidation and discharge of the whole debt, consistently with our resources—preserving sacredly the public faith.

It would give me unspeakable pleasure to be able as most of my distinguished predecessors were, upon such occasions, to congratulate you on the happy and prosperous condition of the affairs of the State. I am deeply pained by my inability to do so. On the contrary, I am required by a sense of duty, to invoke the aid of your wisdom, prudence and forecast, in averting the threatening dangers which arise from its embarrassed situation. While no State can boast of a more patriotic and individually prosperous people, than Alabama, or a people of greater energy and resources—it is yet necessary in order to secure a favorable response to the heavy drafts, which our circumstance impose upon them, and justice too, imperiously demands, that the most diligent and effective means should be used to reduce the burden, by a faithful application of the assets first liable. When justice has been fully done by this course, no burden which a preservation of the honor of our State may require, will be deemed by them too heavy to be borne. A neglect, however, of this important step, in addition to the pain arising from the known violations of the principles of justice, may result in consequences the most deplorable. Relying upon the aid of our wise counsel, with a heart devoted to my country, it shall be my constant prayer, that the Giver of all Good may continue his guardian care over us, and guide us in the ways of wisdom, that all our acts may redound to the prosperity and honor of the State.