

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF GOV. PITCHLYNN.

*Fellow-Citizens of the Senate
and of the House of Representatives.*

In assuming the office of Principal Chief of this Nation, I deem it proper that we should as a people, in view of the perils by which we are environed, to pause for the moment, and lift our hearts in gratitude and praise to the God of Heaven for the merciful Providence which He has graciously extended over us whilst we have been engaged in defending our homes against the most cruel and relentless foe. And that we invoke of Him wisdom to our councils and the continuance of His Almighty and protecting arm over us.

At no period in our history were we ever burthened with such responsibilities as those that are now resting upon us. And at no previous time were we ever threatened with so many dangerous calamities; for the force of circumstances have compelled us to participate in the present war, although we were not a party to its creation yet as neighbors and friends, we feel it to be our natural and bounden duty to espouse the cause of the Southern States when they were threatened with subjugation. And with brave and honest hearts, regardless of consequences, we at once cast our lot with our Southern brethren and sent our sons to the battle field.

It is now more than three years since this unholy and unnatural war was commenced against the Confederate States and their Allies; and although rivers of blood have been freely shed and the land filled with widows and orphans, still the war rages with unabated fury and vindictiveness on the part of the foe. And no human sagacity can predict when and how it will end. We know not through what scenes, trials and bloodshed we are yet to pass before the end comes. But whatever may happen—or let the consequences be what they may our destiny is indissolubly involved in that of the South. By the side of our Confederate friends we *must* stand or we must fall. Let us make a clean history for ourselves, as our fathers did before us: For it is good to be honest and trust in nations as well as in individuals for therein lies the foundation of that confidence which establishes unity, strengthens and brightens the chain of friendship.

Whilst thousands of white men born and reared in the south, have deserted the flag of their country and become traitors and thieves, the Choctaws have stood as firm as their eternal mountains with their honor unsullied and their integrity unaffected. Like brave men they have been true to themselves and true to their friends. And should the coming future threaten us with annihilation or extermination as a people, let it be the last shout of the last Choctaw, I die true to my country and true to my friends! Though darkness and gloom, seem at times, to overshadow our future let us like the old Romans never despair of our country; but putting our trust in the God of battles, with the determination of performing our whole duty and the victory will be ours,

We still hold our country; and we are again assembled in General Council under our own skies within the Halls of our Capitol. These inestimable privileges of freemen must be maintained at every hazard, although the odds against us is numerically fearful and the foe malignant and vindictive; but the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. We must fight! There is no alternative left us but to stand and battle against the invader with heroic souls! Brave men never yield to despondency in the time of danger! It is for our very existence we are struggling: This country is our last refuge—the last home of the Choctaws. We are chained to the rock of isolation but not of despair, yet we have no country to which we can flee; for unlike our Confederate friends we cannot emigrate to the States and receive the hand of welcome and be heartily incorporated into their citizenship. I repeat it we must fight until our country is, either our free homes or honored graves! There is no other hope left us; for who would seek conditions of pardon, or except them when offered by the Government of Abraham Lincoln, which has waged the most cruel, relentless and desolating war that ever disgraced any nation that claimed to be civilized and refined. And what confidence can a Choctaw have in that Government whose perverted or unnatural will, reverses the social order, and arrays brother in deadly conflict against brother for negro freedom and equality.

Thus far we have been an undivided people and I feel more honored now by being the free choice, as Chief Executive, of such a united and determined people than I could have been in any previous period in our history. We must—we will continue a united people. The wily and astute cunning of the foe has failed—and will continue to fail in seducing any Choctaw from his allegiance to his country. No Choctaw can be so forgetful of the past as to disgrace himself or his forefathers. The treason of others teach a philosophy by the force of example and we will continue to accept its admonitions and exhibit to the civilized world something more than Spartan fortitude and Roman courage by presenting an unbroken and unappalled unity in the defence of our homes and the graves of our ancestors.

As the Chief Executive Officer of this Nation I will use every effort in my power to have the civil laws strictly and vigorously enforced and our Treaty Stipulations, with the Confederate States of America honestly and faithfully observed, and I will also on all occasions heartily co-operate with the Military Authorities commanding in the Indian Territory. The interest and welfare of the Nation demand this of me. To sustain the unity and efficiency of our army shall be my constant end and aim. We are engaged in an arduous struggle for existence. Let us therefore sacrifice our political prejudices, bickering and jealousies upon the altar of our common country and unite as one man to battle for Southern Liberty and Independence.

My predecessor having failed to submit to you his annual message I will therefore depart from established usage, in the delivery of an inaugural, by recommending to your consideration such measures as the public exigencies seem to require. I would therefore, recommend to you the propriety of appointing some suitable Agent to visit the

Choctaw Refugees and report their condition at the earliest day practicable that the Executive may submit the same to General Maxey and have their wants and necessities relieved if possible. These refugees who were formerly citizens of Mooshulatubbe District immediately on the enemys lines, deserve the grattitude of the Nation for their constancy, their bravery and self sacrificing devotion to the common weal, for they have not only fought the enemy at every disadvantage and at every hazard but they have spurned every attempt of the foe to seduce them from their allegiance. Had prudence prevailed after the Battle of Honey Springs, much of the wealth of that District could have been saved for that devoted people by removing it south of the mountains, but such was not the case. Since that period they have sought for their women and children refuge in the mountains where they are yet to be found destitute of clothing and in a starving condition.

I would also recommend that prompt and energetic efforts should be made by all the civil officers of this Government and all good and law abiding citizens to suppress the thieving and robbing that prevails to such a fearful extent. To accomplish that purpose I would suggest the propriety of all persons under the age of eighteen and over forty five to organize themselves into a local defence. It is to be hoped that such force will be promptly organized and that it will hold itself in readiness at a moments warning to aid the Civil Authorities in the enforcement of law and order; and also cooperate with the regular Military force in repelling invasion. It would also greatly aid the civil authorities and the regular military, by the arrest of all suspicious characters travelling through our country. We have permitted to many bad men to pass unquestioned through this nation. These characters should be examined and if they are not in possession of proper passports, they should be delivered to the nearest Confederate Commander; for it is evident that where such characters have not properly authenticated passports, they are either, thieves, deserters, or spies of the enemy. We must be active and watchful; for remember that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

I would further recommend, that resolutions should be passed by the General Council, complimenting the gallant officers and brave men of the allied army of the District of the Indian Territory. No army is more deserving. They have not only accomplished much with inadequate means—have been irresistible in battle, but they have also suffered privations and wants as trying to fortitude and love of country as any army ever endured.

P. P. PITCHLYNN.