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Speech of Hon. Thomas Williams of Pennsylvania, on the Reconstruction of the Union: Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 10, 1866 (Classic Reprint)

By Thomas Williams

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The vast discretion necessarily lodged in the commander-in-chief in times like those through which we have just passed, the extreme prominence of his position, and the enormous influence arising from the control of an immense expenditure, were almost sure to give to that officer a greatly preponderating weight, and to make the world - accustomed only to royal wars and royal rule - believe that it was the President alone, and not the Congress or the people, who had saved this nation, and whose business it was to restore it in all its parts. And therefore it was that the same claim of power in the proclamation of December, 1863, provoked no animadversion here, while the details of the Presidential plan were subjected to the severest criticism; and no special complaint was made when the will of the law-making power was disregarded and overruled. And therefore it was, too, that the House bill failed on a Second...



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