

Andrew Johnson's Visit to Washington—His Opinion of Grant.

Washington Correspondence of the N. Y. Herald. EX-PRESIDENT JOHNSON arrived here this evening and was waited upon soon after reaching the Metropole by a number of your correspondents who found the Ex-President comfortably quartered in one of Shelly's best parlors, and looking quite fresh and hearty. Andrew Johnson, plain citizen, received your correspondent with the same cordiality and kindness that distinguished him so highly while an occupant of the white house.

"Glad to see you, sir," said the Ex-President, at the same time handing a chair to your correspondent and sitting down himself. "Sit down, sir."

Correspondent—I came to pay my respects, Mr. Johnson, and, at the same time, to learn if there was any particular object in your visit.

Johnson (smiling)—Well, sir, I have some private business to attend to here, and I have a son at Georgetown College, the only son left to me now. I came to see him and attend the commencement of that college.

Correspondent—I believe, Mr. Johnson, you are the first President since the time of John Quincy Adams who has revisited the capital after retiring from the white house.

Johnson (laughing)—Really, sir, I don't know how that is. My attention was never directed to the point before. It may be so, however.

Correspondent—Well, Mr. Johnson, to change the subject, what do they now think of the administration down in Tennessee?

Johnson—I don't know that you ought to ask such a question. People would be likely to attribute an unfavorable opinion from me as prompted by improper motives.

You know very well, sir, for you were familiar with my views while I was President, what my estimate of Grant was, and I don't know of anything that has since occurred that has caused me to change my mind the slightest. I know Grant thoroughly. I had ample opportunity to study him when I was President, and I am convinced he is the greatest man that was ever thrust upon a people. Why, the little fellow's excuse for not using the express, but I can't help pitying him. His little fellow has nothing in him. He hasn't a single idea. He has no policy, no conception of what the country requires. He don't understand the philosophy of a single great question, and is completely lost in trying to understand his situation. He is mendacious, cunning, and treacherous. He lied to me flagrantly, by G-d, and I convicted him by my whole Cabinet; but that even would have been tolerable were it the only instance, but it was not. He lied on many other occasions. I tell you, sir, Grant is nothing more than a bundle of petty spites, jealousies, and resentments. And yet they say Grant is a second Washington. Only think of it; when a country is in the hands of Washington or Jefferson, where is he? Why he is so small you must put your finger on him. He's a little upstart, a coward, physically and intellectually, to be compared to George Washington. Why, it makes me laugh. I have more pity for the man than contempt, for I have no spite against him. But I fear for the country when such a man is likened to the Father of his Country. Why, just look at the inaugural of Washington. He speaks about his fear and trembling in accepting the Presidency, even after all his experience and success. But this little fellow, Grant, an upstart, a mere scion of the war, a creature without the ability to comprehend the philosophy of a single great question, says in his inaugural, "I know the responsibility is great, but I accept it without fear." Is that like Washington or Jefferson? Pshaw! It's monstrous to think of. Grant, I tell you, sir, has no ideas, no policy. Why, Washington considered that a man's greatness was measured by his morality, by the standard of his soul. And I have always considered that the more soul a man had, the more he developed the soul or intellect within him, the more Godlike he became. But, sir, Grant has nothing. Physically, and mentally, and morally he is a nonentity. Why, sir, his soul is so small that you could put within the periphery of a hand-mesh, and it would not hold out for a thousand years without knocking against the walls of the shell. That's the size of his soul. Just look at the man sitting at a Cabinet council. He has no idea, no policy, no standard, no creed, no faith. How can he guide the people? How can he impress any great improvements or moral ideas upon the people? He has no object to look forward to, no leading aim to draw the people toward any particular end. He sits there with his Cabinet. One member has bought him a house in Philadelphia, another has given him \$50,000, another has given him a carriage, and so on. It is due to the office of President of the United States that he has such a following. They talk about his generalship. Well, he was a mere incident of the war. Men and arms were supplied in abundance, and his forces were so massive that they simply crushed out the rebellion. It would have been done had Grant never been born. Therefore he was a mere incident, but the little fellow now comes to think he is somebody really. I can't help pitying him when I think how well I know him and what an infinitesimal creature he really is. I often think about that the fittest place for Grant is at some place in the country where there are cross roads. The following morning he will be at the cross roads, and the little fellow will have noticed the scene. At one corner perhaps there is a small blacksmith's shop. At another corner of the cross roads there is a grocery store, and at another a house where the squire meets to settle cases. Well, I have often noticed at such a junction of several roads that when the squire's business is over some fellows will propose a horse race, and to give interest to the thing a barrel of cider and perhaps a half gallon of whisky will be struck on the result. Now Grant is just suited to such a situation. His ideas are of the cross roads order, and he has not a thought above that.

Correspondent—What do you think of the general situation now?

Johnson—Well, I think we are tending to democracy or anarchy, unless a proper direction is given to the disorderly elements at work. We are the friends with an aristocracy of bondholders. A moneyed aristocracy, they say, is the most dangerous; but a credit aristocracy, which is only the shadow of the substitute for money, is worse still; for it is the moneyed aristocracy adulterated. I say the bondholder is a credit aristocrat. Here is the producer, raising his wheat or his corn. What is it worth to him? He sells it for the credit of the bondholder. The bondholder gives his credit to the producer, in exchange for the latter's goods, and says, "You may take our credit, but we will put the gold and silver into our pockets." That is the producer's idea. When by and by the producer finds the credit valueless, what will he be worth? When the great revolution comes, what will be our condition? Where is all the gold and silver that has been dug from our own soil and coined in our own mint? Where is it all gone? Can you tell me, sir? I don't speak of such as we import, but what we coined ourselves—that vast amount dug out of our own earth. Why, it is locked up in the vaults of the credit aristocracy. Now, sir, it is a singular fact that no country yet has ever paid off its national debt without repudiation. It may startle you to hear it, but it is true. Look over history and you will

find I am right, and wherever you will find a permanent national debt, one that has not been paid off, you will find there is no freedom. Spain is not free, England is not free, because each of those countries has a permanent national debt. It is in the moneyed aristocracy for wherever there are power and moneyed aristocracy there is always a desire for a union between the two. Here we have an executive power controlled by the bondholders. Grant is ruled by a miserable set of hucksters, and bondholders. He is in their hands completely, and therefore we are in danger. The country is in peril, for the bondholders are striving to rule the Government. The people ought to be made to understand this condition. The people need to be indoctrinated with the truth, and you gentlemen of the press can do it. You write a great deal and all that, but sometimes you write things and show off to the public, and make it look like a good deal of time to remove the effect. Now you have an opportunity to do so by explaining these matters to the people through the press. The farmer and producer, no matter how humble, are always disposed to do what they think right. You can show them the right. They have an interest in doing what is best, but you must explain what the best course is, and then they will adopt it. So you must make them understand what produces work and what the credit of the bondholder is good for. You must give a proper direction and this will follow.

Correspondent—What do you regard as the proper course for the crisis?

Johnson—Why, sir, I sometimes wonder whether there are not some sides of this question that I have not put my hand to my head and asked myself if I am sane. I find myself using arguments that were deemed sensible and irresistible by some of the greatest minds of the country, and yet they are unheeded, perhaps laughed at. I have found myself obliged to think deeply, when I was President, over great constitutional questions. I have called to my aid the most capable minds in the country, and have drawn from them their advice and wisdom, and then comparing all, and adding what little might arise in my own mind, I have endeavored to present a close, cogent, logical statement to the people, and yet I have seen such arguments as that of the "solid South" rejected and trampled upon.

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