

CHAPTER LXVII.

JOHNSON'S ADMINISTRATION, 1865-1869.

ON the day after the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, Andrew Johnson took the oath of office, and became President of the United States. He was a native of North Carolina, born in Raleigh, on the 29th of December, 1808. With no advantages of education, he passed his boyhood in poverty and neglect. In 1826 he removed with his mother to Tennessee and settled at Greenville. Here he was married to an intelligent lady who taught him to write and cipher. Here by dint of native talent, force of will, and strength of character, he first earned the applause of his fellow-men. Here, through toil and hardship, he rose to distinction, and after holding minor offices was elected to Congress. As a member of the United States Senate in 1860-61 he opposed secession with all his zeal, even after the legislature had declared Tennessee out of the Union. On the 4th of March, 1862, he was appointed military governor of that State, and entered upon his duties at Nashville. He began his administration and carried out his measures with all the vigor and vehemence of his nature. There was no quailing or spirit of compromise. His life was many times in peril; but he fed on danger and grew strong under the onsets of his enemies. He held the office of governor until 1864, when he was nominated for the vice-presidency in place of Mr. Hamlin. Now, by the tragic death of the President, he was suddenly called to assume the responsibilities of chief magistrate. In his first congressional message he foreshadowed a policy of great severity towards the civil and military leaders of the overthrown Confederacy.

On the 1st of February, 1865, Congress adopted an amendment to the Constitution by which slavery was abolished and forbidden in all the States and Territories of the Union. By the 18th of the following December the amendment had been ratified by the legislatures of twenty-seven States, and was duly proclaimed as a part of the Constitution. The emancipation proclamation had been issued as a military measure; now the doctrines and results of that instrument were recognized and incorporated in the fundamental law of the land.

On the 29th of May THE AMNESTY PROCLAMATION was issued by President Johnson. By its provisions a general pardon was extended to all persons—except those specified in certain classes—who had participated in the organization and defence of the Confederacy. The condition of the pardon was that those receiving it should take an oath of allegiance to the

United States. The excepted persons might also be pardoned on special application to the President. During the summer of 1865 the great armies were disbanded, and the victors and vanquished returned to their homes to resume the work of peace.

The finances of the nation were in an alarming condition. The war-debt went on increasing until the beginning of 1866, and it was only by the most herculean exertions that national bankruptcy could be warded off. The yearly interest on the debt had grown to a hundred and thirty-three million dollars in gold. The expenses of the government had reached the aggregate of two hundred millions of dollars annually. But the augmented revenues of the nation proved sufficient to meet these enormous outlays, and at last the debt began to be slowly diminished. On the 5th of December, 1865, a resolution was passed in the House of Representatives pledging the faith of the United States to the full payment of the national indebtedness, both principal and interest.

During the civil war the emperor Napoleon III. interfered in the affairs of Mexico, and succeeded, by overawing the people with a French army, in setting up an empire. In the early part of 1864 the crown of Mexico was conferred on Maximilian, the archduke of Austria, who established his government and sustained it with French and Austrian soldiers. But the Mexican president Juarez headed a revolution against the usurping emperor; the government of the United States rebuked France for having violated the Monroe doctrine; Napoleon, becoming alarmed, withdrew his army; and Maximilian was overthrown. Flying from Mexico to Queretaro, he was there besieged and taken prisoner. On the 13th of June, 1867, he was tried by court-martial and condemned to be shot; and six days afterward the sentence was carried into execution. The scheme of Napoleon, who had hoped to profit by the civil war and gain a foothold in the New World, was thus justly brought to shame and contempt.

After a few weeks of successful operation the first Atlantic telegraph, laid by Mr. Field in 1858, had ceased to work. The friends of the enterprise were greatly disheartened. Not so with Mr. Field, who continued both in Europe and America to advocate the claims of his measure and to plead for assistance. He made fifty voyages across the Atlantic, and finally secured sufficient capital to begin the laying of a second cable. The work began from the coast of Ireland in the summer of 1865. When the steamer *Great Eastern* had proceeded more than twelve hundred miles on her way to America, the cable parted and was lost. Mr. Field held on to his enterprise. Six millions of dollars had been spent in unsuccessful attempts, but still he persevered. In July of 1866 a third cable, two thousand miles in length, was coiled in the *Great Eastern*, and again the

vessel started on her way. This time the work was completely successful. After twelve years of unremitting effort Mr. Field received a gold medal from the Congress of his country, and the plaudits of all civilized nations.

By an act of Congress, passed on the 1st of November, 1864, THE POSTAL MONEY-ORDER SYSTEM was established in the United States. The design of the measure was to secure a safe and convenient method of transferring small sums of money through the mails. The money-order is divided into two parts—the *order proper* and the *advice*. From the order, which is received and transmitted by the purchaser, the name of the payee is omitted. In the advice, which is sent by the post-master of the issuing office to the post-master of the paying office, the name of the payee is inserted. The advice and the order receive the same stamp and number, and being transmitted separately, constitute an almost perfect check against loss, robbery, and fraud. The largest sum which may be transmitted in one order is fifty dollars, though larger amounts may be sent in separate orders. The amount charged for issuing is trifling, varying with the value of the order, and the security is perhaps as great as human sagacity can provide. Notwithstanding the invaluable benefits of the system, it was at first received with little favor. In 1870 there were two thousand and seventy-six post-offices from which money-orders were issued. During that year the orders numbered a million six hundred and seventy-one thousand two hundred and fifty-three; and the amount transmitted was above thirty-four millions of dollars. On the 1st of October, 1875, the number of money-offices in operation was three thousand six hundred and ninety-six; the number of orders issued during the fiscal year ending on the 30th of June amounted to five millions six thousand three hundred and twenty-three; the amount of money sent to more than seventy-seven millions of dollars. Of all the orders issued during that year only twenty-seven were paid to persons not entitled to receive them. Such have been the advantages of the system as to require its extension to foreign lands. Postal conventions have already been held and arrangements completed for the exchange of money-orders with Switzerland, Great Britain and Ireland and Germany. The requirements of civilization will no doubt soon demand a similar compact with every enlightened nation.

The administration of President Johnson is noted as the time when the Territories of the United States assumed their final form. The vast domains west of the Mississippi were now reduced to proper limits and organized with a view to early admission into the Union as States. A

large part of the work was accomplished during the administration of President Lincoln. In March of 1861 the Territory of Dakota, with an area of a hundred and fifty thousand square miles, was detached from Nebraska on the north, and given a distinct territorial organization. In February of 1863 Arizona, with an area of a hundred and thirteen thousand square miles, was separated from New Mexico on the west and organized as an independent Territory. On the 3d of March in the same year Idaho was organized out of portions of Dakota, Nebraska and Washington Territories; and on the 26th of May, 1864, Montana, with an area of a hundred and forty-six thousand square miles, was cut off from the eastern part of Idaho. By this measure the area of the latter Territory was reduced to eighty-six thousand square miles. On the 1st of March, 1867, the Territory of Nebraska, reduced to its present area of seventy-six thousand miles, was admitted into the Union as the thirty-seventh State. Finally, on the 25th of July, 1868, the Territory of Wyoming, with an area of ninety-eight thousand square miles, was organized out of portions of Dakota, Idaho and Utah. Thus were the Territories of the great West reduced to their present limits as represented in the accompanying map.

The year 1867 was signalized by THE PURCHASE OF ALASKA. Two years previously the territory had been explored by a corps of scientific men with a view of establishing telegraphic communication with Asia by way of Behring Strait. The report of the exploration showed that Alaska was by no means the worthless country it had been supposed to be. It was found that the coast-fisheries were of very great value, and that the forests of white pine and yellow cedar were among the finest in the world. Negotiations for the purchase of the peninsula were at once opened, and on the 30th of March, 1867, a treaty was concluded by which, for the sum of seven million two hundred thousand dollars, Russia ceded Alaska to the United States. The territory thus added to the domains of the Republic embraced an area of five hundred and eighty thousand square miles, and a population of twenty-nine thousand souls.

Very soon after his accession to the chief magistracy a serious disagreement arose between the President and Congress. The difficulty grew out of the great question of reorganizing the Southern States. The particular point in dispute was as to the relation which those States had sustained to the Federal Union during the civil war. The President held that the ordinances of secession were in their very nature null and void, and that therefore the seceded States *had never been out of the Union*. The majority in Congress held that the acts of secession were illegal and unconstitutional, but that the seceded States had been by those acts

actually detached from the Union, and that special legislation and special guarantees were necessary in order to restore them to their former relations under the government. Such was the real foundation of the difficulty by which the question of reconstructing the Southern States was so seriously embarrassed.

In the summer of 1865 measures of reconstruction were begun by the President in accordance with his own views. On the 9th of May a proclamation was issued for the restoration of Virginia to the Union. Twenty days afterward another proclamation was issued establishing a provisional government over South Carolina; and at brief intervals similar measures were adopted in respect to the other States of the late Confederacy. On the 24th of June all restrictions on trade and intercourse with the Southern States were removed by proclamation of the President. On the 7th of the following September a second amnesty proclamation was issued, by which all persons who had upheld the Confederate cause—excepting the leaders—were unconditionally pardoned. Meanwhile, the State of Tennessee had been reorganized, and in 1866 was restored to its place in the Union. Meanwhile, the national Congress was pursuing its own line of policy in regard to the reconstruction of the Southern States. During the session of 1865-66, a committee of fifteen was appointed by that body to whom all matters appertaining to the reorganization of the States of the overthrown Confederacy should be referred. Soon afterwards the celebrated CIVIL RIGHTS BILL was passed, the object of which was to secure to the freedmen of the South the full exercise of citizenship. The measure was opposed and vetoed by the President, but was immediately re-passed by a two-thirds congressional majority. On the occasion of the celebration of Washington's birthday at the Capital, the bill was severely denounced by the President in a speech delivered in front of the executive mansion; and the position assumed by Congress was declared to be a new rebellion against the government of the United States. In subsequent speeches and messages the same sentiment was reiterated, and the attitude of the executive and legislative departments became constantly more unfriendly.

In the summer of 1866 a call was issued for a national convention to be held in Philadelphia on the 14th of August. The objects had in view were not very clearly defined; but it was understood that the general condition of the country would be considered, measures of national policy discussed, and all the political elements, in opposition to the majority in Congress be consolidated into a new political party, with which the President's name would be associated in leader-

ship. At the appointed time delegates from all the States and territories were present; many members of the Republican party took part in the movement, and the convention was not lacking in enthusiasm. Still, the meeting exercised but very little permanent influence on the affairs of the country.

Soon afterwards the President made another effort to rally public opinion in favor of his policy. In the latter part of August he set out from Washington, accompanied by Secretaries Seward, Welles, and Randall, General Grant, Admiral Farragut, and other prominent officials, to make a tour of the Northern States. The ostensible object had in view was that the President should be present at the laying of the corner stone of a monument to Senator Douglas at Chicago. Departing from the Capital, the presidential party passed through Philadelphia, New York, and Albany, and after taking part in the ceremonies at Chicago, returned by way of St. Louis, Indianapolis, Louisville, Cincinnati, and Pittsburg. At all the principal towns and cities through which he passed, the President spoke freely to the crowds in defence of his own policy and in denunciation of that of Congress. The whole journey was a scene of intense excitement and partisan animosity. The general effect of the President's course was disastrous to him and his political adherents; for in the elections of the following autumn the measures of Congress were sustained and the members re-elected by increased popular majorities. Nevertheless, the result of the election had very little effect in altering the President's views or softening his feelings towards the legislative department of the government.

By degrees the affairs of the administration grew critical. When Congress convened in December of 1866 the policy of the President was severely condemned. The congressional committee, appointed at the session of the previous year, now brought forward a report embodying a full plan of reorganizing the Southern States. After much discussion the measures proposed by the committee were adopted by Congress, and the work of reconstruction was begun. As the first condition for the re-admission of a State into the Union it was enacted that the people of the same, by their legislative assembly or otherwise, should ratify the fourteenth amendment to the constitution which declared the citizenship of all persons born or naturalized in the United States. In furtherance of this policy Congress, at the same session, passed an act requiring that in the national territories the elective franchise should be granted without distinction of race or color, before such territories should be admitted into the Union. A

similar measure was adopted in respect to the District of Columbia, forbidding the further restriction of the right of suffrage to white men. To all of these acts President Johnson opposed his veto; but in every case his objection was overcome by the two-thirds majority in Congress.

Concerning the reorganization of the Southern States, the real question at issue was as to whether a *civil* or a *military* method of reconstruction ought to be adopted. From the beginning, the President had urged the superiority of the civil process. But in Congress the opposite opinion prevailed, and the views of the majority were rather intensified by the hostility of the executive. On the 2d of March, 1867, an act was passed by which the ten seceded States were divided into five military districts, each district to be under the control of a governor appointed by the President. After appointing the commanders required by this law, the chief magistrate asked the opinion of Mr. Stanbery, his attorney-general, as to the validity of the congressional measures of reconstruction. An answer was returned that most of the acts were null and void; and the President accordingly issued to the military commanders an order which measurably nullified the whole proceeding. But Congress passed a supplemental act declaring the meaning of the previous law, and the process of reorganization was continued under the congressional plan. The work, however, was greatly retarded by the distracted counsels of the government and the chaotic condition of affairs in the South. But in due time the States of Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina were reconstructed, and in the months of June and July, 1868, readmitted into the Union. In every case, however, the readmission was effected against the protest, and over the veto of the President.

In the mean time, a difficulty had arisen in the President's cabinet which led to his impeachment. On the 21st of February, 1868, he notified Edwin M. Stanton, secretary of war, of his dismissal from office. The act was regarded by Congress as a usurpation of authority and a violation of law on the part of the President. The reconstruction difficulties had already broken off all friendly relations between the two Houses and the executive. Accordingly, on the 3d of March, articles of impeachment were agreed to by the House of Representatives, in accordance with the forms of the Constitution, and the cause was immediately remanded to the Senate for trial. Proceedings began before that body on the 23d of March and continued until the 26th of May, when the President was acquitted. But his escape was

very narrow; a two-thirds majority was required to convict, *and but one vote was wanting*. Chief-Justice Salmon P. Chase, one of the most eminent of American statesmen and jurists, presided over this remarkable trial.

The time for holding another presidential election was already at hand. General Ulysses S. Grant was nominated by the Republicans, and Horatio Seymour of New York by the Democrats. The canvass was attended with great excitement. The people were still agitated by the recent strife through which the nation had passed, and the questions most discussed by the political speakers were those arising out of the civil war. The principles advocated by the majority in Congress furnished the basis of the Republican platform of 1868, and on that platform General Grant was chosen by a very large electoral majority. The votes of twenty-six States, amounting, in the aggregate, to two hundred and fourteen ballots, were cast in his favor, while his competitor received only the eighty votes of the remaining eleven States. Of the popular vote, however, Mr. Seymour obtained two million seven hundred and three thousand six hundred, against three million thirteen thousand one hundred and eighty-eight given to General Grant. At the same election, the choice for the vice-presidency fell on Schuyler Colfax of Indiana.



CHIEF-JUSTICE CHASE.